

EPIPHANY HOUSE BLESSING – 2016

Every year the Carmelite Pre-novitiate Community at Carith House in Chicago, IL, on the Feast of the Epiphany blesses their home.

You are invited to adopt this custom in your family. The family gathers to ask God's blessing on their home and on 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.

A traditional way of doing this is to use chalk to write above the home's entrance, 20 + C + M + B + 16. 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. The 20 at the beginning and the 16 at the end is the year (2016).

ITEMS NEEDED

Chalk and a small bottle of holy water. Gather with family members, friends, and perhaps some neighbors at the front door.

BLESSING THE CHALK

LEADER: *Our help is the name of the Lord:*

ALL: **The maker of heaven and earth.**

LEADER: *The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in:*

ALL: **From this time forth for evermore.**

LEADER: *Let us pray.*

ALL: **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 that we who use it in faith to write upon the door of our home the names of your holy ones Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, may receive health of body and protection of soul for all who dwell in or visit our home; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

BLESSING THE EXTERIOR OF THE HOME

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

20 + C + M + B + 16

while saying:

ALL: **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 offer the following prayer:

LEADER: *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.

ALL: Amen.

BLESSING THE INTERIOR OF THE HOME

After entering the house, say:

LEADER: *Let us pray: Christus mansionem benedicat.*

ALL: May Christ bless this house. Amen.

LEADER: *A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.*

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength. These commandments I give you are to be in your hearts. Place them on the doorframes of your home and on your entry gate.

The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Each room is sprinkled with holy water.

Living room:

LEADER: *Bring us to live with you one day in heaven.*

ALL: Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Kitchen:

LEADER: *You prepare for us a rich feast.*

ALL: Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Dining room:

LEADER: *Feed us at the heavenly banquet.*

ALL: Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Bedrooms:

LEADER: *In you alone we rest securely.*

ALL: Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Bathroom:

LEADER: *You cleanse us from every impurity.*

ALL: Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

All return to the front door to pray together.

ALL: Our Father...

All are sprinkled with holy water.

LEADER: *Bless this household through all days to come, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever and ever.*

ALL: Amen.