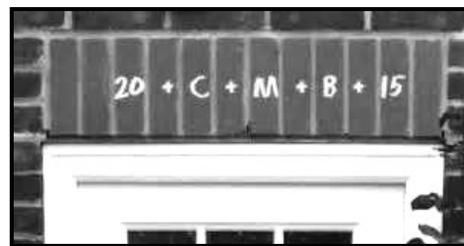
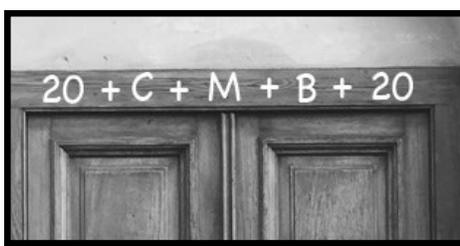
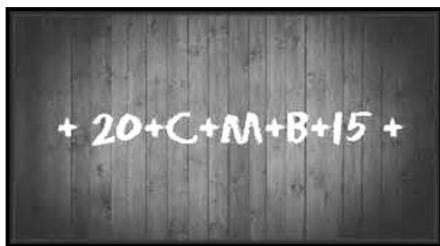


Epiphany House Blessing with Chalk



by Michael K. Marsh

The Church has a custom of blessing homes on the Feast of the Epiphany and the week following. Family and friends gather to ask God's blessing on their homes and those who live in or visit the home. It is an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in our home, our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows.

The traditional way is to use chalk blessed during the Epiphany liturgy and write above the home's entryway, 20 + C + M + B + 21. The letters C, M, B have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless the house." The "+" signs represent the cross and 2021 is the year.

Instructions for Blessing the Home

Using the blessed chalk mark the lintel of your front door (or front porch step) as follows:

20 + C + M + B + 21 saying:

The three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed the star of God's Son who became human two thousand and sixteen years ago.

May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the New Year. Amen.

Then say the following prayer:

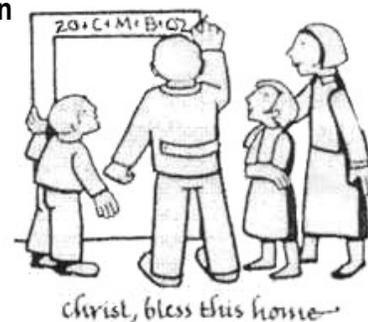
Visit, O blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence.

Bless all who live or visit here with the gift of your love;

and grant that we may manifest your love to each other and to all whose lives we touch.

May we grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you;

guide, comfort, and strengthen us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.



At times God has commanded his people to mark their doors. The Israelites marked their doors with the lamb's blood on the night of the Passover. A similar command was given with the Shema Yisrael:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart ... and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-6, 9)

"Chalking the door" is a way to celebrate and literally mark the occasion of the Epiphany and God's blessing of our lives and home. With time the chalk will fade. As it does we let the meaning of the symbols written sink into the depths of our heart and be manifest in our words and actions.

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Blessing of the Chalk

The chalk is traditionally blessed during the parish Sunday Epiphany Mass and distributed to families.

V. Our help is the name of the Lord:

R. The maker of heaven and earth.

V. The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in:

R. From this time forth for evermore.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your Spirit

Let us pray.

Loving God, bless this chalk which you have created, that it may be helpful to your people;

and grant that through the invocation of your most Holy Name

all who use it in faith to write upon the doors of their homes the names of your saints, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar,

may receive health of body and protection of soul for all who dwell in or visit their home; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.