



St. Blase: Bishop and Martyr

February 3 is the feast of St. Blase. Many of us remember St. Blase and the blessing of throats that has become an important tradition in our faith. Like some other saints, we know more about the devotion to St. Blase than we know about the saint himself. We do know that he was martyred in the year 316. Writings about this saint indicate that he was a good bishop who really cared about the spiritual well-being of his people. Because of religious persecution he was forced to live as a hermit in the forests of Armenia. He lived a life of solitude and prayer. It has been told that one day a group of hunters seeking wild animals to bring back for gladiator fighting came across St. Blase's cave and found him kneeling in prayer surrounded by patiently waiting lions and bears.

St. Blase was arrested and on the way to prison he encountered a mother who came with her young son who had a fish bone lodged in his throat. At the command of St. Blase, the child was able to cough up the bone. The trip to the prison continued and eventually St. Blase was beheaded. So what is fact and what is legend? In this case, the biographical details are not so important. St. Blase is seen as an example of the power given to those who have offered themselves entirely to Jesus. Let us follow the example of St. Blase and give ourselves to the Lord, trusting in His care and protection. (*Information about St. Blase came from "Saint of the Day," Leonard Foley, O.F.M., editor*)

Father David

Assignments of Permanent Deacons

Many of us are familiar with the process involved in assigning diocesan priests to different parishes. The Bishop and clergy personnel board work with the various priests who are due to be transferred. The goal is to do all that is possible to ensure the priest is a good fit for the parish and vice versa. The assignment process of permanent deacons works differently. Most deacons serve in the parish where they are a parishioner. When there is a vacancy due to a deacon passing away, or moving elsewhere, it does not mean there is an automatic replacement. I mention this since, as you know, Deacon Matt will be leaving us sometime this spring. Deacon Brad Hentz from St. Irene Parish in Warrenville will be assisting me with Baptisms on an "as needed" basis. However, there will not be a deacon assigned here automatically. I have made known to our Diaconate Office for the Diocese of Joliet, my desire to interview permanent deacons who may be willing to serve in a parish other than their own. As you know, we do have one deacon candidate from our parish, Michael Fitzpatrick. Please continue to pray for him during his formation process and ask our Lord to assist all those in ministry. Thank you.

Father David