This Month's Liturgy; January 2022

I would say 'Happy New Year' but of course that would be wrong – as we all know the beginning of the new liturgical year was the first Sunday of Advent, 28th November 2021! However as the new CIVIL year of 2022 began on January 1st, it is quite legitimate to wish each other a continuation of blessing and happiness for the months ahead of us or as Saint Aelred of Rievaux whose feast we keep on 12th of January would bid us, a constant deepening of the invaluable gift of FRIENDSHIP – friendship with Christ at the heart of everything and then, in him, a valuing and a nurturing and nourishing of those friendships which support and strengthen us each day of our lives.

One little custom which you may already keep is that of the blessing of our houses – and not just the bricks and mortar but by extension the households, which takes place on the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (which this year is kept on Thursday January 6th). Custom has it that just as the Magi (traditionally know as **C**aspar, **M**elchior and **B**althasar) give gifts to the new born Christ, so we would ask that the blessing of Christ would now visit our homes with his gifts; hence the letters **C M B** were written in chalk over the main doorway of the house – but CMB as well as being the first letters of the three wise travellers could also stand for a Latin phrase CHRISTUS MANSIONEM BENEDICAT, which means **Christ bless this house.** Often the current year will be added to the script, so that for this present year we might have,

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20 + C + M + B + 22 or indeed just **CMB 2022**

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It is a simple way of marking the passing of the year and also making very evident our desire that we will continue to grow in our friendship with Christ through the coming months.

"No medicine is more valuable, none more efficacious, none better suited to the cure of all our temporal ills than a friend to whom we may turn for consolation in time of trouble, and with whom we may share our happiness in time of joy."

Happy continuation of the month