



## The Twelfth Day of Christmas

“The Twelve Days of Christmas” is a popular song most of us have heard many times before. Traditionally, the feast of Epiphany was the twelfth day of Christmas, or January 6th and for many people, marked the end of the Christmas season and celebrations. On that day, many people would take down their decorations. Christmas vacation would end for school children and many people would prepare to enter the bleakness of the long winter season. However, the celebration of Epiphany should really perk us up and remind us of what we celebrated just two weeks ago.

What does the word Epiphany mean anyway? In a general sense, it means “manifestation” or “showing.” People of faith say it means, “Appearance of Jesus as Messiah,” and not just as another person, but as a Messiah, as the one long awaited. Today we celebrate the event in which Jesus was shown to the non-Jewish world for the first time. The three wise men represent the Gentile world. A baby was born into the world and the three astrologers went to see this baby. Certainly babies are born every day all over the world, but there was something special about this baby. This baby was both human and divine. This baby also came into the world for the whole world. Each gift given by the wise men is symbolic and tells us something about this newborn infant.

The gold symbolized the royalty of Jesus. It tells us that He will have a kingdom; a kingdom not built of palaces and armies but one built on love and peace. The frankincense symbolizes adoration and prayer, as does incense today. When we pray to the Father, we ask Jesus to bring to Him our petitions. Our prayers rise like incense to the Lord. The myrrh, a spice put into the tombs of Jesus’ day, symbolizes the death and burial that one day will be a part of His earthly experience.

For today’s feast of Epiphany, blessed chalk is available in the narthex. You are invited to take a piece of chalk home with you and mark your doorway with the following inscription: “20 + C + M + B + 17.” The C-M-B are the initials of the legendary names of the Magi: Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar. It also stands for Christus Mansionem Benedicat: May Christ bless this dwelling place. As you mark your doorway, the presiding member of the household prays: “May all who come to our house this year rejoice to find Christ living among us; and may we seek and serve in everyone we meet, Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.”

*Father David*