

Blessing in Homes at Epiphany

“Chalking the Door”

There is a tradition on the Feast of the Epiphany for the faithful to have their homes blessed. We invite you to adopt this custom in your family. The family gathers to ask God’s blessing on their home and on those who live in or visit the home. It is an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in your home, your comings and goings, your conversations, your work and play, your joys and sorrows.

There is an English tradition of using chalk to write the following at the home’s entrance: 20 + C + M + B + 19. The letters C, M, B have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus mansionem benedictat*, “May Christ bless this house.” The “+” signs represent the cross and 2019 is the year.

Blessing the Chalk (in church)

Priest: Our help is in the name of the Lord;

People: The maker of heaven and earth.

Priest: The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in;

People: From this time forth for evermore.

Let us pray.

Loving God, +bless this chalk which you have created, that it may be helpful to your people; and grant that through the invocation of your most Holy Name that we who use it in faith to write upon the doorstep of our home the names of your holy ones Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, may receive health of body and protection of soul for all who dwell in or visit our home; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Instructions for Blessing the Home

Using the chalk blessed at church, mark your door or doorstep of your home as follows:

20 + C + M + B + 19

While saying:

The three wise men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed the star of God’s Son who became human two thousand and nineteen years ago. May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

Then offer the following prayer:

Visit, O blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence. Bless all who live or visit here with the gift of your love; and grant that we may manifest your love to each other and to all whose lives we touch. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.

“Chalking the door” is a way to celebrate and literally mark the occasion of the Epiphany and God’s blessing of our lives and home. With time the chalk will fade. As it does, we let the meaning of the symbols we have written sink into the depths of our heart and be manifest in our words and action the Latin words, *Christus mansionem benedictat*, “May Christ bless this house.”