



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. Then they opened their treasures and offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. -Matthew 2:10-11

It is a long standing Catholic tradition at Epiphany to ask God's blessings on our homes. Because the Wise Men were visitors of the Christ Child in His home we ask God's assistance in our own commitment to Christian hospitality throughout this year; namely to welcome visitors as we would welcome Christ. The prominent, visible sign of the blessing we ask is made by writing above the front door of the house with chalk that has been blessed for this purpose. The following inscription is made: **20 + C + M + B + 18**. The numbers are for the current year of 2018. The letters have two meanings. 1) They are the initials of the traditional names of the Three Wise Men: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. 2) They also abbreviate the Latin phrase *Christus mansionem benedicat* which means "May Christ bless the house." The crosses represent the holiness of the Wise Men 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. We use chalk to write with because it is a product of clay and recalls the lowly humanity (cf. Gen. 2:7) taken on by Jesus in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (*Note: The chalk, having been blessed, is now a sacramental and should be treated or disposed of with the same dignity as other objects that have been blessed such as a rosary, medal, etc. Unused chalk should be buried in the ground*)

Procedure for blessing a house at Epiphany

Gather the members of the household at the front door. Using the blessed chalk provided write the inscription 20+C+M+B+18 on the lintel above the front door. This may be done on the inside, outside or both. It may also be done above other doors in the house. After the inscription has been made, make the sign of the cross. The following is recited out loud by a leader, preferably led by the father of the household:

Leader: From the east came the Magi to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; and opening their treasures they offered precious gifts: gold for the great King, incense for the true God, and myrrh in symbol of His burial.

All: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for He has looked with favor on His lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is His Name. He has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation. He has shown the strength of His arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has come to the help of His servant Israel for He has remembered His promise of mercy, the promise He made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever. Glory be to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.

All: From the east came the Magi to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; and opening their treasures they offered precious gifts: gold for the great King, incense for the true God, and myrrh in symbol of His burial.

Leader: We ask Your blessing, O Lord, almighty God, on our home so that in it there may be health, purity, victorious strength, humility, goodness and mildness, obedience to God's laws, and acts of thanks to God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, and may this blessing remain upon this house, and upon all who dwell in it. We ask this through Christ Our Lord, Amen.