

THE CHALKING AND BLESSING OF HOMES FOR THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

The traditional date of Epiphany is January 6, but in the United States it is celebrated on the Sunday between January 2 and January 8. Usually, a priest would lead the following ritual, but in the absence of a priest, the head of the house may lead the family.

The leader begins with the sign of the cross and the invocation of the Trinity, and all reply, "Amen."

L: Let us praise God, who fills our hearts and homes with peace. Blessed be God forever.

R/. Blessed be God forever.

L: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling place among us. It is Christ who enlightens our hearts and homes with his love. May all who enter this home find Christ's light and love.

Read the story of the Visitation of the Magi, from Matthew 2:1-12.

After the reading, the intercessions are said:

L: The Son of God made his home among us. With thanks and praise let us call upon him.

R/. Stay with us, Lord.

L: Lord Jesus Christ, with Mary and Joseph you formed the Holy Family: remain in our home, that we may know you as our guest and honor you as our Head.

We pray:

R/. Stay with us, Lord.

L: Lord Jesus Christ, you had no place to lay your head, but in the spirit of poverty accepted the hospitality of your friends: grant that through our help the homeless may obtain proper housing. We pray:

R/. Stay with us, Lord.

L: Lord Jesus Christ, the three kings presented their gifts to you in praise and adoration: grant that those living in this house may use their talents and abilities to your greater glory. We pray:

R/. Stay with us, Lord.

After the intercessions, the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father..."

The leader says the prayer of blessing with hands joined:

L: O Lord, Almighty God, bless this house that it may become a shelter of health, chastity, self-conquest, humility, goodness, mildness, obedience to the commandments, and thanksgiving to God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Upon this house and those who dwell herein, may Your blessing remain forever, through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

After the blessing, inscribe the doorpost (using the blessed chalk) with the following symbol...

20 * C + M + B + xx

*...where the * represents the Star of Bethlehem, "C.M.B." represents the Magi and the invocation "Christus mansionem benedicat" (Christ bless this house), the three crosses represent the Holy Trinity, and "xx" are the last two digits of the year. For 2021, the inscription should read 20*C+M+B+21. The inscription is usually done by the leader, but it can also be done by the children of the household.*

After the inscription, all make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

L: May Christ Jesus dwell with us, keep us from all harm, and make us one in mind and heart, now and forever.

R/. Amen.

End the celebration with a suitable song, for example, "O Come, All Ye Faithful" or "We Three Kings."



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*Adapted from the USCCB website
"Blessing of the Home and Household for Epiphany"*

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