

LITURGICAL LIVING

Series 23: January 28-February 03

Prayer in Ordinary Time II

Remember, this time between Christmas and Lent is anything but ordinary. Where do you think God is calling you to grow during this Ordinary Time? Here is the final tip for an extraordinary season of prayer!

3. “Give something, however small, to the one in need. For it is not small to one who has nothing. Neither is it small to God, if we have given what we could.” — St. Gregory of Nazianzus

Along with St. Gregory Nazianzen, many saints — not to mention Christ Himself — have said that serving the poor is essential for anyone striving for holiness. While the giving of alms acquires a special emphasis during the season of Lent, we should seek to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the mourning and visit the sick and incarcerated during all seasons of the year.

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, Purification of the Blessed Virgin, Meeting of the Lord, Candlemas (2)

This feast commemorates three distinct but related historical events in the life of the Holy Family. This day marks when Joseph and Mary brought baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem for the first time after his birth. The Law required them to consecrate their firstborn son to God. Mary was also required to submit to ritual purification for forty days after childbirth. These two things, consecration to God by Jesus and ritual purification by Mary may seem unnecessary when you think about it. Jesus, is God so does he really need to be consecrated? And Mary, the sinless, pure Virgin, didn't really need purification. These examples teach us about obedience to God's law and respect for passed down traditions.

This day also commemorates the encounter in the temple between the Holy Family and St. Simeon. This is the third and final epiphany of the infant Jesus. Another name for this feast is Candlemas because St. Simeon said, “For my eyes have seen your salvation / which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, / a light for revelation to the Gentiles, / and for glory to your people Israel” (Luke 2:30-32). Jesus is the Light of the World so this is the day the Church blesses candles for use throughout the year.

Traditionally, families bring in their own candles to be blessed on this day for use in their homes. This can be done on Sunday after Mass as well. You can simply ask your priest to bless your candles after Mass if you are interested. Tell Fr. Craig I sent you! I'll be there :)

Celebrate

This is a fun day to eat by candlelight. Pray the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary (Presentation of the Temple is the fourth Joyful Mystery).



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A quick note on candles. Canon Law dictates that candles used for the liturgy must be at least 51 percent beeswax. This is no requirement for our homes but we are encouraged to follow this same practice! When candles are blessed, that makes them a sacramental and you can't treat them like any old candle anymore.. This goes for everything that is blessed. All blessed objects need to be treated with reverence according to Canon Law. This is understood to prohibit throwing them away. If a blessed object becomes unusable it must be dissolved (as we do with the Eucharist), burned (as we do with palms or linens) or buried (as we do with statues). But, if a blessed object has already been used up for its intended purpose, it may be thrown away (like a blessed Christmas tree). After use, you will have candle stubs. It is recommended that they could be melted down to make more candles or make a fire starter.

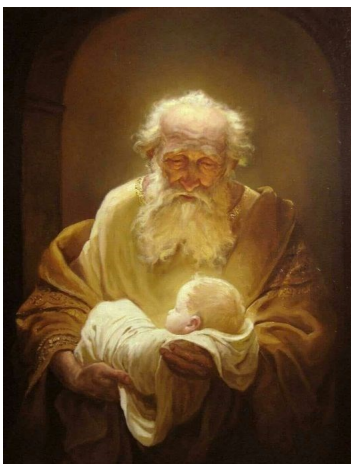


Other traditions on February Second are Groundhog day in America. But guess what? This tradition is rooted in Catholicism! This tradition actually dates back to the Middle Ages and goes as follows: "If Candlemas Day is clear and bright, winter will have another bite. If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain, winter is gone and will not come again."

Candlemas is also Crepe day in France. So if you like crepes, February 2nd is a great day to enjoy some! Otherwise, pancakes work great as well!

Prayer

A good way to end this day and any day is in prayer. The canticle of Simeon given to us in Luke's gospel is quite beautiful and suitable for this day.



Lord, now you let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Response: *Protect us, Lord, as we stay awake; watch over us as we sleep, that awake, we may keep watch with Christ, and asleep, rest in His peace. Alleluia!*

St. Blaise (3)

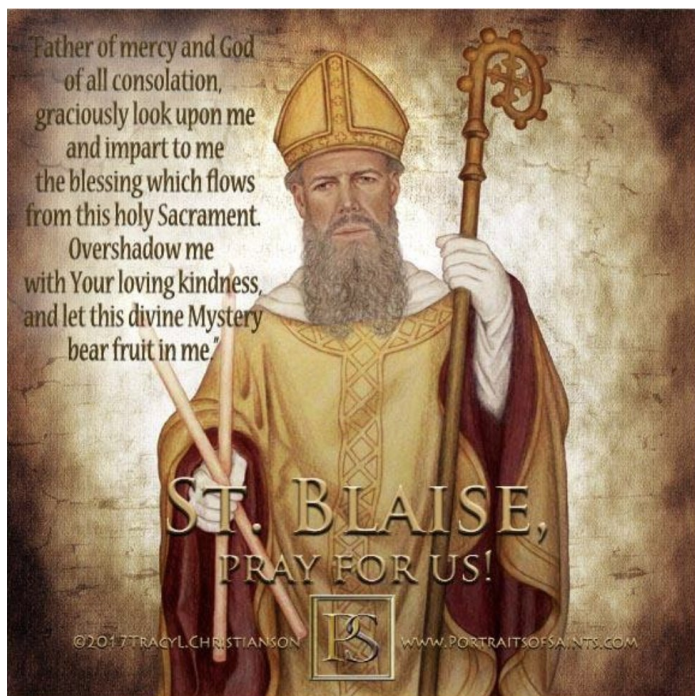
Saturday, February 3rd is the feast of St. Blaise. It also happens to be my husband and I's wedding anniversary! Did we select this day intentionally because of this feast day? No, but we have a powerful intercessor for our marriage!

An early 4th century bishop who chose to live in a hermitage in a cave.. He was also a physician so he cared for his people spiritually and physically from this cave. As time passed, his cures became more miraculous and it was said he was healing animals in this cave. Eventually he was arrested for being a Christian in 316, and as he was being escorted away, a woman brought her young son who was choking on a fishbone and laid him at his feet. He was immediately healed and his captors executed him. His intercession is sought for choking and ailments of the throat.

Throat Blessing

Blessing of the throats is an old tradition that is still practiced in many parishes today! After Mass, lines will form and the parishioners' throats will be blessed using two newly blessed candles tied together in the middle to form a cross saying, "Through the intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every ailment of the throat and from any other illness: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

A St. Blaise inspired dinner menu is fish.



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