



EPIPHANY HOUSE BLESSING

20 + C + M + B + Year

"Christus Mansionem Benedicat!" – "May Christ Bless This Home!"



For much of the world, Jan. 6 is the Solemnity of the Epiphany, the 12th Day of Christmas, or "little Christmas". For dioceses of the United States we celebrate the Solemnity on Sunday. The "three" magi, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, (names that come from tradition) followed the star to Bethlehem to adore the newborn King. They brought gifts of gold because the Child was a King, frankincense because the Child was God, & myrrh because the Child was destined to die to free the world from everlasting death. Since before the Middle Ages, Catholics would bless their homes by inscribing with blessed chalk the initials of the three kings above their doorways.

This tradition symbolizes the family's commitment to welcome Christ into their home throughout the year. It wasn't very long ago, perhaps 100 years ago or so, but some ethnic parishes continue this today - when priests would walk through the parish neighborhoods, holy water and chalk in hand, blessing homes & marking the portals. Families can continue this tradition and celebrate the Epiphany with food, gifts, chalk and a little holy water. On the Epiphany, family members can exchange a small present with one another. The highlight of the celebration is the house blessing. A procession can be held with candles to each of the rooms of the house & family members can take turns sprinkling them with holy water. Different family members can inscribe the initials, crosses and date. All the doorways of the house can be blessed but the basic custom is to bless the main entrance. A Three Kings cake or a "Rosca" or some other treat can then be shared. It is traditions like these that can help to build our Roman Catholic Identity.

Here is one form of an Epiphany House Blessing:

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R: Amen

Leader: Peace be to this home and: to all who dwell here, in the name of the Lord.

R: Blessed be God forever.

Leader: A reading from the holy gospel according to St. John

R: Glory to You, O Lord.

Leader: In the beginning was the Word & the Word was with God, & the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, & without him nothing came to be... And the Word became flesh & dwelt among us, & we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-3.14)

(After the prayers of the blessing are recited, each room of the home is sprinkled with holy water. The year and initials of the Magi are inscribed above the doors with the blessed chalk, Casper, Melchior & Balthasar, with the first two numerals of the year preceding the C & the last two numerals of the year placed after the B. The inscription can also be written on a piece of paper and placed above the doors.)

20 + C + M + B + 26

As you inscribe the initials say: "Christus Mansionem Benedicat" which means "May Christ Bless This Home!"

All: Lord God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only begotten Son to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this home and all who live here & visit here. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness and the keeping of your law. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our love for each other may go out to all we meet. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.