

EPIPHANY 2021 – Chalking of the Doors

In various parts of the world, the Epiphany is marked with the time-honoured tradition of “chalking the doors.” The formula for the ritual is simple: take chalk of any colour (ideally blessed by a priest on the Feast of the Epiphany) and write 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 the place where he was born. 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 request for Christ to bless the building so marked and that He stay with those who dwell or work therein throughout the entire year.

We start in the Entrance Hall

Leader: Peace be to this place.

All: And to all who dwell and work herein.

Leader: From the east came the Magi to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; and opening their treasures they offered precious gifts: gold for the great King, incense for the true God, and myrrh in symbol of His burial.

Reader (Matthew 2:1-12):

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.’ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.” ’

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.’ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Leader: From the east came the Magi to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; and opening their treasures they offered precious gifts: gold for the great King, incense for the true God, and myrrh in symbol of His burial.

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All: My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.
The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age, on those who fear him.
He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.
He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his sons for ever.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia

Leader: From the east came the Magi to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; and opening their treasures they offered precious gifts: gold for the great King, incense for the true God, and myrrh in symbol of His burial.

All: Our Father...

We head just outside for the prayers of blessing.

Leader: Let us pray.

May all who come to this home in 2021 rejoice to find Christ living among us; and may we seek and serve, in everyone we meet, that same Jesus who is the incarnate Word. Amen.

God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only-begotten Son to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this home. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Loving God, bless this family and those we hope to welcome over the course of this year. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness, and abiding in your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

After these prayers are recited, we will bless the front door and the Entrance Hall with Holy Water. The initials of the Magi are inscribed upon the front door with chalk (ideally blessed by a priest). May God be with us in our work, studies and family life this year as we seek to do his will: in word, in deed, in love.