

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CHURCH



Father Mark Seiker
3301 Echo Drive
North Platte, Nebraska 69101

Rectory / Office [308-534-5461](tel:308-534-5461)
Parish Hall: 534-0511

Parish email: rectory-office@seas-np.org
Webpage: <http://www.seas-np.org>

The Epiphany of the Lord *January 5, 2020*

Welcome to St. Elizabeth's: It is our hope that you feel at home and among friends here at St. Elizabeth. If you are a visitor for a day, we pray God's speed on your journey. If you are looking for a parish community, we would be delighted to welcome you into our parish family. Please introduce yourselves. Registration forms are available in the entry racks or contact us anytime at 308-534-5461.

Religious Services

Mass Schedule For Sunday Obligation:

Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 10:00 a.m.

Weekdays & Holy Days

As published in the Bulletin.

Rosary

Prayed **8:30 a.m.** Monday mornings, and
30 minutes before weekend Mass.

Sacrament of Confession

Offered 30 minutes before most all daily Masses
Saturday 4:00 p.m. – 4:55 p.m.
Sunday, 9:00 a.m. – 9:55 a.m., or by appointment.

Sacrament of Baptism

Parents are asked to attend a baptism preparation class. This is recommended, and easiest to do before the birth of the child, but must be done before the baptism.

Sacrament of Matrimony

To assist those who plan to marry, all couples will be required to fulfill the diocesan marriage preparation policy, which includes the FOCCUS & Engaged Encounter Programs. This requires a minimum of 4-6 months. The assessment process must be completed before a wedding date is set. Contact pastor early to begin the preparation.

Parish Information

Bulletin Deadline

All material is to be submitted to the parish office before noon Wednesday prior to the Sunday it is to appear. Email to: rectory-office@seas-np.org

New or Moving Parishioners

Please call the office to arrange an appointment with the Pastor to register in the Parish. Please call the office to notify us of any address change.

Your Will

Ask your attorney to include remembrance of your Church in your will.

Religious Vocations

Any young woman interested in religious life, or young man interested in a vocation to the priesthood should contact your pastor. Please pray for vocations!

Education

Family Formation Program

Sunday mornings (Sept-May) 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.)

For those interested in possibly joining the Catholic Church. Usually on Wednesdays (Sept-May), 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. in Parish Hall. Please contact the parish office for more information.

SCHEDULE OF MASSES

Monday	Jan. 6	8:00 a.m.
Tuesday	Jan. 7	7:00 a.m.
Wednesday	Jan. 8	5:30 p.m.
6:00pm–10:00pm Eucharistic Holy Hours => Spend time with Jesus		
Thursday	Jan. 9	8:00 a.m.
Friday	Jan. 10	12:10 p.m.
		5:30 p.m.
Saturday	Jan. 11	5:00 p.m.
Sunday	Jan. 12	10:00 a.m.

INTENTIONS

Christopher Herring
Anna Su Thi Nguyen + Otto, Virginia, Lynn Weskamp +
Elli (Fugate) Schmidt
Velma Eastman + Fr. Melvin Rempé +
People of Our Parish
Virginia Marie Waechter +

“They opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” — Matthew 2:11b

Stewardship: December 29, 2019

Adult Envelopes:\$1,092.50
Loose Plate:\$35.25
Children:\$2.00
Holy Day: (Christmas) \$3,603.00
Total:\$4,732.75

Joy of the Gospel Campaign

Total Pledged:\$958,770.00
 Gifts last week:\$9,570.00
Total Gifts Received:\$879,333.05
 Original DIAL Loan:.....1,485,000.00
 Total Received (CTTF Camp): \$1,025,440.07
 Misc Donations Received:.....\$739,940.31
 Total Payments on Loan:.....\$1,684,428.04
 Balance on DIAL LOAN:..... \$79,052.11

Christmas (Retired Priests)....\$750.00

Parish Calendar

Sunday	Jan. 5	11:15am: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's Parish Buffet Dinner
		12:00pm – 1:00pm: Family Formation Parents' Meeting & Classes for children
Wednesday	Jan. 8	6:00pm – 10:00pm: Eucharistic Adoration 7:00pm – 9:00pm: RCIA Classes in Parish Hall
Thursday	Jan. 9	1:00pm: Adult Bible Study in Parish Hall
Sunday	Jan. 12	11:00am: Knights of Columbus Breakfast 11:30am: Daughters of Charity Meeting

Catholic School News:

Christmas Break: Students are enjoying Christmas break. Classes resume Monday, Jan. 6. Have a blessed Christmas & a Happy New Year!

