

The Epiphany of the Lord

January 3, 2010

“Epiphany” comes from a Greek word meaning “revelation,” “showing forth,” or “advent,” and today’s feast celebrates the spread of the good news beyond the borders of Bethlehem, to the entire world. Matthew’s Gospel tells of wise men from the east who are guided to the infant Christ by the light of a star. The story of the Magi foreshadows the universality of the saving message of Jesus, who comes not just to the chosen people, but to all.

It is appropriate that on this day of “revelation,” we listen to the Epiphany Proclamation, an ancient chant which offers a sneak preview of the coming liturgical year. “The glory of the Lord has shone upon us,” the cantor sings, “and shall ever be manifest among us until the day of his return.” And one of the ways Christ continues to be revealed to us is through the liturgy, “the rhythms of times and seasons” through which we celebrate the mysteries of faith together. The Epiphany Proclamation continues to proclaim for all to hear that Christ is really in our midst, “Lord of time and history.”

Epiphany Gifts

The wise men brought gifts to the child Jesus—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Epiphany is still a day for gift-giving in many countries, particularly in Spain. Following the Noon Mass on this Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, we continue this tradition as Father Ryan gives to the children of the parish a gift of “gold” in remembrance of the gifts the wise men brought to the child Jesus.

An Epiphany House Blessing

You will need a piece of chalk and a small container of holy water. Gather with family members, friends, and perhaps some neighbors at the front door.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.** Legend gives the names Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar to the wise men who followed the star to the infant Christ. With chalk, their initials sign this doorway, along with four crosses, and the numbers of this new year.

The following inscription is written in chalk above the doorway:

20 + C + M + B + 10



An ancient depiction of the visit of the wise men to the infant Christ from the Vatican Museums

Leader: Let us pray, *Christus mansionem benedicat*, May Christ bless this house!" **Amen!**

Each room is sprinkled with holy water as the following prayers are said.

Living room: Where two or three are gathered, you are there. Bless this room, O Lord. **Amen!**

Kitchen: You give us our daily bread. Bless this room, O Lord. **Amen!**

Dining room: Prepare us for the feast of heaven. Bless this room, O Lord. **Amen!**

Bedrooms: Stay with us, Lord, when night is here. Bless this room, O Lord. **Amen!**

Bathroom: Keep us pure in your sight. Bless this room, O Lord. **Amen!**

All return to the front door to pray together.

Let us pray as Jesus taught us: **Our Father...**

The leader sprinkles all present with holy water and concludes:

Bless this household through all days to come, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever and ever. **Amen!**

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