

# ‘CHALKING THE DOORS’

Epiphany marks the Christian tradition of ‘Chalking the doors.’ Using chalk write the following above, or on the step, of the entrance of your home:

**20 + C + M + B + 24**

The letters have two meanings. First, they represent the initials of the Magi — Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar — who came to visit Jesus in His first home. They also abbreviate the Latin phrase, *Christus mansionem benedicat*: “May Christ bless the house.” The “+” signs represent the cross, and the “20” at the beginning and the “24” at the end mark the year.

Taken together, this inscription is performed as a request for Christ to bless those homes so marked and a way in which we dedicate our year to God from its very outset, asking His blessing on our homes and on all who live, work, or visit there.

The timing for the chalking of the doors varies somewhat in practice. In some places, it is done on New Year’s Day. More commonly, it is performed on the traditional Feast of the Epiphany — the Twelfth Day of Christmas.

This blessing can be performed simply by just writing the inscription and offering a short prayer.

Practicing traditions like the chalking of the doors helps us to live our Faith more concretely and serve as an outward sign of our dedication to Our Lord. Our homes are also the place where many of us will make the greatest strides in our spiritual growth, through observance of daily prayer, spiritual reading, and work offered as an oblation to God.

Seeing the symbols over our doors can help to remind us, while passing in and out on our daily routines, that our homes and all those who dwell there belong to Christ. It also serves as a reminder of welcoming the Magi gave to Jesus. We should strive to be as welcoming to all who come to our homes to visit us when eventually that can happen!

Possible prayers to say during your Chalking:

*May all who come to our home this year rejoice to find Christ living among us; and may we seek and serve, in everyone we meet, that same Jesus who is your incarnate Word, now and forever. Amen.*

*God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only-begotten One to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Saviour. Amen.*

*Loving God, bless this household. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness, and abiding in your will. We ask this through Christ our Saviour. Amen.*