

SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER'S PARISH

Parish Bulletin for the Fourth Sunday of the Ordinary
Season - 3rd February 2019



SAINT BLAISE AND THE BLESSING OF THROATS

Although today is the Fourth Sunday of the Ordinary Season, the third of February is the feast of the martyr Saint Blaise. We know only a handful of facts about him: he was a fourth-century bishop in the city of Sebaste, in modern-day Turkey. As a physician, he was a well-respected man, and that he was elected bishop by his fellow citizens.

In the fourth century, the Roman Empire was divided up between the Emperor Constantine in the West and the Emperor Licinius in the East. While frequently at odds, they came together in 313AD at Milan, to sign what would become known as the *Edict of Milan* - intended to end the persecution of Christians. Most historians agree that Licinius only signed the *Edict* for political reasons, and continued the persecution.



At first Blaise avoided arrest by withdrawing into the hills near Sebaste, where he lived in a cave. Eventually, however, he was discovered. According to tradition, as he was being marched by the soldiers to prison, two things happened: firstly, he met a poor woman whose pig had been seized by a wolf. At Blaise's command, the wolf restored the pig to its owner, alive and unhurt. This same woman, to repay his kindness, would come to visit him in prison, bringing wax candles to light up his cell. Again, en route to the prison, a mother came to plead with Blaise to help her son who was dying from a fish bone fixed in his throat. Blaise prayed over the boy, and he was healed. For this reason he is always depicted with candles, a pig and fish bones - see left.

The Roman governor, Agricola, demanded that Blaise deny Christ or be tortured. Having refused to do so, he ordered that the flesh be torn from Blaise's body with steel combs. No amount of torture, however, could bring about a denial, and so Blaise was beheaded.

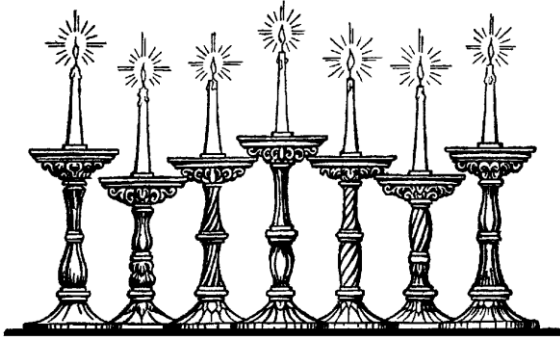
The similarity of the instruments of his torture to wool combs led to him being named the patron saint of wool combers, and of the wool trade in general, in England in the Middle Ages. In fact, the fourteenth century King Edward III ordered the Lord Chancellor of his government to sit on a wool bale, now known as *The Woolsack* in order to underline the importance of wool to the economy. *The Woolsack* is still in the House of Lords today - it is the large wool-stuffed seat, covered with red cloth, with neither back nor arms, and upon which the Speaker of the House of Lords sits, along with the Lords Mace, the symbol of royal authority to meet and pass laws.

The miraculous cure of the boy meant that Blaise was invoked against all ailments of the throat, and by the fifteenth century, the ritual *Blessing of Throats* was widely given on his feast day. We will offer this blessing today. It is given with two candles, which were blessed during Mass yesterday, the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, commonly called *Candlemas*. The Priest places the candles around the throat, using the formula: "Through the intercession of St. Blaise, may God free you from every disease of the throat, and from every other illness beside." **Father McGachey**

TODAY 3rd FEBRUARY FEAST OF SAINT BLAISE



The 3rd February is the Feast of St. Blaise, the third century bishop and martyr. He is the patron saint of those with illnesses of the throat. The traditional individual *Blessing of Throats* will be given after the 5pm, 9am and 11am Mass.



BLESSING OF CANDLES FOR USE IN OUR HOMES

At all Masses this weekend, we will have the blessing of candles for use in our homes. It is traditional for every Catholic household to have at least two blessed candles. The candles are very modestly priced, and will be on sale after Mass.

PARISH SCHEDULE FOR THIS WEEK

HOLY MASS - Monday-Saturday 10am

HOLY MASS - Sundays: Vigil 5pm, 9am and 11am

CONFESSIONS - Saturday 4.15pm-4.45pm

CHURCH OPENING/CLOSING TIMES - Monday-Saturday 9am, and Sundays 8am. Closes at 3pm, and after Mass on Saturdays

NOVENA TO OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL - Tuesdays after 10am Mass

THE CARFIN NOVENA (Our Lady of Lourdes & St. Thérèse) - Thursdays after 10am Mass

STATIONS OF THE CROSS - Fridays at 9.35am

PARISH SCHEDULE FROM MONDAY 11th FEBRUARY 2019

in addition to the above:

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT - Monday-Friday 10.45am-3pm

