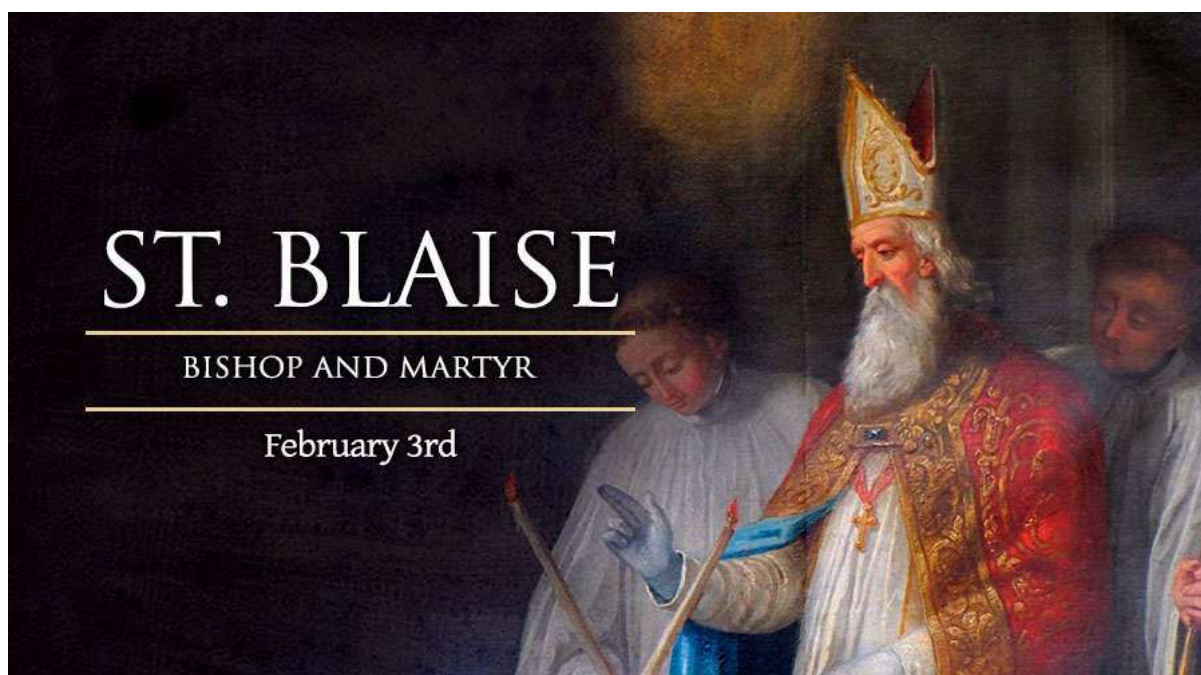


St. Blaise



Blaise was a hard-working bishop dedicated to encouraging the spiritual and physical health of his people in Sebastea, Armenia. Although the Edict of Toleration which granted freedom of worship in the Roman empire had been signed five years prior, religious persecution still raged in the country.

According to a legend, a mother came to him with her young son who had a fish bone lodged in his throat. At Bishop Blaise's command, the child coughed up the bone.

In another tale, Blaise 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. Blaise commanded the wolf return the pig, which it did -alive and uninjured - to the amazement of all.

In 316 he was beheaded for not sacrificing to the pagan gods. The account of his life was written nearly 400 years later. The Germans and Slavs hold him in special honor and for decades many United States Catholics have sought the annual St. Blaise blessing for their throats.