

Catholic House Blessing

Adapted from *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*
Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy
National Conference of Catholic Bishops © 1988, pp. 297-301

The blessing of the home is a popular Epiphany custom. Using blessed chalk, many households mark their entrance door with the current year and with the inscription CMB, the initials of Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, the traditional names of the magi. The inscription also stands for the Latin phrase *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which means "Christ, bless this home." Each room of the house may also be blessed with an accompanying prayer. The doorway over each room is marked in the same way as the entrance door and sprinkled with holy water. The symbols written in chalk over the door should look like this:

20+C+M+B+21

Gather as a family (roommates, friends, relatives) in any room you desire, with a crucifix present if possible. Yes, you can--and are encouraged to bless your own home/apartment/condo/dorm room even if a priest or deacon isn't available! (The use of holy water is optional.)

All make the sign of the cross.

The leader begins:

Peace be with this house and with all who live here. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All respond: Amen.

The leader introduces the house blessing:

When Christ took flesh through the Blessed Virgin Mary, he made his home with us. Let us now pray that he will enter this home and bless it with his presence. May he always be here among us; may he nurture our love for each other, share in our joys, comfort us in our sorrows. Inspired by his teachings and example, let us seek to make our home before all else a dwelling place of love, diffusing far and wide the goodness of Christ.

Then the Scripture is read by another family member:

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians

You are God's chosen race, his saints; He loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience.

Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful. Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; And never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The word of the Lord.

All Respond: Thanks be to God.

After the scripture reading, all go from room to room, offering prayers of intercession. Some of the following prayers may be used. Use the chalk to mark the top of the door or the trim inside each room. As each prayer concludes, sprinkle the room with holy water.

At the main entrance to the house: With Chalk write 20+C+M+B+21 on top of the door or on the trim above the doorway.

O God, protect our going out and our coming in; Let us share the hospitality of this home with all who visit us, that those who enter here may know your love and peace. (Sprinkle Holy Water and say) Grant this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

In the living room: With Chalk write 20+C+M+B+21 on top of the door or on the trim above the doorway.

O God, give your blessings to all who share this room, that we may be knit together in companionship. (Sprinkle Holy Water and say) Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the kitchen: With Chalk write 20+C+M+B+21 on top of the door or on the trim above the doorway.

O God, you fill the hungry with good things. Send your blessing on us, as we work in this kitchen, and make us ever thankful for our daily bread. (Sprinkle Holy Water and say) Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the dining room: With Chalk write 20+C+M+B+21 on top of the door or on the trim above the doorway.

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth, for you give us food and drink to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad. Help us to be grateful for all your mercies, and mindful of the needs of others. (Sprinkle Holy Water and say) Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the bedrooms: With Chalk write 20+C+M+B+21 on top of the door or on the trim above the doorway.

Protect us, Lord, as we stay awake; watch over us as we sleep, that awake we may keep watch with Christ, and asleep, we may rest in his peace. (Sprinkle Holy Water and say) Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the bathroom: With Chalk write 20+C+M+B+21 on top of the door or on the trim above the doorway.

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. You formed us in wisdom and love. Refresh us in body and in spirit, and keep us in good health that we might serve you. (Sprinkle Holy Water and say) Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

All return to the starting place. A cross or icon is kissed by each person, and then put in a permanent place of honor. A candle may be lighted before it. Sprinkle Holy Water and **recite together the Lord's prayer.**

The Leader says the prayer of blessing:

Be our shelter, Lord, when we are at home, our companion when we are away, and our welcome guest when we return. and at last receive us into the dwelling place you have prepared for us in your Father's house, where you live for ever and ever.
Amen.

All make the sign of the cross as the leader concludes:

May the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, and may the word of Christ in all its richness dwell in us, so that whatever we do in word and in work, we will do in the name of the Lord. Amen.