

January 5, 2020

From Fr. Jim . . .



Feast of the Epiphany

This Feast celebrates another aspect of the Incarnation: Christ's coming into the whole world as light and salvation for all. In the darkness of winter, we can celebrate that our light has come to us. The love of Christ is light for the world's darkness. The familiar story of the three kings following the star to the manger and presenting gifts to the Christ-child signifies that the light of God's love shines on all people. No one is to live in darkness anymore. Where do we still need to "see" Christ in the world today? What part of our lives needs to be "illuminated" by Christ's love? What gifts/talents do we have that we can place before our king in order to celebrate and acknowledge his presence with us through whom the light of Christ's love will shine?

On the Feast of the Epiphany, the blessing of homes has been traditional custom in various ethnic groups, and a fine reminder that Christ is incarnate in the love and care we manifest to each other in our ordinary, daily lives. One custom is to trace crosses, the initials of the "kings" and the numerals of the year over the doorway with chalk, 20 +C+M+B +20. Legend names the kings, Casper, Melchior, and Balthazar. However, the initials were long ago reinterpreted by northern European Protestants who love the custom but not the legend. CMB became *Christus mansionem benedicat*. This is Latin for: "May Christ bless this House." This prayer of blessing for a home is taken from the Book of Blessings, the Roman Ritual, p.685:

Lord God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only begotten Son to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who live in it. Fill them with the light of Christ, that their concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Let us ask the Lord to bless the house that is our parish family! Let us ask the Lord to bless the houses that are our partner parishes and the universal church. Let us ask the Lord to bless the houses and families of all nations.