SCRIP: Purchase SCRIP gift cards for a variety of local and national retailers, which includes everything from grocery, to dining, to gas, to clothing! SCRIP gift cards also make excellent gifts, with many retailers available in smaller denominations. Visit the SCRIP table after weekend Masses or call the Endowment office at 534-5939.

North Platte Catholic School:
Faith and Knowledge for a Brighter Future

Surviving Divorce ... Divorced? Come find comfort, counsel, hope and healing consistent with Catholic Church teachings. The twelve-week video series & facilitator led Surviving Divorce program begins on **February 3rd**, 7-9pm, at John XXIII Diocesan Center, 3700 Sheridan Blvd. A suggested donation of \$50 covers the cost of the program and includes the Surviving Divorce personal guide and all materials. Classes are kept small and may be registered for by contacting the Family Life Office at 402-473-0620 or catholicflo@cdolinc.net

Joy & Hope Anniversary Recognition Mass

The Mass and a reception for all married couples will be held Sunday, **Feb. 9, 2020** at 9:00am Mass at Cathedral of the Risen Christ, Lincoln. We kindly request that all couples register with the Family Life Office, however, special recognition will be given to those couples celebrating 10, 25, 40 and 50 years or more. Suggested donation of \$10 per couple is appreciated! Family guests are welcome. Registration forms should be available at your parish office or call Family Life Office at (402) 473-0620.

Annual Villa Marie Dance ...

Villa Marie Home and School for Special Needs Children is hosting its annual Benefit Dance, Silent Auction, and Raffle—“Anchored in Hope”—on Friday, January 24 at the Rococo Theater, 140 N. 13th Street, Lincoln. *(Please note the change of venue.)* Doors open at 6:00pm, and the event begins at 7:00pm. Music will be provided by Malpractice. Tickets range from \$20 - \$40 and a Valentino's dinner is included in the ticket price. Contact the Rococo at <http://rococotheatre.com/events/> to purchase tickets. Please call Jenny (402-874-0577) or go to our website www.villamarieschool.com for more information. All proceeds from the dance will go toward funding operational expenses at Villa Marie School. Thank you for your support!

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Buffet Dinner ...

TODAY, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020, 11:15am at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Hall. Bring your favorite side dishes and desserts. Meat (fried chicken) will be furnished. **This is for the entire parish.** We need to celebrate St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's Feast Day (actually on Jan 4). Hope to see you there!

Family Formation Parents' Meeting ... Sunday,

Jan. 5, 2020, 12:00pm ... following the Parish Buffet Dinner, we will have our monthly Parents' meeting (*and children will meet in classrooms*). ALL Parishioners are invited and encouraged to stay & listen to the presentation ... it is NOT just for parents, but is a way to learn & deepen our knowledge and appreciation of our Faith. The topic this year is the Liturgical Year.

Nominations for Daughters of Charity ...

Women of the Parish are encouraged to please pray about and consider nominating themselves or another woman to be on the ballot to be an Officer of the Daughters of Charity for 2020-2022. Please consider being active in this important group of women in our Parish!

Advent / Christmas Baby Shower ...

During this Christmas Season, as we celebrate the good news and great joy of our Savior's birth, please express this joy with gifts for His little ones. Our parish is hosting an Advent / Christmas Baby Shower. All gifts will be donated to the Women's Resource Center. Please leave unwrapped, new or gently used items in the crib in the narthex from **Dec. 1 – Jan. 12.**

Nebraska Walk for Life ...

