

Continued from bulletin.

We all should give Jesus what the Magi gave him, Pope Benedict said. The way we do that is to give him our very selves.

“They had come to place themselves at the service of this King, to model their own kingship on his,” Benedict said.

“Included in this were their gifts — gold, frankincense and myrrh — gifts offered to a King held to be divine. Adoration has a content, and it involves giving. Through this act of adoration, these men from the East wished to recognize the child as their King and to place their own power and potential at his disposal, and in this they were certainly on the right path.”

A Lesson in Power

Sunday’s Gospel also focuses on wicked King Herod who tries to trick the Magi, saying: “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.”

Benedict said: “They knew that in order to change the world it is necessary to have power. Hence, they were hardly likely to seek the promised child anywhere but in the King’s palace. Yet now they were bowing down before the child of poor people, and they soon came to realize that Herod, the King they had consulted, intended to use his power to lay a trap for him, forcing the family to flee into exile.”

Benedict explained: “Now they were able to see that God’s power is not like that of the powerful of this world. God’s ways are not as we imagine them or as we might wish them to be. God does not enter into competition with earthly powers in this world. ... He contrasts the noisy and ostentatious power of this world with the defenseless power of love, which succumbs to death on the Cross and dies ever anew throughout history; yet it is this same love which constitutes the new divine intervention that opposes injustice and ushers in the Kingdom of God.”

Heading Home

Sunday’s Gospel ends with: “And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Pope Benedict XVI said: “On their homeward journey, the Magi surely had to deal with dangers, weariness, disorientation, doubts. The star was no longer there to guide them! The light was now within them. Their task was to guard and nourish it in the constant memory of Christ, of his Holy Face, of his ineffable Love. “

For us, he said, “May Jesus, the face of the merciful Lord for every person, continue to light our way, like the star that guided the Magi, and fill us with his joy.”

Epiphany House Blessing

On Epiphany (or New Year, or the first convenient opportunity) you can bless your house. Take (blessed) chalk (of any colour) and mark on the lintel of your front door **20 + C + M + B + 23** saying:

The three Wise Men,

C Caspar,

M Melchior,

B and Balthasar followed the star of God’s Son who became human

20 two thousand

23 and twenty-three years ago.

++ May Christ bless our home

++ and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Christ, God’s incarnation, is present in the love and care we manifest to each other in our ordinary daily lives together.

Other possible prayers:

May all who come to our home this year rejoice to find Christ living among us; and may we seek and serve, in everyone we meet, that same Jesus who is your incarnate Word, now and forever. Amen.

God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only-begotten One to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

Loving God, bless this household. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness, and abiding in your will. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

It is in the home that the first experience of love occurs; it is there that love is nurtured and grows to maturity. The Christian home is also the ground for much of people’s spiritual growth.

The blessing of a home encourages Christians to dedicate their life at home to God and to others.

C M B above the door, also stands for *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, Latin for “May Christ Bless this House.”

A part of church history is the custom of blessing homes at the New Year. A family would hold a short service of prayer to ask God’s blessing on their dwellings and on all who live, work with and visit them. In this way, we invite Jesus to be a “guest” in our home, a listener to each conversation, a guide for troubled times, and a blessing in times of thanksgiving.

“Chalking the door” or the door step may be used as a way to celebrate and literally “mark” the occasion. In the Old Testament the Israelites were told to mark their doors with the blood of the lamb on the night of the Passover to ensure that the angel of death would pass them by. Deuteronomy 6: 9 says that we shall “write [the words of God] on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, ... and you shall write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates.”