In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

The inscription placed by the priest above the entrance to traditional Catholic homes at their blessing on the Feast of Epiphany (Jan. 6) reminds us that a New Year is upon us. It should also be a reminder that traditional Catholics are in for yet another year of battle against Modernists who would seek to destroy our pious traditions and our One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith.

20 + C + M + B + 20

The priest blessing the home in the year 2020 would traditionally inscribe the formula upon the inside entrance to the home with blessed chalk. The numbers represent the year of the blessing. The letters represent **C**aspar, **M**elchior, and **B**altassar, traditionally known as the Three Kings. However, Modernists have attacked the notion that there were three kings.

In his Encyclical on the doctrine of the Modernists, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, issued on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Sept. 8, 1907), Pope St. Pius X defined Modernism as "the synthesis of all heresies" (n. 39). He warns that Modernists "exercise all their ingenuity in an effort to weaken the force and falsify the character of tradition, so as to rob it of all its weight and authority … who dare, after the impious fashion of heretics to deride the ecclesiastical traditions, to invent novelties of some kind … or endeavor by malice or craft to overthrow any one of the legitimate traditions of the Catholic Church" (n. 42).

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew is the only Gospel that records the visit of the Three Kings to the Divine Child Jesus (cf. Matt. 2:1-13). In it, the Latin term *"Magi"* (plural for Magus) is used to refer to the holy visitors. The Douay-Rheims Bible translates Magi as "wise men." Tradition has held fast to the idea that these Magi, these wise men, were also Three Kings. Remember that the twin fonts of Catholic Truth are Sacred Scripture AND Sacred Tradition. Unlike Protestants, we do not rely upon the Bible alone, a heresy known as *Sola Scriptura.*

Accordingly, relying upon Scripture alone, plus a lot of Modernist zeal, the Magi in the Gospel have been dismissed as not having been kings at all. The account of the visit of the Magi is often sadly dismissed as a pious fiction. Other opponents of the traditional view of Three Kings propose novelties such that the Magi were not kings, but rather: magicians, sages, sorcerers, religious scholars, astronomers, or astrologers.

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novelties of some kind … or endeavor by malice or craft to overthrow any one of the legitimate traditions of the Catholic Church" (n. 42).

Noting that St. Matthew's Gospel does not mention the number of Magi who visited Jesus, many *Sola Scriptura*/Modernist writers opine that since the Bible was silent, we do not know how many there were. In support of tradition, it should be noted that the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome has a fresco of the adoration of the **Three** Magi on the arch of the Greek Chapel *(Capella Greca)* that dates back to the second half of the second century, the earliest known image of the Magi.

In Cologne, Germany we can find the "Shrine of the Three Kings" above and behind the Cathedral's grand high altar. Three separate magnificent gold and silver gilded reliquaries adorned with over 1,000 jewels are placed two on the bottom and one on the top, containing the relics of the Three Kings. Three large jewels on the front of each sarcophagus mark the location of the crowned heads of the Three Magi. German kings after their coronation would travel to the Three Kings Shrine in Cologne to offer gifts to Jesus Christ, so as to be recognized by Him, as were the Three Magi at Bethlehem.

The attacks upon the historicity and identity of the Three Magi is an affront to Catholic Tradition and to the holy relics at the Shrine of the Three Kings. Pope St. Pius X notes in *Pascendi* that Modernists "destroy as far as they can the pious traditions of the people, and bring into disrespect certain relics highly venerable from their antiquity" (n. 43).

The relics of the Three Kings were discovered by St. Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, in India at the beginning of the fourth century. They were originally honored at *Sancta Sophia* Cathedral in Constantinople, then brought to the Basilica of St. Eustorgio in Milan in the fifth century, and finally brought to Cologne by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1164. Further indications of the historicity of the Three Kings is further testified to by their inclusion in a seventh-century Martyrology of Saints.[1]

The Three Kings became followers of Christ on that first Epiphany and are said to have returned together to India, where they built a church. Tradition tells us that after the first Pentecost (cf. Acts 2), St. Thomas the Apostle spread the Gospel in India. It was in India that the Three Kings are said to have been baptized by St. Thomas and consecrated as bishops. Each then spread the Catholic Faith to the point of martyrdom, shedding their blood for Christ.[2]

Seeking the One True Faith, the Three Kings were inspired by Almighty God to undertake a perilous journey from afar to worship the new-born King of Kings. Most often it is said that: Caspar is believed to have been a King of India, who brought the gift of Frankincense;

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Melchior, who brought the gift of gold, was believed to be the oldest of the Three Kings and is traditionally referred to as the King of Persia; and the gift of myrrh, given by Baltassar of dark skin and a heavy beard, is considered to have been the youngest of the three and a King of Arabia.