On **Jan. 18, 2020**, the Nebraska Walk for Life will begin at 10:00am at the north steps of the State Capitol. From there, we will walk to the UNL Student Union, where the Keynote Speakers, Jennifer and Jeff Christie, will speak at 11:30am. Prior to the Walk, join us for the annual Pro-Life Mass starting at 9:00am at St. Mary Church, 1420 K Street, Lincoln. Reverend Scott Harter, Pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Ord, NE, will be the celebrant and the homilist for the Mass.

Life: An “Epiphany” of God ... “Life is always a good. ... Why is life a good? This question is found everywhere in the Bible, and from the very first pages it receives a powerful and amazing answer. The life which God gives man is quite different from the life of all other living creatures, inasmuch as man, although formed from the dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7, 3:19; Job 34:15; Ps 103:14; 104:29), is a manifestation of God in the world, a sign of his presence, a trace of his glory (cf. Gen 1:26-27; Ps 8:6). This is what Saint Irenaeus of Lyons wanted to emphasize in his celebrated definition: ‘Man, living man, is the glory of God’. Man has been given a sublime dignity, based on the intimate bond which unites him to his Creator: in man, there shines forth a reflection of God himself” (The Gospel of Life, n. 34).

Spiritual Warfare Series ... A 3-part series will be given by Matt Simmons, Director of Spiritual Formation, on Spiritual Warfare at John XXIII Diocesan Center from 6:30-8:30pm. Ephesians 6:12 “For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens.” Series will be January 21, Our Identity in Christ; February 18, Battleground of Our Minds; and March 24, Our Weapons for Spiritual Warfare. The workshop is free and registration is kindly requested. For topic details and to register please visit <https://lincolndiocese.regfox.com/03oe-spiritual-warfare>. Questions? Call 402-473-0615 or email Annette-Wemhoff@cdolinc.net

Marriage Help ... *Retrouvaille* (pronounced *retro-vi*) has helped tens of thousands of couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. This program can help you too. *Retrouvaille* is a program for married couples that feel bored, disillusioned, frustrated, or angry in their marriage. Some experience coldness. Others experience conflict in their relationship. Most don’t know how to change the situation or even communicate with their spouse about it. This program has helped tens of thousands of couples experiencing difficulties in their marriage. For confidential information about or to register for the February program beginning with a weekend on February 14-16, 2020, call 1-888-317-5654 or 308-986-2351 or www.retrouvaille.org on web.

Put a Retreat into Your Schedule ... register at www.goodcounselretreat.com & receive immediate confirmation or call Good Counsel Retreat House at 402-786-2705 to register now.

January – May Schedule:

- Jan 10-12 Deacon James Keating Men
“Men: Christ Choose YOU ... Do You choose Him?”
- Jan 23-26 Regnum Christi/ Fr. Bruce Wren, LC Women
“Women’s Spiritual Exercises”
- Jan 31 - Feb 2 ... Fr. William Holoubek Men / Women
“Unbound: Breaking Free from Spiritual Wounds”
- Feb 7-8..... Fr. Lux & Fr. McGuire (LDCCW)... Women
(LDCCW Winter Symposium Fri-Sat)
- Feb 28 - Mar 1 .. Fr. Christopher Goodwin..... Men / Women
“Living on God’s Word”
- Mar 6-8..... Fr. Joseph Faulkner Men / Women
“Biblical Prayer and its Benefits”
- Mar 13-15 Tony Brandt & Chris Stewart. Men/ Women
“Disciples on Mission: Discipleship, Evangelization & Stewards”
- Mar 23-26 Fr. Chris Barak & Fr. Gary Coulter Men / Women
“4-day Directed Spiritual Exercises Mon-Thur”
- Apr 3-5 Fr. Sean Kilcawley Men / Women
“Rend Your Hearts: Living a Spirituality of Surrender”
- Apr 9-11 Marian Sisters Young Women
Holy Week Retreat for Young Women
- Apr 17-19 Fr. John Rooney Men / Women
“Receiving Mercy & Bering Merciful”
- May 1-3 Marian Sisters (Mother Ann Marie & Sr. Serena). Women
Women’s Retreat on Mary – Mother of God

Daughters of Charity (Altar Society) Meeting: will be Sunday, Jan. 12, at 11:30am in Rectory Conference Room. All women are invited & encouraged to attend.

