



Dear Parents,

January 6, 2021

We welcome the children back to school during the days of Epiphany! Today Father Stoley came to each classroom and blessed the rooms. Above every doorway he wrote with blessed chalk 20+C+M+B+21. You can do the same thing in your own homes! We are sending home blessed chalk for your family along with this explanation of the Epiphany Home Blessing. May the Lord send his grace and favor into your homes.

In the Heart of Christ the King,

Sister Mary Alma, C.K.

PS. It is a joy to have the children back with use again! Adding to this joy are two new students. Joseph Miranda of Roca has joined the fifth grade class and Avery Newmyer of Crete has joined our Pre-K class. Welcome to St. James School!

Epiphany Blessing of the Home

One popular religious tradition since the Middle Ages has been associated with the feast of the Epiphany: the blessing of homes with holy water and blessed chalk. The ritual calls for a priest or parent to mark, with the blessed chalk, above the inside of the main door the initials of the Magi and the numbers of the current year connected with crosses: 20+C+M+B+21. Another explanation of the initials (C-M-B) is that they are the first letters of the blessing in Latin: *Christus mansionem benedicat* ("May Christ bless the house").

REFLECTION

Parent:

Epiphany closes out the Christmas season. The word "Epiphany" comes from the Greek word *epiphanein*, a "showing, appearance, or revelation." In the early Church, the word soon came to describe the Incarnation - the appearance of the true God in flesh.

The gospel story of the Magi is a reflection on an important aspect of the mystery of Incarnation: The Messiah has come to all people and not just to the Jews, a theme highlighted by Matthew's gospel. The word "magi" is Greek and refers to a learned caste in Babylonia, probably astrologers. In Psalm 72: 10ff, the King of Judah, one of the Messiah's titles, is promised gifts. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh, the three gifts mentioned in the gospel, were common symbols of homage in the East. Traditionally they have come to symbolize the destiny of Jesus: gold for his royalty, frankincense for his divinity, myrrh for his suffering and death. The Three Kings are: Melchior, an old white man with a long white beard, bearing the gift of gold; Caspar, young and of darker hue, carrying incense, and Balthasar, a black man, offering myrrh. These three represent three major races of the world. Jesus loves all people of the world and came to redeem all of mankind.

As we mark the doorway of our home, let us, like the Three Kings, open our hearts to Jesus. Let us also ask Jesus for the grace we need to open the doors of our hearts and our home to others. May this coming year be a grace-filled year, full of the love and peace of Christ.

Epiphany Blessing of the Home

INTRODUCTION

Parent: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Peace be with this house and with all who live here. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All: Now and forever.

Parent: During these days of the Christmas season, we keep this feast of Epiphany, celebrating the manifestation of Christ to the Magi, to John in the River Jordan, and to the disciples at the wedding at Cana. Today Christ is manifest to us! Today this home is a holy place.

BLESSING

With blessed chalk, the parents writes above the main inside doorway and says the following. It will look like: 20+C+M+B+21.

C is for Caspar, M for Melchior and B for Balthazar (3Magi).

Parent: Writes Says
20 May this be a year
+ C where Jesus, in His Divinity,
 dwells within our hearts
+ M and reigns over our wills, our passions and
 our desires
+ B that we may, with Him, embrace our crosses
 for the salvation of all souls.
+ (rest of current year) Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Parent: Let us pray. Lord God of Heaven and earth, You revealed Your only-begotten Son 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 Lord.

All: Amen.

Good Shepherd Scholarship: We are now accepting Good Shepherd Scholarships for the 2021-2022 school year. Please see flier coming home today for more information.

New Quarantine Rules: If your child needs to quarantine, please call the school to find out details. Quarantining is no longer 14 days and may now be as few as 7 days with testing or 10 days without testing.

Winter Coats: Our parish's Knights of Columbus would like to provide winter coats, hats, and gloves for any child in need this winter. Please let the school office know if your child needs any of these winter apparel items.

Upcoming SFA Meeting: Mark your calendars for Tuesday, January 19 from 6:30 – 7:45 pm for our next St. James School Family Meeting.

Coming Home Today: Good Shepherd Scholarship Form, Catholic Diocese of Lincoln Flier, Tuition Envelope, Scrip Order Form