Epiphany Inscription over the Doorway of the Home

20 + C + M + B + 19

The letters have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the Three Magi: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. They also abbreviate the Latin words “Christus mansionem benedicat.” “May Christ bless the house.” The letters recall the day on which the inscription is made, as well as the purpose of blessing.

The crosses represent the protection of the Precious Blood of Christ, whom we invoke, and the holiness of the Three Magi sanctified by their adoration of the Infant Christ. The inscription is made above the front door, so that all who enter and depart this year may enjoy God’s blessing. The month of January still bears the name of the Roman god Janus, the doorkeeper of heaven and protector of the beginning and end of things. This blessing “christens” the ancient Roman observance of the first month. The inscription is made of chalk, a product of clay, which recalls the human nature taken by the Adorable and Eternal Word of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

To bless your home this Epiphany, use the following Prayer Service.
**Introductory Rites**

_The family and their friends gather at the front door of the home as a suitable song is sung by all, for example, “O Come All Ye Faithful.”_

_The leader greets those present._

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

**All: Amen.**

Peace be with this house and with all who live here.
Blessed be God for ever.

**All: Blessed be God for ever.**

Today we gather in this holy place
to recognize that Christ dwells here.
As the Three Kings followed the light of the star,
we too follow the light of Christ to be a place of welcome,
a people of generosity, and a dwelling place for God.

The home is called the domestic church.
It is where we first learn to pray and search for Christ,
to forgive and receive forgiveness,
to offer our gifts, and to bless each other.

Let us then ask God to open our hearts
so that, as the doors of this home
are opened to neighbor and traveler,
this family may be a source of welcome for all in need
and a place where Christ is found.

**Chalking the Door**

_The leader continues._

As the words of the Gospel of John are proclaimed, let us consecrate this door and the home it protects to Christ who is the sheepgate. Let this door be the threshold that leads both ways to the blessings and goodness of God.
As the Scripture below is proclaimed, the oldest and the youngest persons of the household may take turns inscribing “20 + C + M + B + 19” on the outside lintel of the front door.

**Reading of the Word of God**

A reader may slowly read the following text of sacred Scripture from the family Bible as the inscription is written over the door – John 1:13-14.

In the beginning was the Word, *(inscribe 2)*
and the Word was with God, *(inscribe 0)*
and the Word was God. *(inscribe +)*
He was in the beginning with God. *(inscribe C)*
All things came to be through him, *(inscribe +)*
and without him nothing came to be. *(inscribe M)*
And the Word became flesh *(inscribe +)*
and made his dwelling among us, *(inscribe B)*
and we saw his glory, *(inscribe 1)*
the glory as of the Father’s only Son, *(inscribe 9)*
full of grace and truth.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Placing of the Epiphany Card over the Door**

As the following Scripture passage is proclaimed, another family member places an Epiphany card over the front door on the inside of the house.

The reader continues as the card is placed *(Matthew 2:9-11).*

And behold,
the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them,
until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.
They were overjoyed at seeing the star,
and on entering the house
they saw the child with Mary his mother.
They prostrated themselves and did him homage.

**Procession into the Home**

Those gathered sing an appropriate song, such as “We Three Kings,” as they each receive a lit candle and follow the family into the main gathering space of the home.
Litany

The leader continues.

As this household has been given the light of Christ through baptism, let us pray that this home shines radiantly with the love of God to be a shelter of peace for all who visit and dwell in it.

A reader leads the litany.

Our response is: Make us your dwelling place, Lord.

With Mary, and Joseph: Make us your dwelling place, Lord.
With Anne and Joachim:
With Elizabeth and Zechariah:
With Anna and Simeon:
With the shepherds and the kings:
With all the angels and saints:
With all holy men and women:
For the sick and the hungry:
For the homeless and the lonely:
For friend and stranger:
For neighbor and traveler:
In our hopes and dreams:
In our faults and failings:
In times of joy and peace:
In times of sadness and grief:
When anger and fear confuse us:
When pride and pain confound us:
When the plans we make must change:
When you call us home by a different way:

The leader continues.

Christ taught us to call upon the Father, and so we pray:

Our Father...

Prayer of Blessing

Those gathered may place a hand on the shoulder of the person near them as the leader says the following prayer.
Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation,
for through your goodness
you have given us shelter from the cold
and the light of your Word to brighten the darkness of night.
We come to you bearing no gifts
for everything we have is a gift from you.
All we can offer is our love for each other
and our faith in your Son.
Transform, then, these humble gifts into an epiphany,
a revelation of your divine presence,
and bless this house and all who come to it.
May this home and this family be a light
for all who are lost and afraid,
a place of peace and hospitality for those in need,
and a sign that you are indeed God with us.
And when our long journey has ended,
lead us all by the star of your mercy
that we may come home to you
to the dwelling place you have prepared for us in heaven.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

All may sign themselves with holy water. If desired, those present may go to various rooms of the home to sprinkle them with holy water.

Concluding Prayer
The leader says the following:

May God bless us and keep us.
May his face shine upon us and be gracious to us.
May God look upon us kindly and give us peace.

All: Amen.

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

All: Amen.

All sing an appropriate song, such as “Joy to the World.”
Dear brothers and sisters,
the glory of the Lord has shone upon us,
and shall ever be manifest among us,
until the day of his return.

Through the rhythms of times and seasons
let us celebrate the mysteries of salvation.

Let us recall the year's culmination,
the Easter Triduum of the Lord:
his last supper, his crucifixion, his burial,
and his rising celebrated
between the evening of the twenty-first day of April
and the evening of the twenty-third day of April,
Easter Sunday being on the twenty-fourth
day of April.

Each Easter — as on each Sunday —
the Holy Church makes present the great and
saving deed
by which Christ has for ever conquered sin
and death.
From Easter are reckoned all the days we
keep holy.

Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent,
will occur on the ninth day of March.

Pentecost, joyful conclusion of the season of
Easter,
will be celebrated on the twelfth day of June.

And, this year the First Sunday of Advent
will be
on the twenty-seventh day of November.

Likewise the pilgrim Church proclaims the
passover of Christ
in the feasts of the holy Mother of God,
in the feasts of the Apostles and Saints,
and in the commemoration of the faithful
departed.

To Jesus Christ, who was, who is, and who is
to come,
Lord of time and history,
be endless praise, for ever and ever.

Amen.