



## Keeping Christ in Christmas: Sacred Carols

*God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let  
nothing you dismay,*

*Remember, Christ, our Savior, was born on  
Christmas Day;*

*To save us all from Satan's power [when we  
were gone astray.]*

*O tidings of comfort and joy, [comfort  
and joy;*

*O tidings of comfort and joy.*



Yes, it is easy to forget, in our hyper-commercialized, secularized, paganized world, that the real basis for our celebration of “Happy Holidays” is two Christian “Holy Days”: Christmas (December 25, the Nativity of Jesus Christ, the Lord) and Epiphany (the “Revelation of Christ to the Gentiles,” characterized by the worship of the Magi, or Wise Men, celebrated either on January 1, or, more traditionally, January 6).

“Jingle Bells,” “Frosty the Snowman,” “Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer,” and similar traditional secular fare may be fine, fun winter songs, but we should not allow them to displace “the real Reason for the season.” Of course, many of the popular “holiday” songs are not merely innocent paeans to hearth, home, and the wonders of nature, but celebrations of the opportunity for revelry and debauchery, the complete antithesis of the Christmas message.

In our deeply troubled world, where there seems abundant cause for dismay, we can indeed take comfort and joy from the knowledge that “Christ, our Savior, was born on Christmas Day, to save us all from Satan’s power [when we were gone astray.”

Many beautiful renditions of “God Rest ye Merry Gentlemen” have been recorded and can be viewed and heard on YouTube: [The Choir of King’s College, Cambridge](#); [Nat King Cole](#); [Roger Whittaker](#), the British-Kenyan baritone singer-songwriter-whistler; [Libera](#), an angelic boys choir from St. Paul’s parish in London; and [Bing Crosby](#), to name but a very few.

And behold the star which they had seen in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. — The Gospel according to St. Matthew, 2: 9-11.

Numerous artists have made wonderful vocal and instrumental interpretations of “We Three Kings,” a favorite Christmas telling of the pilgrimage of the Magi. Mario Lanza, the great Italian-American opera tenor and movie star of the 1940s and 50s, provides a version [here](#). And here are some additional very different, delightful versions: [Mannheim Steamroller](#) (instrumental); [\(arr. John Rutter\) Cambridge Singers](#); and [Kenny G](#) (instrumental);

As we have noted above, the Holiday (Holy Day) Season extends officially from December 25 to January 6, the Twelve Days of Christmas (hence the carol of the twelve lords a-leaping and the partridge in the pear tree), so there should be no rush to dispense with the carols on December 26, even though the



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on December 25, 2021

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major retailers will be urging us to move on and start following their marketing ploys for (Saint) Valentine's Day. Here, then are twelve sacred carols by consummate artists for your holiday enjoyment and inspiration. (YouTube videos of the first three suggestions are embedded below.) Of course, there is no need to cease singing our glorious Christmas hymns after Epiphany. These and the thousands of other recordings of sacred carols can help us to "Keep Christ in Christmas" in the most important way — by keeping Him in our hearts every day of the year.

Some Favorite Carols for the Twelve Days of Christmas:

- 1) Bing Crosby — ["O Holy Night"](#)
- 2) Nat King Cole — ["Silent Night"](#)
- 3) Anthony Way — ["Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"](#)
- 4) Roberto Alagna — ["Il est né le devin enfant"](#) (Born Today is the Divine Infant." A translation from the French is available [here](#).)
- 5) Kathleen Battle — ["Ave Maria"](#)
- 6) Choir of King's College, Cambridge — ["Myn Lyking"](#) ("My Dear Heart." A translation from the Middle English lyrics is available [here](#).)
- 7) Luciano Pavarotti & Joan Osborne — ["Gesù Bambino"](#) (a translation from Italian is available [here](#).)
- 8) Enya — ["O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"](#)
- 9) Andrea Bocelli — ["Angels We Have Heard on High"](#)
- 10) Charlotte Church — ["Oh Come, All Ye Faithful"](#)
- 11) St. John's College Choir — ["Suo Gân"](#) ("Holy Saviour, yet so tiny," translated from Welsh [here](#))
- 12) Natalie Cole LIVE — ["The First Noel"](#)

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