



common sight in in the UK - and is even thriving amid tightening

Christians use chalk, which has been blessed, to write the letters “CMB” and the calendar year on their doorway in a traditional Epiphany celebration.

The letters represent the traditional names of the Magi – Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar – and could also stand for the Latin blessing: “Christus mansionem benedicat” – meaning May Christ bless this house.

The so-called “Holy graffiti” has seen huge growth in England lately even amid Covid restrictions.

Revd Arwen Folkes, the Rector of St Peter’s in East Blatchington, Seaford, East Sussex, said: “The tradition of chalking the door was new to my parish, but last year I offered it for those who might appreciate it.

“In January 2020 none of us knew how profoundly important reviving the tradition of blessing and chalking one's home would prove to be.

“Those little numbers and letters on the entrance became a reminder of faith and strength for the year that was about to unfold on us.”



Due to Covid-19 restrictions chalk had to be distributed this year in a different way.

Making bags filled with mini-chalk, a prayer, and explainer to use at home, she said: “There is a huge sense of relief, perhaps even joy, at seeing the way in which people have taken this blessing from the church to their own doorsteps.

“What a lovely and significant tradition for us to embrace at a time of such worry and uncertainty.”

The tradition is new to many. Fr Fergus Butler-Gallie of Holy Trinity, Sloane Square, in the Diocese of London said: "I had seen maybe a decade ago chalking the door in the Czech Republic but never in England. Now it is everywhere.

"People are more confident in these external expressions of faith. They make people ask what the chalking means and is an informal 'conversation starter' which can actually be a gateway to faith."

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