

Blessing of Homes

Today is the traditional day for blessing homes by marking the lintels of doorways with blessed chalk. The traditional marking commemorates the three magi (traditionally named Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar) and gives the calendar year already begun. The markings for this year are: "20 + C + M + B + 17". A simple prayer for the blessing of homes follows:

Gathering at the scene of the manger in your home, make the sign of the cross and say:

Peace be with this house and with all who live here. Blessed be the name of the Lord, now and forever. During these days of the Christmas season, we keep this feast of Epiphany, celebrating the manifestation of Christ to the Magi, to John in the River Jordan, and to the disciples at the wedding in Cana. Today Christ is manifest to us! Today this home is a holy place.

John 1:1-3, 14 is read. Everyone proceeds from one room to the next, asking God's blessing on all that takes place in that room. When all return to the starting place, they join in the Lord's Prayer and then say:

Lord God of Heaven and earth, You revealed your only begotten Son to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. Fill them with the light of Christ, that their concern for others may reflect Your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

From the Book of Blessings

Epiphany Blessing of a Doorway

The Gospel tells us that the magi found Christ “on entering the house.” The door to your home is a holy threshold. You can bless those who come in and go out by inscribing above the door in chalk the first two numbers of the year + C + M + B + the last two numbers of the year. Tradition tells us that the letters stand for the names of the magi: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. Some also point out that it can also represent “Christus mansionem benedicat,” or “May Christ bless the house.” It is appropriate to bless your door in January – in Latin *janua* means *doorway*, and so the first month is the doorway to the new year. After inscribing the doorway, pray the following prayer:

God of Bethlehem and Cana,
God of Jordan’s leaping waters,
In baptism you bring us into your family.
You wed us and embrace us as your beloved.
May we fill this place
with kindness to one another,
with hospitality to guests,
and with abundant care for every stranger.
By the gentle light of a star,
guide home all who seek you
on the paths of faith, hope and love.
Then we will join the angels
in proclaiming your praise:
Glory in heaven and peace on earth,
now and ever and forever. Amen.