

Feast of Epiphany, January 6th



Chalking the Door of the Home on Epiphany

In Austria and parts of Germany, at Epiphany, people write a special sign in chalk over their front door as a reminder of the Magi that visited the baby Jesus. It's made using the year split in two, with the initials of the names that are sometimes given to the Magi, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, in the middle. So 2022 is written as: 20+C+M+B+22.

The initials CMB also stand for the Latin phrase, *Christus mansionem benedicat*: 'May Christ bless the house'. The inscription is performed as a request for Christ to bless the home and be with all those who dwell in it throughout the year. In recent years, this tradition is getting more popular in parishes. Some parishes provide blessed chalk for households to use.

Prayer as you chalk the lintel of your front door

Gather at the front door of your home.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of Light, bless our home. Make it a haven of rest for all in need of your warmth and care. And when we go out from this place, may we never lose sight of that Epiphany star.

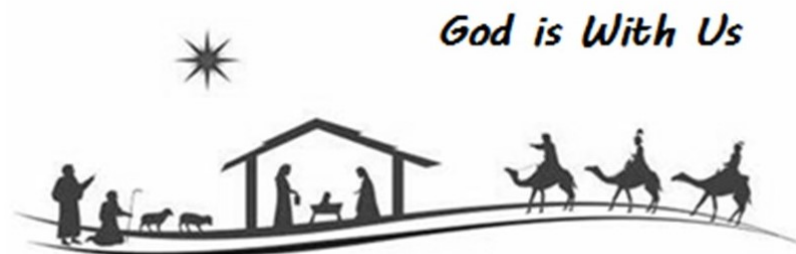
We mark our door with the symbols of the Magi. 20 + C + M + B + 22
May all who enter throughout the year find love and light; for Christ has come to dwell in this home and in our hearts. Amen.

Having marked your door you may now like to place the Magi figures at the crib while praying the following:

Loving Jesus, may we be like the Magi and always look for you in our lives. Be with us, protect us and guide us. Help us to always show your love to one another and to all in need. Amen.

You may wish to conclude by singing 'We Three Kings' or another favourite Christmas hymn.

Keeping Christmas in the Home and Parish in 2021



This Christmas we want all our families and households in the parish to be able to truly celebrate the joy of the season. We are very aware that not everyone will be able to come to the church to attend Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. We invite those who can't come to tune into our livestreamed Masses while we very much look forward to welcoming those who can come to the church for Christmas.

The parish invites you to enter into the prayer of the traditional 12 days of Christmas and to mark these days in your home. Families are invited to make time in the home for prayer and to visit the church for private prayer before the crib.

The COVID pandemic has shown the importance of the 'domestic church', the 'little churches' that is very much alive in homes across the parish. God is always with us when we pray and so, we are very happy to share with you some prayers for the home. We hope you will use them over the Christmas season.

This leaflet contains the following prayers for use in the home over Christmas:

- + ***Christmas Eve – Prayer for placing figure of Jesus in the crib***
- + ***Christmas Day – Prayer before your Family Christmas Meal***
- + ***Feast of the Holy Family – A Family Prayer***
- + ***Feast of Mary, Mother of God (January 1) – Prayer suggestion***
- + ***Epiphany – Prayer for chalking your front door and placing Magi at the crib***

We wish each of you the blessing of Christmas. May it bring God's peace, love, healing, joy and hope to your homes and hearts this year.

Produced by Kildare and Leighlin Faith Development Services and the Diocesan Commission for Liturgical Formation.

Christmas Eve, December 24th



Placing Jesus in the Crib on Christmas Eve Night

There is a lovely tradition of placing the figure of the baby Jesus in the crib on Christmas Eve, before children go to bed. Often the youngest member of the household gets this honour! If you are joining in a Christmas Mass via technology, before Mass begins, light a candle and place the figure of Jesus beside it. All present can process to the crib scene in the home at the end of Mass.

Prayer at the Crib

The youngest member of the family holds the infant figure during this prayer.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Loving God,
as we look upon our family crib we thank you for all who are part of the Christmas story and part of our story too.
As we look upon these animals, we thank you for the gift of creation and the beauty of the world you have created.
We thank you for the shepherds and we remember that it was they who were looked down on by society who were the first to hear the good news of Christmas.
We thank you for Mary and for Joseph, who trusted in you and did what you asked. And finally, we thank you for the gift of Jesus, your Son, who was born like us, lived like us, struggled like us, and who has shown us how to be fully human. As we place this figure of Jesus in our crib may it be a sign of Your presence in our lives.

The figure can be placed in the crib at this point.

Emmanuel, God with us, come to each of us and stay with us.
Protect us and guide us as a family, free us from worry
and let your love grow in our hearts
so that we may be Emmanuel, God with us, to one another over these Christmas days and beyond. Amen.

You may wish to conclude by singing 'Away in a Manger' or another favourite Christmas hymn.

Feast of the Nativity, Christmas Day, December 25th



A Prayer before your Family Christmas Meal

Loving God, on this Christmas day we give thanks that Jesus, your Son, has come into our world bringing us gifts of peace and joy. Bless us as we sit down together at this table for our Christmas meal. Bless the food we share and help us to remember those who are hungry. Be with our neighbours and our friends, those who are lonely, sick or away from home. We pray that our departed loved ones may sit now at your table in heaven. May the joy of this feast give us strength and light, now and in the days ahead. Amen.

Feast of the Holy Family, Sunday, December 26th

In the Holy Family we see the ordinariness of the life of Jesus and the simple acceptance of Mary and Joseph of the wonders of God. In the daily life of our family and community we can come close to God because God is already with us.

A Family Prayer

God, our Father, we are brothers and sisters in Jesus your Son, one family, in the Spirit of your love.
Bless us with the joy of love. Make us patient and kind, gentle and generous, welcoming to those in need. Help us to live your forgiveness and peace.
Protect all families with your loving care, especially those for whom we now pray. (pause)
Increase our faith, strengthen our hope, keep us safe in your love, make us always grateful for the gift of life that we share.
This we ask, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Feast of Mary, Mother of God, January 1st

This oldest feast of Mary, comes on the 8th day of the Octave of Christmas, the world day of peace and at the start of a new year. It is a powerful reminder to us of the presence of Mary in the life of the Church and in our lives. Mary is our mother, too, and we can turn to her in every moment of need, knowing that she will intercede to God for us.

*Take time today to pause and think of what Mary means to you personally and to pray a Hail Mary. **Mary, Mother of God, pray for us. Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us. Mary, Helper of all in need, pray for us.***