Knights of Columbus Meeting ... Mon, Jan. 13, 7:00pm, Parish Hall. All Knights are invited to attend.

Breakfast by Knights of Columbus ... Sunday, Jan. 12, in the Parish Hall after 10:00am Mass; serving pancakes, eggs, fixings, biscuits & gravy, coffee & juices. Free Will offering accepted ... Proceeds go to the purchase of Missalettes.

Wednesday Eucharistic Adoration ... Wednesdays of the year, 6:00pm (after the 5:30pm Mass) - 10:00pm. We need at least one (1) person present during each of those four hours. Anyone is invited to just “drop in” to spend some time with our Eucharistic Lord ... but we need 4 persons each week.

O, Come Let Us Adore Him, Christ the Lord! ...

May the words of our Christmas hymn help us to find the real meaning of Christmas and live it throughout the whole year!!

FROM FR. MARK SEIKER:

Nominations for Parish Council ... are being accepted for the next few weeks. You may nominate another parishioner or yourself. Normally the terms for the parish council are for two years. We have 2 veteran members & 2 new members on the parish council each year. Hopefully there will be 4 parishioners’ names on the ballot.

The Christmas Season ... lasts from the Christmas Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 12. It has been a custom of the Church to celebrate ADVENT during the Advent Season without any Christmas decorations, & to celebrate CHRISTMAS during the Christmas Season, by leaving the manger scene & trees up until the end of the Christmas Season (Jan 12). May we all walk the path of God, not the path of man! May each of you have a HOLY Christmas season and a Blessed New Year!

Christmas Thank You’s ... to those who helped with decorating the Church, arranged the flowers, set up outdoor decorations, the Choirs, Cantors, Servers, Lectors, Acolytes, Ushers, & all who gave of themselves to the Lord to make the feast day of our Lord’s birth a special day. Also thanks to all who gave cards, gifts, & Christmas goodies to me, and especially for your prayers. Your kindness is appreciated!

Children’s Envelopes ... are available for every child (we know of) from Kindergarten-Seniors in High School. If someone doesn’t receive a box of envelopes, please contact the rectory. Also, if there are pre-school children who would like to receive envelopes, please contact the rectory. We’ll give children a statement of their contributions for 2019 in Jan. 2020. **Please use these envelopes for the new year 2019, not old envelopes.** Please teach the children about giving to the Lord!!

New Parishioners / Moved Parishioners:

over the last year there have been some new parishioners added to our parish family and some parishioners who have moved away. We want to welcome those who are new and remember to pray for those who have moved away. **New Parishioners:** John & Donna Bode [Aug 2018], Mike Baxa [Jan 2019], Brent & Nikki Downey [Mar 2019], Mark & Cathy Leathers [Mar 2019], Brock & Jessica Devore [Mar 2019], Belle Soto [June 2019], Monica Kramer [Oct 2019], Virginia Coppersmith [Nov 2019], Please introduce yourself to them & welcome them to our parish. **Parishioners who have moved away:** Rick & Alexa Marquez [moved to Ringwood, NJ Aug 2018], Lisa Clouatre [moved to Bellevue, ME Nov 2018], Melissa Johnson [moved to Saint George, KS July 2019], Marcie Minchow [moved to Omaha Nov 2019], Margo Higgins [moved to Gothenburg Nov 2019].

Blessed Chalk & Epiphany Blessing ... available in Narthex of Church this week. Families are encouraged to pray together and encourage each other in living our Catholic Faith! Perhaps make a plan to include daily prayer together as a family in your daily schedule.

