

Blessing of the Epiphany Water and Homes

The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates the threefold manifestation of the divinity of Our Lord to the whole world: the adoration of the Magi; the baptism of Christ in the Jordan; and the first miracle at the wedding feast of Cana. The Magi in seeking the Christ Child to adore Him foreshadow the spread of the faith to the Gentiles.

The Blessing of the Epiphany Water begins with the *Litany of the Saints*, the *Agnus Dei* and psalms, after which, the priest chants a powerful exorcism against Satan and his legions. An antiphon extols the fruits of the baptism of Our Lord and references the wedding feast at Cana, and then the exorcism of salt and water begins. After the salt is added to the water, the *Te Deum* is sung, and a simple, but profound prayer beseeching God's mercy ends the ceremony.

The exorcisms are unique to the Epiphany water and make it a powerful sacramental against attacks of Satan so that "wherever this water and salt is sprinkled it may turn aside every attack of the unclean spirit". The water is poured into the Holy Water tank and is used in the blessings of the homes during the Octave of the Epiphany.

The home is blessed on the Feast of the Epiphany or during the Octave by a priest or senior member of the household. The purpose of the blessing is to witness to the Faith and to beseech salvific benefits and protection from evil. If a priest is present, incense is used. Holy water is sprinkled throughout the home and, using blessed chalk, the lintel of each exterior-leading door is marked with the year and initials of the three kings, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. The initials also form the first letters of the Latin prayer *Christus mansionem benedicat* [*May God bless this house*], and serve as a reminder of the date and purpose of the blessing.