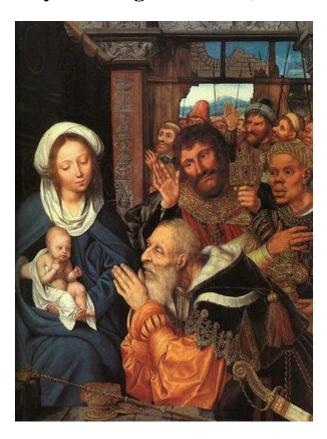# Epiphany Blessing of Chalk (For Priests)

Background & Meaning

20 + C + M + B + 25

The letters have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the Three Magi: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. They also abbreviate the Latin words "Christus mansionem benedicat." "May Christ bless the house." The letters recall the day on which the inscription is made, as well as the purpose of blessing.

The crosses represent the protection of the Precious Blood of Christ, whom we invoke, and the holiness of the Three Magi sanctified by their adoration of the Infant Christ. 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 protector of the beginning and end of things. This blessing "christens" the ancient Roman observance of the first month. The inscription is made of chalk, a product of clay, which recalls the human nature taken by the Adorable and Eternal Word of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

To bless your home this Epiphany, read the Prologue of Saint John's Gospel, followed by the Our Father, and the Collect of the Epiphany; then write the inscription for this year above your front door with blessed chalk.

Blessing of Chalk

This blessing is administered by a priest (or deacon) and can be used during the celebration of Mass before the final blessing. Alternatively, it can be administered in a separate ritual as part of Evening Prayer.

V. Our help is the name of the Lord.

R. Who made heaven and earth.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Let us pray.
Bless, O Lord God, this chalk
to render it helpful to your people.
Grant that they who use it in faith
and with it inscribe upon the doors of their homes
the names of your saints, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar,
may through their merits and intercession
enjoy health of body and protection of soul.
Through Christ our Lord.