



The Many Saints We Honor This Month of February

By Marge Loenser

Our calendar in February starts out with a double header on February 2: **The Feast of the Presentation and Candlemas Day**. It is also **Groundhog Day** (who can forget the movie?). Of the many saints we honor this month, on the 3rd we celebrate **St. Blaise** and we line up to have our throats blessed (with Covid this may be changed). St. Blaise is the patron saint of throat diseases. While on Pilgrimage to Medjugorje, we took a side trip to Dubrovnik, Croatia. Dubrovnik is an ancient cobblestone city that meets the lovely blue-green waters of the Aegean Sea. Here we visited the church of St. Blaise. He was martyred in 316 A.D in Turkey. He had a church named after him in Croatia. In the year 971 the spirit of St. Blaise, visited the church in Dubrovnik to warn the city that the Venetian fleet, anchored off the harbor, was going to attack them. Because of his warning, the city responded and fought off the enemy. St. Blaise then became the patron saint of that city.

Another saint we honor this month is **St. Agatha** on the 5th. She was a virgin and martyr. Of noble Roman birth she was betrothed at age 13 to a Roman nobleman. Agatha was a Christian and pledged her virginity to our Lord and refused the marriage. As a result, the suitor had Emperor Decius condemn her to horrible torture and then beheaded. She is the patron saint of breast cancer and breast feeding. On the 11th we celebrate **Our Lady of Lourdes**. In 1858 our Lady appeared to **Bernadette Soubirous** and declared: **“I am the Immaculate Conception.”** The miracle spring that appeared to Bernadette is still the source of the healing waters for the thousands of pilgrims who visit Lourdes in France.

St. Scholastica is another saint we honor this month. She was the twin sister of **St. Benedict**, and is the patron saint of Benedictine Nuns, education, convulsive children and is invoked against storms and rain. The story is, when St. Benedict and his monks visited Scholastica she wanted more time with her brother as she sensed her death was close and that she would not see him again. Benedict insisted on leaving for his monastery -- it would break a rule not to be there at night time. Scholastica prayed for a storm so that he would be forced to stay. God answered her prayer and St. Benedict spent more time with her. Benedict said in response to the storm: "What have you done?" She replied: "I asked a favor of you and you refused. I asked it of God and he granted it."

Ash Wednesday comes on the 17th and we ask Jesus to help us to renew ourselves by prayer and penance. Here is a prayer for lent that I found on Jesuitresource.org:

"Come, my Light and illumine my darkness. Come my Life and revive me from death. Come, my Physician and heal my wounds; come Flame of Divine love and burn up the thorns of my sins, kindling my heart with the flame of Thy love."

Let us continue to pray for the sick and their caretakers; for the end of the pandemic and for an end to abortion. I leave you with a prayer that St. Catherine of Siena prayed very often to our Lord:

"You have loved me even before I existed, and knowing this I can place my trust in Your love and set aside every fear. Amen."

May God bless us, each one. Love, Marge



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