

Epiphany House Blessing

Epiphany is a traditional time for the blessing of homes, often using blessed chalk and a prayer like the one we had available at Masses this weekend. I am sure that a quick internet search would turn up various similar prayers and several Scripture options on which to read and reflect as part of the blessing. They all generally revolve around the blessing and inscription on the lintel of the main door of the house or apartment. Those numbers and letters are explained in the handout, so I will not rehash it here, but it is good to remember again *why* we bless our homes.

The blessing of homes goes back to the Old Testament in the time of Moses. At the Passover, God instructed Moses to have the people sprinkle the blood of the Passover sacrifice on the door-posts and lintel of the home in which the Hebrew people were staying. Seeing this, the angel of death would “pass over” that house and spare those within it.

We still observe this in the Holy Eucharist at every Mass when the blood of the perfect Passover sacrifice, Jesus himself, is touched to our lips (as a kind of “doorway” to our interior being). We also still ask the Lord to bless our homes and protect those within them from harm. Since it would be terribly disrespectful to Christ to sprinkle his Precious Blood on our doors, we use chalk which we invoke Christ to bless. We inscribe the blessing on the main entrance of the home because we want to be able to see it as we enter and continuously call to mind God’s presence with us. It is also there as a witness to the world and those evil spirits that prowl about it that we place our trust in God’s protection.

Please remember that the chalk, like other blessed objects, should not be simply discarded in the trash. The more proper way to dispose of blessed materials is to bury or burn them. You can certainly use the chalk for other purposes (as long as that purpose is not somehow sinful), always letting it call to mind the ways God works in our world. It is also fine to keep the chalk set aside for use in the following year when blessing your home again.

Rediscovering the Saints

Hopefully, everyone who attended one of the Christmas Masses at our parishes received a copy of our Christmas gift to you, *Rediscover the Saints* by Matthew Kelly. Christmas is also a good time for travelling and visiting family in other places. So if you were not here for Christmas, or would simply like another copy of the book to share with others, we still have them available. There will be some present at the entrances of our churches throughout the Christmas season. Feel free to ask me or an usher if you do not see them. You are always welcome to stop and pick up one at the office as well.

Fr. Timothy Gapinski