



Why do we get our throats blessed on February 3rd?

A long time ago, a bishop-martyr named Blaise saved a child and started a tradition.

Today we celebrate the feast of St. Blaise, the 4th-century bishop of Sebaste in Armenia. He is one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, saints invoked for their power against various physical and mental ailments. St. Blaise's particular specialty is ailments of the throat.

How did he come by such a patronage?

We don't know much about this saint for certain, but according to the legends told of him, he was a physician by training. As a bishop he retired to a cave to live as a hermit during the persecution of Licinius soon after the legalization of Christianity. (Licinius was disregarding the Edict of Milan that he himself had co-sponsored with Constantine.)

They say the wild animals living near Blaise's cave liked the gentle hermit and were tame around him. Blaise later saved a woman's pig that had been stolen by a wolf—simply by commanding the furry thief to return it. He is thus known not only for curing throats, but for taming animals, as well.

The bishop was eventually discovered and taken to prison, and on his way there, a mother brought him her child who was choking on a fishbone. St. Blaise healed him—and it is this story that provides the origin for the traditional blessing of throats on this day.



St. Blaise (photo credit: [Ralph Hammann/CC BY-SA 4.0](#))

Your parish may participate in this tradition. In it, a priest holds two blessed candles, crossed in the form of an X, and holds them to the throat of the person to be blessed. He prays:

“Through the intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Fr. William Saunders at Catholic Straight Answers advises us to pray to St. Blaise not just for physical health of the throat, but spiritual health as well: freedom from gossip, unkind conversation, and other sinful speech. Wise advice indeed!

There are lots of things—from errant fish-bones to major disappointments—that threaten to disturb our peace every day. Padre Pio’s beloved phrase: “Pray, hope, and don’t worry,” reminds us that God always has everything in hand. [Our bestselling dish towel](#) features Padre Pio’s calming words and an elegant floral design. Keep it handy while you’re getting your morning coffee or making dinner (be careful to de-bone those fish!) and remind yourself daily of God’s care. [Available today at The Catholic Company!](#)