

EPIPHANY - THE FEAST OF THE THREE KINGS

Begin by covering a table with a white cloth. On the table, place a manger or a cross, blessed chalk and incense, a candle, matches, and a vessel in which we will burn the incense.

Gather with the whole family around the table.

*A designated person lights the candle, saying the words: **The light of Christ.***

*Everyone responds: **Thanks be to God.***

The head of the family reads:

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany; the revelation of God in a visible form. The incarnate God revealed himself to the Gentiles in the persons of the Magi, to the Chosen People at the Baptism in Jordan, and to His disciples through the miracle performed at Cana in Galilee.

Let us listen to the words of the Gospel according to St. Matthew:

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out.

And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage.

Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

[A moment of silence]

The gifts of the Magi have symbolic meaning. **Gold** – Christ's kingship on earth. **Myrrh** – human nature, and **incense** the divinity of Jesus our Savior. We light incense to fill our home with God's presence.

The lighting of incense followed by prayer.

A designated person reads:

Lord, we thank you for all the graces which you give us and for your providence.

Everyone responds: Lord, be our light and our salvation.

Lord, we entrust our family to you – that we may be able to care for, forgive, and show love to each other.

Everyone responds: Lord, be our light and our salvation.

Lord, please accept our deceased loved ones into eternal life: *[you may name your loved ones]*.

Everyone responds: Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

The head of the family takes the chalk. We sing the following carol while walking over to the door.

We sing:

We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain
Following yonder star

Oh, star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light

Born a king on Bethlehem's plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign

The head of the family uses the blessed chalk to write the below inscription on the outside of the door:

K + M + B 2021 or C + M + B 2021

while saying the words: God, bless this house.

Everyone responds: Amen.

We conclude with a carol:

Joy to the world! The Lord is come
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart
prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods
Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy