

The Epiphany Blessing

There are many church traditions surrounding Advent, Christmas, Saints Days and Epiphany. I am sharing one of my favourites with you – chalking of the doors.



Epiphany (also known as Twelfth Night, *Theophany*, or Three Kings Day) is the celebration of the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus. This time in the church calendar also marks the occasion of a time-honoured Christian tradition of “chalking the doors.” The formula for the ritual is simple: take some blessed chalk of any colour and write the following above the entrance of your home:

20 + C + M + B + 21.

The letters have two meanings.

First, they represent the initials of the Magi — Caspar, Malchior, and Balthazar — who came to visit Jesus in His first home.

Second, they also abbreviate the Latin phrase, *Christus mansionem benedicat*: “May Christ bless the house.” The “+” signs represent the cross, and the “20” at the beginning and the “21” at the end mark the year. Taken together, this inscription is performed as a petition for Christ to bless those homes so marked and that He stay with those who dwell therein or who visit throughout the entire year.

Practising traditions like the chalking of the doors helps us to live our faith more visibly in our everyday lives and serve as an outward sign of our dedication of every part of our lives to Jesus. We are also reminded this year, more than ever, that our homes are sacred spaces, and we give thanks that we have somewhere warm and comfortable in which to live. For me, this thankfulness has never been more acute than in recent times, working with the police and the council to find housing for people who have fallen on difficult times and who have been sleeping rough in and about the town. Please continue to pray for everyone involved.

Chalking doors of a home encourages us all as Christians to dedicate our homelife to God and to others. Seeing the symbols over our doors can help to remind us, while passing in and out on our daily routines, that our homes and all those who

dwell there or visit belong to Christ. The symbols also serve as a reminder of welcome the Magi gave to Jesus. We should strive to be as welcoming to all who come to our homes to visit us!

Here is a link to an archive article in the Church Times about the tradition:
<https://tinyurl.com/yy8dsbep>

So, I have blessed some chalk and printed out the prayer and instructions onto small flyers and have left them in a basket outside the side door of the church for anyone who would like to collect some and to start the New Year 2021 with a blessing and thanksgiving for the homes we live in. They will be there until Sunday.

During these past months we have had the opportunity to bring Jesus into our homes in ways we have never done before. You may not wish to chalk the doors, but you may wish instead to light a candle and simply say the same prayers to bless your home and set your intention for the coming year.

In prayer and care.

Revd Kyla

The Blessing Prayers

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. Amen.

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 live here. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Saviour. Amen.

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 Saviour. Amen.