



Catholic Household Blessings For Epiphany

It is a venerable Catholic custom for parish priests to bless water, chalk, gold, incense, myrrh, and the homes of the faithful during Epiphany. When a priest is unavailable, the father of a household may lead the blessing of the family home at Epiphany, as well as the "chalking of the doors." Rites of blessing are taken from Weller's 1952 *Rituale*.

BLESSING OF HOMES on Epiphany

As the priest enters the home he says:

P: God's peace be in this home.

All: And in all who live here.

Antiphon

P: 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.

The home is sprinkled with holy water (incensed if possible), while the Magnificat is recited.

Canticle of Mary (Magnificat)

P: "My soul * extols the Lord;

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

P: 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'!

P: 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.

P: 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.

P: 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."

P: Glory be to the Father.

All: As it was in the beginning.

At the end of the Magnificat, the Antiphon is repeated. The priest then says the Our Father (inaudibly until):

P: And lead us not into temptation.

All: But deliver us from evil.

P: Many shall come from Saba.

All: Bearing gold and incense.

P: Lord, heed my prayer.

All: And let my cry be heard by you.

P: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

P: 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.

P: 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.

P: 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.


BLESSING OF CHALK on Epiphany (Priest only)

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

P: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

P: Bless,  O Lord God, this creature chalk to render it helpful to men. Grant that they who use it in faith and with it inscribe upon the entrance of their homes the names of thy saints, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, may through their merits and intercession enjoy health of body and protection of soul. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

It is sprinkled with holy water.

CHALKING THE DOOR

Using blessed chalk, the priest (or father of the family) inscribes the following over the front door of the home:

The first two digits of the calendar year, followed by "+ C + M + B +", followed by the last two digits of the year.

- For example, in 2018 the inscription would read: **20 + C + M + B + 18**

The letters have a double signification: that of the traditional initials of the Magi (Caspar, Malchior, Balthazar) who visited Jesus in His first home, and an abbreviation of the Latin *Christus mansionem benedicat*: "Christ bless the house." The fourfold "+" represents the Cross of Christ's Sacrifice, and the fourfold witness of the Evangelists.

A prayer may be recited during the inscription:

P: May all who come to our home this year rejoice to find Christ living among us; and may we seek and serve, in everyone we meet, that same Jesus who is your Incarnate Word, now and forever.

All: Amen.

P: God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only-begotten One to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

P: Loving God, bless this household. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness, and abiding in your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.