**Epiphany**

For those who thought that Christmas was over, Epiphany, celebrated on January 6, marks the final celebratory day of the Christian holiday season! While most people begin taking down their Christmas decorations by New Year’s, there is still a full week before many practicing Christians complete their celebrations of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is commonly associated with the day the Three Wise Men arrived at the manger and has several different names throughout history and cultures.

## History of Epiphany:

Epiphany is a Christian feast day celebrating the revelation of God incarnate as Jesus Christ. In Western Christianity, the feast commemorates the visit of the Three Wise Men who followed an angel to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. The day has also been referred to as Three Kings Day and Little Christmas by both Irish and Amish Christians. The Feast of the Epiphany concludes the twelve days of Christmastide and is the traditional end of the Christmas season.

As early as the fourth century, churches of the Eastern Roman Empire were celebrating Christmas on January 6. Those in the West were celebrating on December 25, which is why some places refer to the Feast of the Epiphany as Old Christmas. Since then, many cultures have developed their own names and traditions to celebrate this day. For example, in Scandinavia, they celebrate what they call Little Christmas Eve on December 23. In Spain, children traditionally did not receive their presents on Christmas Day but instead on January 6, in commemoration of the day the Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. In Ireland, they also call Little Christmas Women’s Christmas, because Irish men take on the household duties for the day. Other popular traditions include singing, chalking the door, having one’s house blessed, eating a three kings cake, going to church, and winter swimming. It is also customary for many Christians to remove their Christmas decorations on Epiphany Eve, although other Christian countries historically remove them on Candlemas, the conclusion of the Epiphanytide. According to the first tradition, those who fail to remember to remove their Christmas decorations on Epiphany Eve must leave them untouched until Candlemas.