

# THE BLESSING OF THE HOUSE ON THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

## On the Meaning of the Blessing of the House

It is an old custom to bless the houses and homes on Epiphany. At least the door of the house is marked with the year, crosses and the letters C M B . In doing so, the house is sprinkled with Epiphany water and incense is raised. The blessing of the house is celebrated with the whole family.

The letters C M B are traditionally seen as the first letters of the Three Kings Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. But actually these letters mean much more: "Christus Mansionem Benedicat". This means "Christ bless this house."

One of the wise men brought incense which, when lit, fills the room as a fragrance. It is an image of man rising up to God; a sign of prayer and festive joy. The "fragrance" of the Good News is meant to permeate the whole home in an invigorating way.

Epiphany water is considered a sign of life and purification. It reminds us of our baptism and thus of our dignity to live as children of God. Through the blessing of the house, Christ who came into the world should also come into our small world, into our family life. Our homes shall, after all, be places of encounter with God: experience of humanity, security, peace and consolation. To us, the sign of blessing on the doors is a sign of His presence and a call to a Christian way of life.

Experience "Epiphany " at home - this is our wish of blessing!

## THE HOLY WATER - A REMEDY

Holy water is not a magic remedy, but it is a healing remedy.

1. Everything God has blessed is truly blessed, i.e. delivered from Satan's slavery and endowed with supernatural properties.
2. God Himself or His servants bless. The blessing is transmitted through the authority of the priest.
3. The water, through the blessing of the Church, infallibly receives all the properties pronounced in the formula of blessing. Water, unlike man, cannot put any obstacle in the way of the blessing.
4. Also today, holy water produces miraculous effects.
5. If, in spite of a deep faith, the hoped-for effect through the holy water does not manifest itself, this lies in the mystery of God. But we may firmly trust that this is to our salvation - even if we do not understand it and cannot easily accept it.

## A DROP OF HOLY WATER

"When a drop of holy water is sprinkled either on oneself or on another person or object, or when a blessing is bestowed on an absent person or object, the prayer of the Church rises up to heaven each time, as it were anew, and draws down graces upon the persons or objects. It expels the power of the evil spirits;

Certainly a drop of holy water often has a greater effect than a long prayer. For our prayer unfortunately is often quite lukewarm and absent-minded. But it is different with the prayer of the Church. It pleases God every moment, in every place, whenever and wherever, and by whomsoever it is offered to Him in the name of the Church.

A Christian should never leave his room for a long time without dispensing three drops of holy water; one for himself and his relatives, so that the Saviour may protect them from all harm to body and soul; a second for dying sinners, so that God may grant them conversion in the last hour, and the third for the poor souls".

*(Obereder H., Holy Water, p. 27f)*

*"I exhort people never to leave their bedrooms in the morning without first having said a fervent prayer on their knees. Only then, I say, can one begin the day in the name of Jesus and expect God's assistance in all business and pursuits. I exhort them not to end the day without prayer and repentance." (Niklaus Wolff)*