

# Epiphany of the Lord

## *Blessing of a Home*

Holy God,  
before he was born, a star showed  
the place of our Savior's birth.  
At his baptism in the Jordan,  
you revealed Jesus  
to be your beloved Son.  
And at the wedding feast of Cana,  
his power was manifest in a miracle.  
On this solemnity of Epiphany,  
we ask you to bless our home.  
Let its shelter from cold and night  
show us your protection and care.  
May we see you everywhere revealed  
in family and friends, guests and strangers,  
in all who come to our door and share  
our meal.  
Fill our home with signs of your presence,  
with joy, laughter, and peace.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



## *January 4, 2009 Seek and You Will Find*

One striking aspect of today's solemnity is the number and diversity of its themes, images, and characters. There is the poverty of the Holy Family and the homage of the Magi, led by a star and warned in a dream, bringing their rich, symbolic gifts. There is an ascetic prophet clothed in camel hair. In the story of the wedding at Cana, newlyweds are just beginning a family, and a mother and son are entering into a new stage of their family life as the son, with encouragement, begins to live his adult vocation. *Epiphany* means "manifestation," or "showing." With the coming of Christ, God is manifest, or shown, in stars and dreams, in the poor and wealthy, in celibate and married, through prophecy and miracle. God seems to

be everywhere today. Many of us hunger for signs, either proof of God's existence or reassurance of God's love. The epiphanies we remember today show us that God wants to be found. God doesn't hide from those who seek him.

We bless our homes today, knowing that God reveals himself in the daily experiences of our lives. To bless your home, gather the household together and pray the blessing on this page. With chalk, write above the door: 20 + C + M + B + 09—the numerals of the new year combined with the initials of the legendary names of the Magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. Some families bless each room, sprinkling it with holy water. Conclude with a favorite carol, such as "Angels from the Realms of Glory."



# This Week at Home

## **Monday, January 5** **Saint John Neumann**

Born in 1881, in what is now the Czech Republic, Saint John Neumann was a missionary. Taking seriously our Lord's words "Go and teach all nations," he became a founder of Catholic education in the United States and Bishop of Philadelphia. You can continue his work by supporting your local Catholic school or Catholic Relief Services, which offers direct aid to schools in crisis areas and support to grass-roots educational programs for school-age children throughout the world. To learn about these programs and how you can help, visit <http://www.crs.org>, hold the cursor over "How We Serve," and select "education."

## **Tuesday, January 6** **All Creatures Great and Small**

According to one Christmas legend, the animals can speak on Christmas Eve. This story expresses in a creative way the belief that the Incarnation (God becoming flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth) impacts all creation. Celebrate this Christmas season with your favorite creature. Take your dog for a long walk. Make a treat for your wild feathered friends by smearing peanut butter on a pinecone, rolling it in birdseed, and attaching it to a tree with string. If you live in snow country, make snow angels and fill them in (like a mosaic) with different types of seeds and branches (one type of seed for the face, branches for the wings, and so forth).



## **Wednesday, January 7** **Practice Hospitality**

As we welcome Jesus into the world, we welcome one another into our hearts and homes. The Christmas season is a time to go visiting and to open the doors of our homes to others. Spending time with grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins can strengthen family ties. Get out the family photo album (or start one) and encourage grandparents to tell family stories. Reach out to a fellow Christian who has become inactive. Visit shut-ins, the ill, prisoners, and anyone in need of company and consolation.

## **Thursday, January 8** **Desert Wisdom**

Today's reading says that those who hate their brothers and sisters are murderers (1 John 4:11-18). How do we free ourselves from hatred and anger? In the fourth and fifth centuries, some Christian men and women lived solitary lives in deserted places in order to draw closer to God. They learned that dwelling in the love

of Christ required them to guard against angry thoughts that could lead to violent actions. Good thoughts can lead to virtue and bad thoughts can lead to sin. Try noticing your thoughts this week. When you catch them going astray, ask for God's help to set them right.

## **Friday, January 9** **Welcome the Outcast**

The solemnity of the Epiphany celebrates Christ's coming to all people everywhere. In today's Gospel (Luke 5:12-16), Jesus cleanses a leper. In doing so, he shows that his ministry extends to the marginalized and outcast of society. If the ministry of Christ extends to these people, so must ours. Jesuit Refugee Services serves refugees and forcibly displaced people throughout the world, providing resources and financial aid, addressing root causes and advocating for responsible and compassionate international response. Find out how you can help by going to <http://www.jrsusa.org>.

## **Saturday, January 10** **God's Gift to You**

The Christmas season is coming to a close. In a consumer culture, we often talk about keeping Christ in Christmas; but really, Christmas is about keeping Christ in our lives throughout the year. What have you or your family received this Christmas that will help you do this? Have you been given a special memory, discovered a helpful spiritual practice, or found a friend in faith? Think about how you can integrate this gift into your life so that you will be fed by the hope, joy, and love of Christmas throughout the year.