



Why should I get my throat blessed?

Have you ever had your throat blessed at Mass on the Feast of St. Blaise? Here's why!

In some parishes, priests will use two candles in the form of a cross to bless the congregation's throats after Mass, usually around St. Blaise's feast day, celebrated on February 3rd.

St. Blaise of Sebaste was a physician and the bishop of Sebastea, in modern-day Armenia, around the 3rd century A.D. Not much is known about his life, but we do know that many people came to him seeking healing for body and soul. The Acts of St. Blaise is a series of legends about his life. According to the medical writings of Aetius Amidenus, Blaise would treat people who had objects stuck in their throats. In 316, the governor of Cappadocia (modern-day central Turkey) was ordered by the Roman Emperor Licinius to persecute St. Blaise. Blaise was hunted down, imprisoned, and eventually beheaded.

St. Blaise became associated with blessings of the throat after a miracle he performed shortly before his death. According to his Acts, as St. Blaise was being taken into custody, a child nearby was choking on a fishbone. His mother threw herself at the saint's feet and begged him for his intercession. Blaise prayed for the child, who was then cured. As a result, St. Blaise often intercedes for protection against illnesses and injuries of the throat. (Some accounts state that Blaise had been given two candles and formed the candles in a cross around the boy's throat.)

The tradition of blessing throats dates back to the 8th century and is derived from the *Book of Blessings*, a liturgical book that contains instructions for Catholic ritual blessings. Within the *Book of Blessings* is the *Order of the Blessing of Throats on the Feast of Saint Blaise*, which states that, to bless someone's throat, the priest must join two candles with a red ribbon and make the sign of the cross while saying the following blessing:

“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.”

The intercession of St. Blaise through the Blessing of the Throats can protect us from diseases and anything that distracts us from God and His healing power. Customs like this one, so deeply rooted in our history as a Church, show us the beauty of our faith and how close we are to the miraculous.

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