

LITURGY BYTES

The 3 Kings

This weekend we celebrate the Epiphany, Little Christmas or the feast of the 3 Kings as it is known. The word “epiphany” means manifestation or “showing forth.” This feast celebrates God’s bringing the Gentiles to meet the newborn Savior. Found not in a palace, but in a simple traveler’s lodging, the infant Jesus reveals something of God’s nature, humility and a way of behaving.



The visit of the Magi (the 3 Kings) occurs directly before the story of the Holy Family fleeing into Egypt. We know little about the Magi. They come from the East and journey to Bethlehem, following an astrological sign, so we believe them to be astrologers.

Because there are three gifts mentioned, we assume there were three of them. Also, in Matthew’s Gospel, the Magi represent the Gentiles’ search for a savior. Because the Magi represent the entire world, they also represent our search for Jesus. The gifts that they bring also foreshadow Jesus’ role in salvation: the gold represents Jesus’ kingship; the frankincense is a symbol of Jesus’ divinity because priests burned that substance in the temple; the myrrh was something used to prepare the dead for burial, thus anticipating Jesus’ death.

One of the many customs centering around this feast is the blessing of the doorposts in people’s homes. Some use chalk to mark the year and the initials of the Kings over their front doors. Others prepare simple signs and hang them over their doors. Here’s what it would look like this year:

20 + C + M + B + 21

The year is marked by the year of blessing—2021. The cross marks the points on the compass; the initials stand for the Kings: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar.

The letters CMB can also stand for “Christus Mansionem Benedicat” which means “*May Christ bless this house.*”

Simple prayer of blessing for you to use for your front door:

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 inhabit it. Fill them (us) with the light of Christ, that their (our) concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Have a blessed, safe and healthy week~~~~~*Michele Hahn*