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EPIPHANY HOUSE BLESSING



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Epiphany House Blessing

“Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain now enclosed in a tiny body.”

- **St. Peter Chrysologus**

In early January, when most people have taken down Christmas decorations and transported trees to the curb, Catholics are still celebrating Christmas. At the end of the traditional Twelve Days of Christmas, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Epiphany, which commemorates the visit of the Magi and the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. Among the many centuries-old traditions associated with this feast, the annual Three Kings House Blessing is one of the most beloved.

Since outside of villages, it is virtually impossible for priests to visit all homes in a parish, the Church provides a form which the laity may use to perform the blessing. Someone in the family—ideally the father or head of household—leads the blessing service.

There are two forms of blessing that may be used. One can be found in the *Book of Blessings*, published by the U.S. Bishops Conference. It is given, as well, on the Bishops Conference website at:

[Blessing of the Home and Household on Epiphany](#)

The second is the traditional form involving the use of blessed chalk and holy water. Since it is extensive and not easily obtained it is given below, from the revised ritual of 1964.

The house blessing is reminiscent of the Passover (*Exodus 12:1-28*), in which the Israelite houses were marked, and therefore protected, with the blood of a lamb. When we bless our houses now, we are marking our homes as Christian and asking God to bless our homes and our families.

Through the Epiphany house blessing, we are welcoming the Christ Child into our hearts and our homes as He blesses our upcoming year. May you have a blessed Epiphany, and may the Lord always reign in your house.



Blessing of Homes on Epiphany

Adapted from the *Roman Ritual*, 1964

If a priest is not present, another baptized person may perform this house blessing.

Priest or head of household: God's peace be in this home.

All: And in all who live here.

Priest or head of household: Magi from the East came to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; and opening their treasure chests they presented Him with precious gifts: gold for the great King, incense for the true God, and myrrh in symbol of His burial. Alleluia.

Canticle of the Magnificat, Luke 1.46-55

Priest or head of household: "My soul extols the Lord;

All: And my spirit leaps for joy in God my Savior.

Priest or head of household: How graciously He looked upon His lowly maid! Oh, see, from this hour onward age after age will call me blessed!

All: How sublime is what He has done for me, the Mighty One, whose name is 'Holy'!

Priest or head of household: From age to age He visits those who worship Him in reverence.

All: His arm achieves the mastery: He routs the haughty and proud of heart.

Priest or head of household: He puts down princes from their thrones, and exalts the lowly;

All: He fills the hungry with blessings, and sends away the rich with empty hands.

Priest or head of household: He has taken by the hand His servant Israel, and mercifully kept His faith,

All: As He had promised our fathers with Abraham and his posterity forever and evermore."

Priest or head of household: Glory be to the Father.

All: As it was in the beginning.



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Meanwhile the home is sprinkled with holy water and incensed. At the end of the Magnificat the antiphon is repeated.

Then the priest or head of household says the Our Father (the rest inaudibly until:)

Priest or head of household: And lead us not into temptation.

All: But deliver us from evil.

Priest or head of household: Many shall come from Saba.

All: Bearing gold and incense.

Priest or head of household: Lord, heed my prayer.

All: And let my cry be heard by you.

Priest or head of household: The Lord be with you.

All: May he also be with you.

Let us pray. God, who on this day revealed your only-begotten Son to all nations by the guidance of a star, grant that we who now know you by faith may finally behold you in your heavenly majesty; through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Responsory: Be enlightened and shine forth, O Jerusalem, for your light is come; and upon you is risen the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary.

Priest or head of household: Nations shall walk in your light, and kings in the splendor of your birth.

All: And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

Let us pray. Lord God almighty, bless + this home, and under its shelter let there be health, chastity, self-conquest, humility, goodness, mildness, obedience to your commandments, and thanksgiving to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. May your blessing remain always in this home and on those who live here; through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.



The Blessing of the Doorway

Normally, the house blessing is coupled with the blessing of the doorway. Some churches will provide parishioners with blessed chalk after the Epiphany Masses. Otherwise, the faithful can bring chalk to their parish, asking the priest to bless it.

With the blessed chalk, the priest or head of the household writes the year and the initials CMB above the door as illustrated for 2021:

20+C+M+B+21

The initials have two meanings. In the historical sense they refer to the three names traditionally attributed to the Magi – **Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar**. Thus, the blessing is called the Three Kings Blessing.

Spiritually, however, they refer to the blessing itself, represented by the Latin prayer “**Christus mansionem benedicat**” (May Christ bless this house). Each Cross + recalls the reason for the Incarnation, as did the gift of myrrh of the Magi.

* If it is unsafe to write above the doorway, you may place the blessing to the side of the door. It is not necessary to bless every door, but if possible, all exterior doors should be blessed, whether on the inside or outside jamb.