In the Traditional Roman Ritual, we have the "Blessing of Homes on Epiphany."[3] The opening Antiphon is as follows (translated from the prescribed Latin text):

> "From the East came the Magi to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; and opening their treasures, they offered costly gifts: gold to the great King, incense to the true God, and myrrh in symbol of His burial. Alleluia."

These symbolic gifts testify to Who Jesus was, is, and always will be: gold for the King of Kings; incense for the true God; and myrrh for the true Man. These symbolic gifts testify to the need for all peoples of every nation and every creed in our time to have a modern-day Epiphany recognizing the true identity of Jesus Christ, as did the Three Kings.

In our troubled times, infested by Modernism, the heresy of religious indifferentism is rampant within the Church and throughout the world. The idea that all religions are of God and lead to eternal salvation is a heresy that the Three Kings did not embrace, nor should we. The Three Kings turned away from their false religions and worshipped on bended knee before the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God made man.

As for religious indifferentism, the following errors/heresies, present in our day, were condemned by the great Pope Pius IX in his Syllabus of Errors (attached to his 1864 Encyclical *Quanta Cura*): "Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true" (n. 15); "Man may, in the observance of any religion whatever, find the way of eternal salvation, and arrive at eternal salvation" (n. 16); "Good hope at least is to be entertained of the eternal salvation of all those who are not at all in the true Church of Christ" (n. 17); "Protestantism is nothing more than another form of the same true Christian religion" (n. 18).

Those Three Kings, who were the first Gentiles to be converted to Catholicism, symbolize that ALL peoples of the world are called to worship Jesus Christ as Lord, God, and King of Kings. The Three Kings,Caspar, Melchior, and Baltassar, are **Patron Saints against Religious Indifferentism**.

Of the gifts that the Three Kings offered to the Incarnate Word of God, and of the gifts that

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we are to likewise offer, St. Thomas Aquinas writes:

> "… they offer gifts in keeping with Christ's greatness: 'gold, as to the great King; they offer up incense as to God, because it is used in the Divine Sacrifice; and myrrh, which is used in embalming the bodies of the dead, is offered as to Him who is to die for the salvation of all' (Gregory, Hom. X in Evang.). And hereby, as Gregory says (Hom. X in Evang.), we are taught to offer gold, 'which signifies wisdom, to the new-born King, by the luster of our wisdom in His sight.' We offer God incense, 'which signifies fervor in prayer, if our constant prayers mount up to God with an odor of sweetness'; and we offer myrrh, 'which signifies mortification of the flesh, if we mortify the ill-deeds of the flesh by refraining from them.'"[4]

This leads us to better understand the following prayer from the Traditional Roman Ritual for the blessing of homes on the Feast of Epiphany (translated from the prescribed Latin text):

> "Bless, O Lord, almighty God this home that it be the shelter of health, chastity, self-conquest, humility, goodness, mildness, obedience to the commandments, and thanksgiving to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. May blessing remain for all time upon this dwelling and them that live herein. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."[5]

The Roman Ritual also contains a "Blessing of Chalk on Epiphany" as follows (translated from the prescribed Latin text):

> "Bless O Lord God, this creature chalk to render it helpful to men. Grant that they who use it in faith and with it inscribe upon the entrance of their homes the name of Thy saints, Caspar, Melchior, and Baltassar may through their merits and intercession enjoy health of body and protection of soul. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."[6]

So, as the priest blesses our home with the formula "**20 + C + M + B + 20**", let us also recognize it as a **formula against Modernism** inspired by Saints **C**aspar, **M**elchior, and **B**altassar. Those letters can be also remind us of the Latin prayer, ***C****hristus* ***M****ansionem*

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B*enedicat* ("Christ bless our home").

May Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, bless you, your family and friends in this New Year as well as our family at *Catholic Family News.* Saints Caspar, Melchior, and Baltassar, pray for us!

Always remember to keep Christ and Catholic Tradition in Christmas and in the New Year. And always remember my **Three R's of Modernism**: **R**ecognize it; **R**efute it; and **R**eturn to Tradition.*In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

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[1] The Three Holy Kings Who Came to Adore the Lord, Our Lady of Fatima Crusader Bulletin, Vol. 42, Issue No. 129.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Rev. Philip T. Weller, *The Roman Ritual*, Volume III – The Blessings (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1946).

[4] *Summa Theologica* (ST) III, q. 36, art. 8, reply to question 4.

[5] Weller, *op. cit.*

[6] *Ibid.*

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