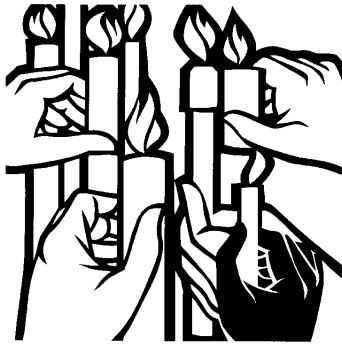


This coming week, we celebrate two special Feast Days in the Liturgical Year. The first is Candlemas Day on February 2nd and the other is the Feast of St. Blasé on February 3rd. Each of these Feasts has a special devotional attached to them, which you can read more about below:

Friday, February 2nd...



Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord ~ Candlemas Day ~

Friday, February 2nd, is the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord Jesus in the Temple, traditionally known as Candlemas Day. **Candles for use in your home will be blessed, and made available at the 7:00 Mass and at the Masses on Feb. 8th and 9th.**

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus was welcomed in the temple by two elderly people, Simeon and the widow, Anna. They embody Israel in their patient expectation. They acknowledge the infant Jesus as the long awaited Messiah. When Simeon sees the Lord Jesus, he breaks into song, and calls Him *A Light to the Nations, and the glory of His people.*

In the eighth century, Pope Sergius inaugurated a candlelight procession; at the end of the same century the blessing and distribution of candles which continues to this day became part of the celebration, giving

the Feast of the Presentation its popular name: *Candlemas*. In the days before the reform of the liturgy [prior to 1963] all of the candles to be used in church for the coming year would be blessed on this day. Also on this day we bless the candles used for the Feast of Saint Blase, on which we give the traditional blessing of throats, using blessed candles. It's easy to see why on such a day when candles are so much a part of the day's celebration that the popular name for the Mass celebrated on this feast day is called "candle-Mass" ~ hence the name, *Candlemas Day*.

Christ himself says, *I am the light of the world.* And we are the light, we ourselves, if we receive it from him... *But how do we receive it, how do we make it shine?... The candle tells us: by burning, and being consumed in the burning. A spark of fire, a ray of love, and inevitable immolation are celebrated over that pure, straight candle, as, pouring forth its gift of light, it exhausts itself in silent sacrifice.* [Pope Paul VI]

Tuesday, February 3rd:

The Feast of Saint Blase ~ Bishop and Martyr

This Tuesday, February 3rd, is the Feast of Saint Blase, a Bishop and Martyr of the early Church. For many centuries, Saint Blase has been the patron Saint of those with ailments of the throat, and likewise, he has been the Saint to ask for his prayers to protect you from throat ailments and every other illness.

We know that the Bishop, Blase, was martyred in Armenia in the year 316. Blase was a good bishop, working hard to encourage the spiritual and physical health of his people. Eventually, he was arrested for his Christian beliefs, and when in prison, a mother came with her young son who had a fish bone caught in his throat. At Blase's command the child was able to cough up the bone.

By the year 800 the custom of blessing throats, using the "blessed candles" from the previous day's feast (Candlemas Day on February 2nd) was spreading across Europe. Saint Blase is seen as one example of the power those have who give themselves entirely to Jesus. With faith we can follow the lead of the Church in asking for Blase's protection.

In anticipation of this Feast, the Blessing of the Throats will be done at the end of each of our weekend Liturgies on the 31st and 1st and again on Tuesday, the Feast of Saint Blase at the 7:00 AM Mass.



ST. BLASE