

*Glory to God in the highest.
On earth, peace.*

Christmas

December 25, 2010 – January 9, 2011

Christmas

DAILY PRAYER

Jesus, Word of God:
Be on my lips.
Gloria in excelsis!

Jesus, Prince of peace:
Grant me a humble heart.
Gloria in excelsis!

Jesus, Light from light:
Shine in my every deed.
Gloria in excelsis!

TABLE PRAYER FOR THE Christmas SEASON

Christ our Savior is born!
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We celebrate your glorious birth,
O Christ.
May this meal strengthen us
to be light for others.

Christ our Savior is born!
We hear the voice of the
herald angels.
May the food of this table
nourish us to proclaim
the good news.

Christ our Savior is born!
We behold your humble birth.
May this be a time of grace,
so others will see your love in us.

Christ our Savior is born!
The Lord has come to us!
Bless this meal, bless our lives
during these joyful Christmas
days. Amen.

Epiphany

HOUSE
BLESSING

*Items needed: chalk and a small bottle
of holy water. Gather with family members,
friends, and perhaps some neighbors at the
front door.*

In the (+) name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tradition names the magi
Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar.
With chalk, their initials sign this doorway, along with four
crosses of the seasons, and the numerals of the new year.

[20 + C + M + B + 11]

Let us pray: *Christus mansionem benedicat.*
May Christ bless this house. Amen.

Leader (or other Reader):
A reading from the Letter to the Ephesians.
In Christ you also are built together spiritually into
a dwelling place for God.
The Word of the Lord.

Each room is sprinkled with holy water.

Living room:
Bring us to live with you one day in heaven.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Kitchen:
You prepare for us a rich feast.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Dining room:
Feed us at the heavenly banquet.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Bedrooms:
In you alone we rest securely.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

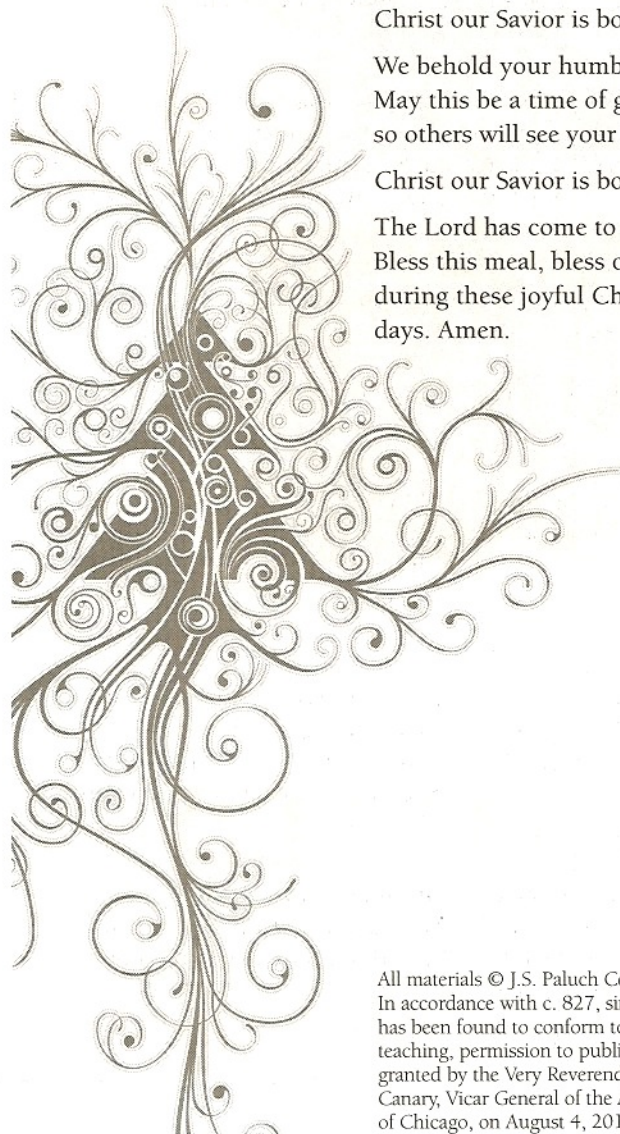
Bathroom:
You cleanse us from every impurity.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

All return to the front door to pray together.
Our Father . . .

All are sprinkled with holy water.

Bless this household through all days to come,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

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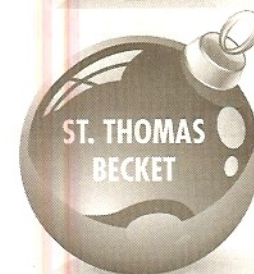


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of Chicago, on August 4, 2010.

A HOLIDAY FILLED WITH

Holy Days

Do you know the holy days that come after Christmas? Take this simple quiz before reading about these celebrations. See if you can match the feast to the date it occurs this year (or other years).



- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. St. Sylvester | a. December 26, 2010 |
| 2. Holy Innocents | b. December 26 (traditional) |
| 3. Holy Family Sunday | c. December 27 |
| 4. St. Thomas Becket | d. December 28 |
| 5. St. John, Evangelist | e. December 29 |
| 6. St. Stephen | f. December 31 |

HOLY FAMILY SUNDAY (first Sunday after Christmas)

In England, this Sunday was an occasion for godparents and their godchildren to celebrate with “god cakes” (pastries filled with sweetened fruit, nuts, and spices). Roll ready-to-bake piecrust into squares, fill, fold diagonally into a triangle, crimp the edges, and bake till crisp and bubbly.

ST. STEPHEN (35 AD), deacon, martyr

Stephen was stoned to death for teaching about Jesus. As a deacon, it was his task to organize meals to feed the poor. In remembrance of Stephen’s work for the needy, the British people used to collect money throughout the year in little clay boxes. On the feast of St. Stephen or “Boxing Day” these boxes were broken and the money distributed to the poor. (This is the origin of the “piggy bank.”)

ST. JOHN (1st century), apostle, evangelist

On this day, children with names derived from John were invited to light the Christmas candles in the house. Because this beloved apostle was believed to have drunk poisoned wine and remained unharmed, people blessed and drank wine on his feast. A supply was kept throughout the year for brides and grooms to sip after their wedding, and for travelers to drink for protection.

HOLY INNOCENTS (1st century)

This memorial honors Bethlehem’s baby boys who were killed by Herod in his effort to eliminate any future threat from a rival. In some places this day has been kept as a day of prayer and abstinence from meat. It was once considered the day when children who died unbaptized would be welcomed into heaven if the faithful prayed for them and called them by a Christian name.

ST. THOMAS BECKET (1170 AD), bishop, martyr

This hunting companion of England’s Henry II became Bishop of Canterbury reluctantly but sincerely. When he refused to support the king’s injustices, the friendship ended. After a six-year exile, Thomas was martyred by the king’s henchmen. Bishop’s bread (a kind of fruitcake) and bishop’s wine (sweetened, spiced, and flavored with orange zest) are customary refreshments today.

ST. SYLVESTER (335 AD), pope

Sylvester was the first Bishop of Rome to lead Christians freely and openly in worship. Two chocolate cakes have been named for this Pope: one with whipped cream, rum, and candied chestnuts; and a triple chocolate (dark, milk, and white) cake with tart dried cherries. For a beverage, *Pabst* (pope’s punch) is nearly identical to bishop’s wine.