

Epiphany House Blessing (chalking the door)

The family gathers to ask God for the blessing of their home and that of those who inhabit or visit it. It is an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in our home, in our chores, comings and goings, our conversations, our work and games, our sorrows and joys.

A traditional way to do this is to use chalk to write on the home's entry

20 + C + M + B + 24.

The letters C, M, B have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three wise men: Gaspar (Caspar in Latin), Melchor and Balthasar.

They are also short for the Latin words **Christus mansionem benedicat**, meaning "May Christ bless this house." The symbol "+" represents the cross and 2024 is the year.

Instructions for each family to bless their home

Using the blessed chalk, write on the lintel of your front door the following:

20 + C + M + B + 24

...as you recite:

The three Wise Men, Gaspar, Melchor and Balthasar followed the star of the Son of God who became a man over two thousand years ago. May the Lord bless this home and be with us during this new year.

Amen.

Family Leader then offers the following prayer:

We ask you, Lord, to bless this house and all those who live in it: may there always be love, peace and forgiveness in this home; grants its inhabitants sufficiency of material goods and abundance of virtues; who are welcoming and sensitive to the needs of others; that in joy they praise you, Lord, and in sadness they seek you; at work they find the joy of your help, and in need they feel close to your comfort; when they go out, enjoy your company, and when they return, experience the joy of having you as a guest; May this house truly be a domestic church where the Word of God is light and food, and may the peace of Christ reign in his hearts until one day he arrives in your heavenly home.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Indelible Blessing: Chalking the door of the home is a way of celebrating and literally leaving a mark on the occasion of Epiphany and God's blessing on our lives and homes.

Over time, the chalk will fade. As it does, we will let the meaning of the Latin words sink deep into our hearts and manifest itself in our words and actions: *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless this house."