

# St. Blase

**FEAST DAY:** February 3  
throat illnesses, animals,  
wool trading



Patron: of  
wool combers, and  
Death: 316

Saint Blase (or Saint Blaise) was the bishop of Sebastea and a doctor. The first known record of the saint's life comes from the medical writings of Aëtius Amidenus, where he is recorded as helping with patients suffering from objects stuck in their throat. Many of the miraculous aspects of St. Blase's life are written of 400 years after his martyrdom in the "Acts of St. Blase."

Saint Blase is believed to begin as a healer then, eventually, became a "physician of souls." He then retired to a cave, where he remained in prayer. People often turned to Saint Blase for healing miracles.

In 316, the governor of Cappadocia and of Lesser Armenia, Agricola, arrested then-bishop Blase for being a Christian. On their way to the jail, a woman set her only son, who was choking to death on a fish bone, at his feet.

Blase cured the child, and though Agricola was amazed, he could not get Blase to renounce his faith. Therefore, Agricola beat Blase with a stick and tore at his flesh with iron combs before beheading him.

In another tale, Blase was being led to the prison in Sebastea, and on the way came across a poor old woman whose pig had been stolen by a wolf. Blase commanded the wolf return the pig, which it did -alive and uninjured - to the amazement of all.

When he reached Sebastea, the woman came to him and brought two fine wax candles in an attempt to dispel the gloom of his darkened cell.

In Great Britain, the village of St. Blazey got its name from Saint Blase, and a church dedicated to the saint can be found in Decon hamlet of Haccombe, near Newton Abbot.

There is a Saint Blase's Well in Kent, and the water is believed to have medicinal properties. A Blessing of the Throats ceremony is held every February 3 at Saint Etheldreda's Church in London and Balve, Germany.

A Catholic middle school was named after Saint Blase in Bradford, West Yorkshire. The name was decided upon when the link between Bradford and the woolen industry was connected to the way St. Blase was martyred: with woolcomb.

Saint Blase is often depicted holding two crossed candles in his hand, or in a cave with wild animals. He is also often shown with steel combs. The similarity of the steel combs and the wool combs made a large contribution to Saint Blase's leadership as the patron saint of wool combers and the wool trade.

[https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php? saint\\_id=28](https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php? saint_id=28)

## LENT 2020

### FAST & ABSTINENCE FEBRUARY 26'TH

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. In addition, Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence.



For members of the Latin Catholic Church, the norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding upon members of the Latin Catholic Church from age 14 onwards.

If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil (on Holy Saturday night) as the "paschal fast" to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, and to prepare ourselves to share more fully and to celebrate more readily his Resurrection.

**Ash Wednesday** is one of the most popular and important holy days in the liturgical calendar. Ash Wednesday opens Lent, a season of fasting and prayer.

Ash Wednesday takes place 46 days before Easter Sunday, and is chiefly observed by Catholics, although many other Christians observe it too.

Ash Wednesday comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting. The practice includes the wearing of ashes on the head. The ashes symbolize the dust from which God made us. As the priest applies the ashes to a person's forehead, he speaks the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Alternatively, the priest may speak the words, "Repent and believe in the Gospel."

Ashes also symbolize grief, in this case, grief that we have sinned and caused division from God.

Writings from the Second-century Church refer to the wearing of ashes as a sign of penance.

Priests administer ashes during Mass and all are invited to accept the ashes as a visible symbol of penance. Even non-Christians and the excommunicated are welcome to receive the ashes. The ashes are made from blessed palm branches, taken from the previous year's Palm Sunday Mass.

It is important to remember that Ash Wednesday is a day of penitential prayer and fasting. Some faithful take the rest of the day off work and remain home. It is generally inappropriate to dine out, to shop, or to go about in public after receiving the ashes. Feasting is highly inappropriate. Small children, the elderly and sick are exempt from this observance.

It is not required that a person wear the ashes for the rest of the day, and they may be washed off after Mass. However, many people keep the ashes as a reminder until the evening.

Recently, movements have developed that involve pastors distributing ashes to passersby in public places. This isn't considered taboo, but Catholics should know this practice is distinctly Protestant. Catholics should still receive ashes within the context of Mass.

In some cases, ashes may be delivered by a priest or a family member to those who are sick or shut-in.