

Chalking the Door at Epiphany

***Chalking the Door** is a way of marking our homes and churches with sacred signs and symbols as we ask God's blessing upon those who live, work, or visit throughout the coming year. The inscription written above the door is as follows: **20 + C + M + B + 20** The numbers at the beginning and end of the inscription simply refer to the current year. The last number changes each year.*

A Blessing as We Chalk the Door at Epiphany

Family and friends gather at the main entrances to homes or apartments, and ask God's blessing on their dwellings and on all who live or visit there. Leadership may be shared with a change of voice at each paragraph or phrase.

Peace be to this place (this house) and to all who enter here.

A reading from Proverbs: "By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures."

Let us pray: Gracious God, as a shining star once guided the magi to the birthplace of the infant Jesus, so enable those who dwell here to be your light in the world; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Using chalk (hence, "Chalking the Door"), people are invited to inscribe the lintel of the home (the horizontal frame above the door) with the inscription shown below. The letters C M B come from the traditional (9th century) names for the "three kings" – Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. Some also suggest "Christus Mansionem Benedicat" which means, "May Christ bless this dwelling!" Each person is afforded a turn to make one or more of the marks:

20 + C + M + B + 20

A reading from Isaiah: "The effect of righteousness is peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and quiet place."

Let us pray: Sovereign God, we pray that you will bless this home and all who live here with your gracious presence, that your love may be our inspiration, your wisdom our guide, your truth our light, and your peace our benediction; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Lord, remember your people and teach us to pray: Our Father...

May the Lord watch over our going out and our coming in, from this time forth and forevermore. Amen.