THE HOLY ROSARY - Monday-Thursday 12.35pm

HOLY MASS - Monday-Thursday 1pm

NEW - NOVENA TO OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL - Tuesdays after 1pm Mass

NOVENA TO SAINT THERESE & VENERATION OF THE RELIC - Wednesdays after 1pm Mass

CONFESSIONS - Monday-Thursday 1.30pm-2pm

BEGINNING ON SUNDAY 17th FEBRUARY - SUNDAY EVENING DEVOTIONS

Rosary and Benediction/Evening Prayer and Benediction (as announced) at 6pm

NEW ALTAR SERVERS - We could be doing with some more servers to assist at the altar each Sunday. Any boy or girl, from Primary 3 upwards, would be most welcome to help. Parents, if your child is interested, then please speak to Father McGachey after Mass.

CHURCH VISITS - The children from Our Lady and Saint Francis Primary School will be visiting the Church for a guided tour over the next few weeks. We look forward to showing them around.



FEAST OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

SUNDAY 10th FEBRUARY

Rosary Torchlight Procession in the Parish Church,
with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 7pm

MONDAY 11th FEBRUARY

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE SICK

The Holy Rosary 9.35am

Holy Mass 10am

The Holy Rosary 12.35pm

Holy Mass 1pm with the Sacrament of the Sick

Light refreshments in the Xavier Centre afterwards

CALENDAR

Tuesday is the memorial of the third century **St. Agatha** died in defence of her purity, in Catania, Sicily, where she was born. She is the patron saint of those who suffer from breast cancer. On **Wednesday** we remember **St. Paul Miki**, a Japanese Jesuit, and his twenty-five companions who were martyred in Nagasaki, Japan in 1597. They were killed by being raised on crosses and then stabbed with spears. Their executioners were astounded when they saw their joy at being associated to the Passion of Our Lord. **St. Josephine Bahkita** is honoured on **Thursday**. She was a young Sudanese girl sold into slavery and brought to Italy where, while serving as a nanny, she was sent to live with the Canossian Sisters in Venice. There she was baptized, and granted her freedom by Italian law. She joined the Canossians and worked at their Mother House, where she served humbly for the next twenty five years. She died after a long and painful illness. She was made a Saint by Pope Saint John Paul II.



THE XAVIER CENTRE

THE XAVIER CENTRE - To make bookings or enquires about the Xavier Centre contact 07581239872.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION - Please collect your new rota today.

CHARITY RACE NIGHT - with all proceeds going to HCPT Group 19. It takes place on Saturday 9th March at 7.30pm in the Xavier Centre. Tickets are priced £2.00, which includes a light bite to eat. To buy a ticket, or for any other information, please contact Liam McCormick on 07927651284.

MONDAY 18th FEBRUARY - Enrolment Mass for the Sacraments of Confession and First Communion and Confirmation, with pupils and parents of Primaries 3,4,6 and 7, at 7pm.

YOUNG ADULT FAITH GROUP - had their first meeting on 31st January at Christ the King Church, Holytown. They meet each week on Thursdays at 7pm for pizza, prayer and social at Christ the King. All 16 to 25-year-olds welcome!

CONTACT US

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CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATORS Elizabeth McMahon & Geraldine Battersby

SCOTTISH CHARITIES NUMBER SC 011041

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM - Baptisms are celebrated most Sundays of the year, except during Lent and on Easter Sunday, at 12.30pm.

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE - At least six months' notice must be given of intention to marry.

Please telephone or email Father McGachey to make an appointment, or speak to Father McGachey or Deacon Jim after Mass at the weekend.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK

RECENTLY DEAD - Tony Boylan, John Reynolds, Cathie O'Hare, Sheila Sparks, Christopher Kelly, Mrs Carlin, Jim Briody, Hannah Sprunt, James McGrady, Gerard Muir, Gerry McKenna, Frank Murphy, Dylan Duffy, Cheryl McDonald, Derek Chapman, Albert O'Hara, Arthur McPartland, Francis Murphy, Cathy Keating, Christine Karren, Martin Gibney, Janice Randol Derek Chapman, Robert Cameron, Christine Doyle, Margaret Thompson, John Cantwell, Anne Brown, James Docherty, Jean Hughes, Frank Dunn, Jean Early.

MONTHS MIND, ANNIVERSARIES AND BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCES - Patricia Blake, Hughie McAvoy, Joseph Deasey, John Mays, Cathie Hughes, Gerry Delaney, Alice Leonard, Teddy and Mary Clarke, Elizabeth Howley, Peter O'Hara, Rachel McGahan, Darren Smith.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS FOR THE SUNDAY 27TH JANUARY - £1803
SINCERE THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY FOR THE UPKEEP OF OUR PARISH