

## EPIPHANY HOME BLESSING

Some Christians bless their homes on Epiphany each year. With chalk, they write an inscription on the inside lintel above the front door. The series of the numbers, letters and crosses changes only slightly from year to year. For the year 2023, the line will read as follows:

20+C+M+B+23

Because Epiphany comes so near the beginning of the New Year, the year numbers represent an annual renewal of God's blessing.

The letters have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the magi: Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words "Christus mansionem benedicat." "May Christ bless this house."

The crosses represent Christ, who we invoke, and the saintliness of the magi. The inscription is made above the front door, so that all who enter and depart this year may enjoy God's blessing. The month of January still bears the name of the Roman god Janus, the doorkeeper of heaven and patron of the beginning and the end of things. This blessing adds a Christian dimension to the traditional observance of the first month. The inscription is made of chalk, a product of clay, which recalls the human nature taken by God's eternal word in this holy season.

If you want to bless your home this Epiphany, read the opening verses of John's Gospel, pray the Lord's Prayer, then write the inscription for this year above your front door with chalk.



**Prayer for Blessing Chalk:** Jesus, through your Incarnation and birth in true human form, you have made all the earthy holy. We now ask your blessing upon this simple gift of your creation - chalk. We use it as a tool to teach our children, and they use it as a tool in their play and games. Now, with your blessing, may it become a tool for us to mark the doors of our home with the symbols of your wise servants who, so long ago, came to worship and adore you in your first home.