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FROM THE PASTOR



You've probably seen it: a mysterious series of letters and numbers, looking for all the world like an equation, inscribed in chalk over a doorway at your parish, or at the home of a friend. Maybe you thought you could figure it out. Maybe you were too embarrassed to ask, "What the heck is that?"

If you don't know what the chalk is all about, don't be ashamed. You're certainly not alone. Epiphany (also known as Twelfth Night, *Theophany*, or Three Kings Day) marks the occasion of a time-honored Christian tradition of "chalking the doors." The formula for the ritual — adapted for 2025 — is simple: take blessed chalk and write the following above the entrance of your home: **20 + C + M + B + 26**.

The letters have two meanings. First, they represent the initials of the Magi — Caspar, Malchior, and Balthazar — who came to visit Jesus in His first home. They also abbreviate the Latin phrase, *Christus mansionem benedicat*: "May Christ bless the house." The "+" signs represent the cross, and the "20" at the beginning and the "25" at the end mark the year. Taken together, this inscription is performed as a request for Christ to bless those homes so marked and that He stay with those who dwell therein throughout the entire year.

The chalking of the doors is a centuries-old practice throughout the world, though it appears to be somewhat less well-known in the United States. It is, however, an easy tradition to adopt, and a great practice whereby we dedicate our year to God from its very outset, asking His blessing on our homes and on all who live, work, or visit them there.

The timing for the chalking of the doors varies somewhat in practice. In some places, it is done on New Year's Day. More commonly, it is performed on the traditional Feast of the Epiphany — the Twelfth Day of Christmas. Most often the chalking takes place after Epiphany Mass, and can be done at any church, home, or dwelling. Traditionally the blessing is done by either a priest or the father of the family. This blessing can be performed simply by just writing the inscription and offering a short prayer, or more elaborately, including songs, prayers, processions, the burning of incense, and the sprinkling of holy water.

After many Epiphany Masses, satchels of blessed chalk, incense, and containers of Epiphany water (holy water blessed with special blessings for Epiphany) are distributed. These can then be brought home and used to perform the ritual. Another common practice is to save a few grains of the Epiphany incense until Easter, so that it can be burned along with the Easter candle.

Practicing traditions like the chalking of the doors helps us to live our Faith more concretely and serve as an outward sign of our dedication to Our Lord. Our homes are also the place where many of us will make the greatest strides in our spiritual growth, through observance of daily prayer, spiritual reading, and work offered as an oblation to God.

The chalking of the doors of a home encourages Christians to dedicate their life at home to God and to others. Seeing the symbols over our doors can help to remind us, while passing in and out on our daily routines, that our homes and all those who dwell there belong to Christ. It also serves as a reminder of welcoming the Magi gave to Jesus. We should strive to be as welcoming to all who come to our homes to visit us!

Below, we've provided some examples of how this ceremony can be performed. At the back of church each family is encouraged to grab a bag of blessed chalk, Epiphany water, and the directions on how to bless your home.

HOUSE BLESSING

Head of Household (HOH): Let us pray. O Lord, Almighty God, bless this house + that it may become a shelter of health, chastity, self-conquest, humility, goodness, mildness, obedience to the commandments, and thanksgiving to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Upon this house and those who dwell herein may Your blessing remain forever, through Christ our Lord.
All: Amen.

The HOH takes blessed chalk and with the family, proceeds to the front door. While all look on, the HOH reads the corresponding words as the kings inscribe their initials onto the lintel. (The initials CMB also stand for Christus mansionem benedicat: May Christ bless this house.) Final inscription on lintel should

Saturday Jan 10 th 5pm	Servers	Volunteers	Sunday Jan 11 th 10:30 am	Servers	Madeline K, Peyton K, & Shayden S.
	Lector	Tom Halbleib		Lector	Brandon Maurath
	Gifts	Darren & Tori Goetz		Gifts	J.L. & Carrie Evins
	Hospitality	David & Dana Charles		Hospitality	Matt & Michelle Selzer

read: **20 + C + M + B + 26:**

The three wise men, Caspar, [*HOH inscribes 'C' on lintel*] **C** Melchior, [*HOH inscribes 'M'*] **M** and Balthasar [*HOH inscribes 'B'*] **B** followed the star of God's Son who became man two thousand [*HOH inscribes the '20' on left*] **20** twenty-five years ago. [*HOH inscribes '25' on right*] **26** May Christ bless our dwelling, [*HOH places + after '20'*] + and remain with us throughout the new year, [*+ after 'C'*] + and grant that our comings and goings [*+ after 'M'*] + will be in search of truth. [*+ after 'B'*] +

HOH: Almighty God, incline your ear. May you bless us and all who are gathered here. Send your holy angel who will defend us and fill with grace all who live here.
All: Amen.

The HOH blesses the house with holy water. Everyone sings: We Three Kings of Orient Are

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL NEWS:

Pizza Hut Fundraiser will be on Monday, January 12th. 3rd-grade parents will deliver.

ST. JOSEPH NEWS:

D of I Meeting on Thursday, January 8, at 1 pm, Diane Solomon and Fran Robben are hosts.

ST. PAUL NEWS:

Angelus Knights of Columbus FREE Youth Trapshoot for grades 5 – 12th. This event will be held on Sunday, January 4, 2026, at 1pm. At the K of C Hall, Angelus.

Angelus K of C Meeting at 7pm in the Hall.

Our Tithes from Last Week

Oakley: \$7,443.00 Angelus: \$7,512.41

We welcome all our guests to our parishes. If you have moved here, we encourage you to register on our website.



Follow us on St. Joseph Catholic Church and School

@stjosephoakley

Sunday, Jan 11 th 8 am	Servers	Natalie Bixenman
	Lectors	Nancy Schwarz & Doug Robben
	Gifts	Ron & Elsie Rietcheck
	Ushers	Bernard Dickman, Bob, Lee, and Clem Fellhoelter

DAILY SCHEDULE

Sat 03 – 5pm Mass + Living and Deceased members of the John Geist Family

Sun 04 – 8:00am Mass (Angelus) + Jeff Davis
 10:30am Mass – Parishioners
 1pm Angelus Youth Trapshoot

Mon 05 – NO MASS
 7pm Angelus K of C Meeting

Tues 06 – 8:30am Mass + Ralph Kruse
 9:30am Bible Study in the rectory

Wed 07 – 7:30am Mass (Angelus) + Carole Wolf

Thur 08 – 8:30am + Todd Kuhlman
 9am – 7pm Adoration in Oakley
 1pm D of I Meeting at the Annex

Fri 09 – 7am Mass + Loretta Schoenfeld

Sat 10 – 5pm Mass + Margie Schoenfeld

Sun 11 – 8:00am Mass (Angelus) - Parishioners
 10:30am Mass + Ron Kuhlman

Confessions are available 30 minutes before weekend Masses, by appointment, or as indicated on the schedule.

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