Liturgical Minister

	Sat., Jan. 11, 5:00pm	Sun., Jan. 12, 10:00am
Lector	Jim Nisley	Michael Lafleur
Acolyte	Jerry Volesky	Conrad Buhrman
Server	William Krondak	Jace Grunden
	Nicholas Krondak	Weston Hammond
Music	Greg Vandenberg	Peggy Orr
Gifts	Volunteer – Ask Ushers	Volunteer – Ask Ushers
Ushers	Jerry Beckius	Jeff Orr
	Sharon Beckius	Volunteer
Rosary		

Readings for the Week

Monday:	1 Jn 3:22 — 4:6; Ps 2:7bc-8, 10-12a; Mt 4:12-17, 23-25
Tuesday:	1 Jn 4:7-10; Ps 72:1-4, 7-8; Mk 6:34-44
Wednesday:	1 Jn 4:11-18; Ps 72:1-2, 10, 12-13; Mk 6:45-52
Thursday:	1 Jn 4:19 — 5:4; Ps 72:1-2, 14, 15bc, 17; Lk 4:14-22a
Friday:	1 Jn 5:5-13; Ps 147:12-15, 19-20; Lk 5:12-16
Saturday:	1 Jn 5:14-21; Ps 149:1-6a, 9b; Jn 3:22-30
Sunday:	Is 42:1-4, 6-7; Ps 29:1-4, 3, 9-10; Acts 10:34-38; Mt 3:13-17

Prayers for the sick: J.D. Troyer, Matt Reisen (Matt & Ashley Perlinger's friend), Margaret Ruskamp (Donna Bode's mother), Special Intention, Carolyn Cohen, Tim Garth (Theresa McCarthy-Garth's son), Those struggling with Alcoholism, Mary Lou Robles (Toni Barron's sister), Renate Nordquist, Sharon Beckius, Mike & Kim Paul, Jim Beckius.

Prayers for the deceased: Dolores Kosmicki, Patricia Zamora (Toni Barron's sister), Teresa Clouatre, Gordon Swanson (Cindy Swanson's father), Florena Schneweis (Emily Krondak's mother), Carlos Fleury (Steve/Janet Fear's son-in-law), Ruby Ramirez (Toni Barron's sister), JoAnn Bode Waters (John Bode's sister), Fr. Paul Rutten, Fr. Brad Zitek, Eileen Boltz, Peggy Fleecs, Leona Clouatre, Bernadine Torres, Father Jim Novakowski, Martha Burbach, Luke Ranck, Margaret Baxa, Mary Portz, Phyllis Beckius.

Birthdays/Anniversaries: 1/4 - Tessa Nordquist, 1/5 - Nicholas Krondak, Obie Wartman, 1/8 - Sheila Exner, Kaye Plienis, 1/11 - Lucy Wartman, 1/12 - Corinne Hammond.

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION ... Life hands us many epiphanies or "wake up calls." A few years ago, a young couple adopted a two-year-old child in a morass of red tape, complications, and court hearings. At the baby's baptism, the priest suggested appending an "adoption blessing," wherein the new relationship was expressed and affirmed. There is a place in that rite for the child to speak, and instead the priest said, "Can you give Daddy a kiss?" Standing in the midst of his church, the young adoptive father suddenly welled up with tears as he embraced the child. Afterward, he explained that through all the hassles and legal struggles he never until that moment in church understood that he was the parent of this child. The ritual claimed them for each other, gave expression to their relationship that the legal documents never could, and firmly cemented this child into the heart of a community as everyone erupted into heartfelt applause. This assembly witnessed in a powerful way what happens in every baptism: the mystery of adoption, the free flow of grace, the overwhelming sense of God's presence at the heart of our life's journey. —Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION ... We are in the season of the Incarnation, the mystery of God's love poured out in Christ's birth. The word derives from the Latin *carnis* meaning "flesh." Throughout history, some Christians have distrusted the "flesh," and stressed a hatred of this world and its pleasures. Perhaps they have not paid enough attention to how "embodied" the sacraments are. One third-century author put it plainly in an image that may alarm diet-conscious Americans, explaining that we wash the body so the soul can be cleansed, that we anoint the body so the soul can be strengthened, and that we eat the body and blood of Christ so that "the soul can fatten on God."

