

The Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord

Epiphany means “manifestation.” The first Epiphany was the visit of the Magi to adore the Christ Child. The Magi, who were actually scholars and scientists, came to be associated with kings. Their gifts reveal this holy Child’s identity; *gold* for Christ’s Kingship, *incense* for His divinity, and *myrrh* for His sacrifice on the Cross.

The Feast of Epiphany is traditionally celebrated as the *twelfth night of Christmas*, on January 6th. In the United States, this feast has been moved to Sunday, January 5, 2025. In many families, the king figurines are moved a bit closer to the nativity scene every day from Christmas Day until Epiphany. Moreover, it is traditional for parish priests to bless water, chalk, and incense on the eve of Epiphany, and use them for the blessing of homes the next day.

The blessing of homes (schools, places of employment, etc.) on Epiphany revives the beautiful custom of making our homes sacramentals. Sacramentals make us more mindful, receptive and cooperative with God’s grace. This blessing also reminds us that Christ is the One Who enlightens our hearts and homes with His love. He is the source of our hope, our comfort and our joy.

Marking doorways with blessed chalk is also a witness of faith. Use the chalk to mark above the main door and, over all exterior doors:

- Numerals to consecrate the New Year.
- Initials to remind us of the legendary names of the Magi—Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar—and also to represent the Latin motto: ***Christus mansionem benedicat*** (May Christ bless this house)
- Four crosses to represent the four seasons.
- Example for the year **2025: 20 + C + M + B + 25**



2025 Epiphany Blessing of the Home

If a priest is present, he leads; otherwise, the head of the family is the leader. A suitable song may be sung. The leader makes the Sign of the Cross, and all reply, “Amen.”

(Leader) Let us praise God, who fills our hearts and homes with peace. Blessed be God forever.

R/. Blessed be God forever.

(Leader) 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.

(Leader reads Luke 19:1-9) Listen to the words of the holy Gospel according to Luke:

Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house.” And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, “He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner.” But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham.”

Leader: The Son of God made His home among us. With thanks and praise let us call upon Him.

R/. Stay with us, Lord.

Leader: 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.

Leader: 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.

Leader: 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.***

The leader says the prayer of blessing with hands joined:

Lord God of heaven and earth, You revealed Your only-begotten Son to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. Fill them (us) with the light of Christ, that their (our) concern for others may reflect Your love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the Sign of the Cross and praying:

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

R/. Amen.

All present go from room to room, blessing each room with holy water and praying the following prayer:

Blessed be all the rooms of this home. May each of them be holy and filled with the spirit of *happiness and peace, love and affection.* May the spirit of *pardon and affection* reside with us and be always ready to heal our divisions. May the spirits of *joy and laughter, hope and faith, playfulness and prayer, compassion and love* be perpetual guests in our home. May God's holy blessing rest upon us all, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As the leader inscribes the initials of the three Magi above the exterior doorways for the year 2025, using the blessed chalk,

20 + C + M + B + 25 the following prayer is prayed:

Blessed be this doorway. May all who come to our home this year rejoice to find Christ living among us as we welcome them with *respect and kindness.* May all our comings and goings be under the seal of God's loving care. May we *seek and serve*, in everyone we meet, Jesus, Who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song, for example, "O Come, All Ye Faithful" or "We Three Kings."



Blessing of Epiphany Chalk by a priest

V. Our help is in the Name of the Lord

R. Who made Heaven and earth.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

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 the saints, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, may through their merits and intercession enjoy health of body and protection of soul. Through Christ our Lord. (*Chalk is sprinkled with holy water.*)

R. Amen.

(Rev. Philip T. Weller, *Roman Ritual: The Blessings*, Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1946, p. 39).

Prepared by the Office for Catechesis & Evangelization, Diocese of La Crosse