

FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Sunday, we celebrate the Epiphany. What does Epiphany mean? It means a revelation, or unveiling, or appearing. It is the day we celebrate the mystery of the revelation, or the unveiling, of Christ's kingship and his divinity. We celebrate the appearing of Christ the King, Christ the divine Son of God.

The Church has a custom of blessing homes, as well as proclaiming the date of Easter, on the Feast of the Epiphany and the weeks 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. One way of doing this is to use chalk blessed during the Epiphany and write above the home's entryway, 20 + C + M + B + 24. 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 2024 is the year.

Marking the doorway to one's home is rooted in the Old Testament. Holy Scripture reminds us that God has at times commanded his people to mark their doors. The Israelites marked their doors with the lamb's blood on the night of the Passover (Exodus 12:7). A similar command was given with the Shema: "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).

Here is a very family-friendly Epiphany home blessing. After gathering at the front door of your home, using the blessed chalk, mark the lintel of your front door, or front porch step, or a wall within your home as follows: 20 + C + M + B + 24. While marking, say: "The three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed the star of God's Son who became human two thousand and twenty-four 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."

If you would like myself and Fr. Siffredus to come and help you with the blessing, just let us know! I leave you with a quote from St. Peter Chrysologus about today's Feast. "Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain now enclosed in a tiny body. As they look, they believe and do not question, as their symbolic gifts bear witness: incense for God, gold for a king, myrrh for one who is to die."

Peace,