Catholics "get" that God is revealed in this world. The sacraments use the "stuff" of creation: water and oil; the senses of the body, touch and taste and smell. We use the things of this world rightly. After all, God's love poured out into human flesh means the world has eternal value. Why else would Jesus describe the kingdom to come as a teeming city or a marriage banquet? Catholics are realists, and nowhere is that more evident than when we gather for a sacrament. —Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD ... Epiphany can be understood as an extension of the Nativity of the Lord that we celebrate on December 25. While at Christmas we celebrate Jesus' coming as the long-awaited king and Messiah of the Jewish people, on Epiphany we celebrate the revelation that Jesus is the Savior and Light of all nations – Jews, Gentiles, and all people. The star shines so brightly that it attracts magi who come from far distant countries to worship Jesus. They are not Jews, yet they are drawn to the Light of the world. The letter to the Ephesians reveals that the Light of the world was for the Gentiles as well as the Jews – Christ gathers all people into the light of his love. The reading from Isaiah also describes a gathering of diverse peoples, but this time it is to the light that emanates from the people of God. Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co., Inc.

ILLNESS ... They are as sick, that surfeit with too much, as that they starve with nothing. — William Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*

HEROD AND THE EPIPHANY ... Why impious Herod, vainly fear that Christ the Savior cometh here? He takes no earthly realms away, who gives the crown that lasts for aye. — *Crudelis Herodes Dawn*, Tr. By J.M. Neale

FULFILL TODAY ... If what you did yesterday still looks big to you, surely you have not done much today. — Anonymous

Pray for our Seminarians: Rev. Mr. Robert John Froeschl, from Sts. Peter and Paul in Falls City. He entered the Seminary in 2014. He is in Theology 4 at Mount St. Mary Seminary.

Pray for our Religious Sisters: School Sisters of Christ the King, Marian Sisters of the Diocese of Lincoln, Sisters at the Carmel of Jesus, Mary & Joseph, Pink Sisters, Sisters of Mary, Queen of Mercy.

HOLY FATHER'S INTENTIONS ... (January)

Prayer intention for evangelization - Promotion of World Peace: We pray that Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote peace and justice in the world.

FAMILY BLESSING ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

Leader: Christ is the beginning & the end, the first & the last, all seasons & years & ages belong to Him. Glory to God in the Highest!

ALL: AND PEACE TO HIS PEOPLE ON EARTH.

(Leader then uses these or other words:) The old is finished and done away with; Christ comes to make all things new. We all need new beginnings. Let us pause for a few moments to reflect on ways that we want our lives to be different this year, and then let us make some practical resolutions. Let us especially remember that recent popes have designated New Year's Day as a day of prayer for peace. May we always be instruments of Christ's peace and reconciliation.

(All pause for a few moments reflection.)

(Reader then proclaims the Scripture reading: Revelation 21:1-5)

Leader: Give us a new spirit of love, a more fervent hope, and a deeper faith during this new year. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Leader: Help each of us to have a greater spirit of cooperation with each other. May we always support each other and forgive each other, we pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Leader: May we be as patient with each other as we want others to be with us. May we be as understanding of each other as we want others to be of us. May we be as loving toward each other as you are toward us. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Leader: Give us a good conscience; give us a horror of sin; give us a passion for justice and for reverence for every precious human life. Give us peace of soul, peace in the home, peace in our community among all groups, peace in our nation, and peace in the world. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

(All then pray together the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. AMEN.

BLESSING OF HOMES ON EPIPHANY

(In the Universal Church, Epiphany is a Holy Day of Obligation, Jan. 6, the "Twelfth Day of Christmas". In the United States and other countries which do not observe Epiphany as a Holy Day, the celebration is usually transferred to the Sunday after New Year's Day. If desired, the following explanation may be used as an introduction to the blessing of homes.)

The blessing of homes on Epiphany is a very old Catholic custom. When the Wise Men or Magi became an important focus of the celebration of Epiphany, the blessing of homes was a natural conclusion: The Wise Men came to bring gifts to honor the King of Kings; but when they entered the home at Bethlehem, they were blessed by Him whom they came to bless! Since the high Middle Ages, the names Caspar, Melchior, and Baltassar have been given to the Magi, and they have been honored as saints; there is a magnificent reliquary of their alleged remains behind the high altar of the Cathedral of Cologne, Germany. The actual facts and history of the Magi are not nearly so important as the celebration. We, too, are always blessed by those whom we go to bless. To give is to receive. To dedicate our homes to Christ is to gain untold blessings from Him who manifested Himself in glory to the world on Epiphany. In the golden age of liturgy, two other mysteries were also celebrated on Epiphany: the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and the Wedding Feast at Cana. Each of these mysteries gives meaning to the blessing of homes. By sharing in the wedding feast of Cana. Each of these mysteries give meaning to the blessing of homes. By sharing in the wedding feast of Cana, Jesus blessed married life and family life in the home. By His baptism, Jesus was consecrated as the Suffering Servant of the Lord. He began His mission to reconcile and to save; we begin our mission as Christians from our family life in the home.

