

Grace Notes in Miniature

Friday, December 25th, 2020



Joy to the world the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King.

Dear friends,

After a much quieter Christmas Eve than usual, and the limited attendance at morning Mass today, I am turning my thoughts to ways to fill this day with as much joy as our circumstances will permit. In what I imagine is the biggest birthday party in the world, we can still find ways to connect with our family and friends and I give thanks for the technology which enables us to do so. I appreciated having a warm car in which to deliver the Christmas baskets I left at the homes of my children, and the ability to talk with them and even see them via telephone or internet are indeed special gifts. The short videos of my grandchildren opening gifts allow my husband and me to share in the excitement and it may not be a bad thing that we have to focus more on relationships this year.

When I talked with my (all adult) children, it seemed that actions and practices took precedence over objects as the most important things to retain and, I often find it interesting that what was scoffed at when they were living at home often is very high on the list of what needs to be part of their family's Christmas as well. So the crèche was put up with an empty manger until after Christmas Eve Mass, and there had to be panettone – perhaps the only vestige of my husband's



Italian heritage – for breakfast. It matters not that the nativity scene is by Playmobil or Lego, rather than Fontanini; the message is still strongly there.

One of my favourite Christmas group activities is the singing of “The Twelve Days of Christmas”, always done with exaggerated actions and a lot of laughter.

Although this year it will be done in an on-line platform (which will no doubt render the singing hard on the ears), we can still have people take turns with the actions, trusting the integrity of the participants to have them join in at home.



1. On the First day of Christ - mas my true love sent to me a Par - tridge in a Pear Tree.

2. On the Se - cond day of Christ - mas my true love sent to me Two Tur - tle Doves and a Par - tridge in a Pear Tree.

3. On the Third day of Christmas my true love sent to me Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree.

4. Fourth Four Calling birds,

5. On the Fifth day of Christ - mas my true love sent to me, Five Gold Rings, Four Call - ing birds, Three French Hens, Two Tur - tle Doves and a Par - tridge in a Pear Tree.

6. On the Sixth day of Christ - mas my true love sent to me Six Geese a - lay - ing, Five Gold

7. Seventh Seven Swans a - swim - ming,

8. Eighth Eight Maids a - milk - ing,

9. Ninth Nine La - dies danc - ing,

10. Tenth Ten Lords a - leap - ing,

11. E - le - venth E - le - ven Pi - pers pi - ping,

12. Twelfth Twelve Drum - mers drum - ming,

Rings, Four Call - ing birds, Three French Hens, Two Tur - tle Doves and a Par - tridge in a Pear Tree.

Melody of "The Twelve Days of Christmas", from Austin's 1909 arrangement

This song isn't nearly as old as some have thought, dating only reliably to the mid 1700's; unlike the similar "Green Grow the Rushes, O", catechetical coding is not considered a characteristic of this piece and it is thought rather to contain some plays on words from a similar French folksong, La Perdriole, (The Partridge), many of the words having been corrupted in transmission (like a game of broken telephone) so that we no longer know what was the original intent. Also known as "Les Douze Mois" ("The Twelve Months") final verse, as published in de Coussemaker, Chants Populaires des Flamands de France (1856), is :[35]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpuNU3y1KAK>

Le douzièm' jour d'l'année , [the twelfth day of the year]
 Que me donn'rez vous ma mie? [what will you give me, my love?]
 Douze coqs chantants, [twelve singing cockerels]
 Onze plats d'argent, [eleven silver dishes]
 Dix pigeons blancs, [ten white pigeons]
 Neuf bœufs cornus, [nine horned oxen]
 Huit vaches mordants, [eight biting cows]
 Sept moulins à vent, [seven windmills]
 Six chiens courants, [six running dogs]
 Cinq lapins courant par terre, [five rabbits running along the ground]
 Quat' canards volant en l'air, [four ducks flying in the air]
 Trois rameaux de bois, [three wooden branches]
 Deux tourterelles, [two turtle doves]
 Un' perdrix sole, [one lone partridge]
 Qui va, qui vient, qui vole, [who goes, who comes, who flies]
 Qui vole dans les bois. [who flies in the woods]



Wishing you Christmas joy, and peace with an abundance of love and laughter!

Gillian