

From the Desk of Father Jeff



There is a beautiful tradition in the Church to bless Christian homes each year on the Epiphany (January 6th.) This tradition is followed by many of the faithful by paying tribute to the Three Wise Men who visited the home of the Holy Family in Bethlehem on the very first Epiphany to give honor to the baby Jesus.

This blessing does not have to be done by a priest or deacon. If you have not observed this tradition in the past, I am sharing this blessing with you especially if you would like to start a new family tradition.

There are many different Epiphany blessings, but this blessing comes from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

We have provided blessed chalk for you to use at the church entrance this weekend.

Epiphany Blessing for Homes:

*When all have gathered, 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.

Response: Blessed be God forever.

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

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.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, 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."

The intercessions are then said:

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

All Respond: 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 then says the following 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. Amen.

If you wish, as some families do, you can inscribe in chalk, the following inscription over the lintel of your front door: **20+C+M+B+25** representing the year 2025 and the names of the Three Wise Men, Casper, Melchior and Balthazar. "Chalking the door" is a way to celebrate and to mark the occasion of the Epiphany and God's blessing of our lives and home. The letters are also an abbreviation for "Christus Mansionem Benedicat" which means "May Christ bless this dwelling."