Leader: Peace be to this home and to all who live here! Blessed be God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit who live within us!

ALL: NOW AND FOREVER!

Leader: In the third Mass of Christmas Day, we heard the opening words of the Gospel according to John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God! He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through Him, and without Him, nothing came to be. And the Word was made flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only-begotten Son of the Father." When the translation says that He "made His dwelling among us", the real words are "He pitched His tent among us." It teaches the very down-to-earth and personal presence of Christ with us. He is here in this home. May He always be in our hearts. Today in signs and symbols, we renew our realization of the presence of the Lord in our home.

The family gathers at the front door. The leader marks over the door, with a piece of chalk, the following: 20 + C + M + B + 20. He then says:

Leader: We have written the number of this year together with the initial of the Magi, Caspar, Melchior, and Baltassar. May God always send His angels to dwell in this home. May He keep us always in His peace and love. May we provide welcome to strangers and to those in need. May He bless our coming and our going so that everything that comes to this home or goes forth from this home may always be guided by the light of faith, hope, and love. We ask all these things through Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

The family then goes from room to room sprinkling each room with holy water. If the room is more significant to one member of the family, that member of the family may sprinkle that room, and lead the petition. As the family goes from room to room, the following -- or other petitions (more suited to the family) may be used. Petitions below which are not relevant should be omitted. After sprinkling all the rooms (or representative rooms) the family gathers back in the living room or family room.

(Dining Room) Bless us, Lord, when we eat our meals together. May the food we take here make us long for the Bread of Life, and may our meals here be a pledge and foretaste of the banquet you prepare for us in heaven. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER.

(Kitchen) Families must work together and cooperate in preparations for meals and in cleaning up afterward. May God bless the work of each of us, and make us appreciate the work that each contributes for the good of this family. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER.

(Parents' Bed Room) Fathers and Mothers are given the awesome responsibility of guiding their children in this world to the world to come. May the Father and Mother of this house always be guided by the Holy Family. May God give them wisdom and strength to guide this family always in truth and in love. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER.

(Baby's Room) God gives the precious gift of life. May we always reverence every life, and care for those who need our care the most. May God watch over and keep our baby safe from all harm. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER.

(Boys' Room) Jesus was a boy. He understands and knows each of us better than we know ourselves. May He guide us always and help us to grow. May He make us humble in good times, and may He give us strength and humility in bad times. In everything may we serve Him as best we can. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER.

(Girls' Room) The greatest human person who ever lived was a woman. Before she was a woman, she was a girl. Mary did not always know what God had in store for her, but she followed in faith. May God bless our femininity, our girlhood, our young womanhood. May He guide us always so that our lives may give Him glory. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER.

(Garage) From here we go, to here we come. May God protect us on our journeys and bring us safely back home. May He give us wisdom and skill and patience in driving so that we shall always respect our lives and the lives of others. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER.

(Bathrooms, closets, utility rooms) So many rooms are necessary for the good functioning of the home. May each room always show forth our respect for each other. May we work together to keep them clean so that the entire family may always enjoy this home in its fullness. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER.

(Family Room or Living Room) In this room we watch television, we read, we talk, we entertain friends, we relax, we hear music. May everything that we do in this room be done for the glory of God. may all that we hear and all that we see be worthy of His presence in our home. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER.

The family then joins hands and prays together the Lord's Prayer. A favorite hymn may be sung. Then all say:

MAY GOD BLESS US AND KEEP US IN HIS LOVE
THROUGHOUT THIS ENTIRE YEAR. AMEN.

An appropriate time for the removing of the Christmas crib and other decorations is at the completion of Epiphany, i.e. on the night before the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord.