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January 6, 2019  
The Feast of Epiphany

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

This Sunday, we celebrate the Feast of Epiphany, when the wise men from the East followed the star to visit the Christ Child and bring to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. There is a custom in the Church related to this Feast of Epiphany that has been practiced by Catholics for at least several centuries. Families use blessed chalk to inscribe a special blessing upon their doorpost or lintel: **20+C+M+B+19**.

There is a beautiful meaning behind this inscription. The 20 and 19 represent, of course, the new year that we have just begun: 2019 years since the birth of Jesus Christ. The “C M B” stand for the traditional names of the three Wise Men: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. But it also stands for the Latin words: “*Christus Mansionem Benedicat*”, which translates “May Christ bless this house.”

This Catholic custom is most appropriate to do as a whole family, gathered at the entrance of the home and led by the father or mother. This special devotion is a reminder for us of the importance of praying together as a family. The home and the family are to be places of faith and love, places that lead us closer to God and closer to heaven. And this custom also reminds us that we should ask God daily for His blessings for us, for our families, and for our homes.

I encourage you to make use of this special blessing at your own home. I will bless chalk at the end of all the Masses for the Feast of Epiphany; and, on the back of this letter, you will find the prayers that can be used for the blessing. May you and your family be drawn closer to Christ through the prayer and worship that you offer to God as a family!

To Jesus through Mary,

Fr. Jonathan Hemelt  
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## **Blessing the Home**

**In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen**

*Leader:* Peace be to this house.

*All:*       **And all who dwell in it.**

*Using the blessed chalk, one member of the family writes above the main door: **20 + C + M + B + 19***

*At the same time, someone says:*

The three Wise Kings, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed a star to find the Christ Child, who was born two thousand and nineteen years ago.

### **Prayer**

Visit, O blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence. Bless this home and all who live or visit here with the gift of your love; and grant that we may show your love to each other and all whose lives we touch. Lord Jesus Christ, be with us now and forever. Amen.

*Pray together:*

**Our Father**, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

**Hail Mary** full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

**Glory be** to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen**