



## Stewardship of the Body

“I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made” (Ps. 139)

### Partners in Faith: The Saints: St. Blaise

Very few actual facts are known about St. Blaise so most of what we know is based on legend. Not much was written about him until about 400 years after his death. It is said that Blaise was born to a rich and noble family in Sebaste, Armenia, and was raised a Christian. Some biographies say he was a doctor who later became a bishop. He was described as being very pious and some miracles were attributed to his interventions.

In the year 316, religious persecution was still going on in Armenia despite the Edict of Toleration of 311 which granted freedom of worship in the Roman Empire. Blaise fled the city and was living in a cave in the back country. It is said that he made friends with the wild animals. Some hunters found him kneeling in prayer surrounded by wolves, lions and bears who were not attacking him. The hunters captured Blaise and brought him back to the city where he was imprisoned. According to the legend, as he was being taken to prison, a mother came with her young son who had a fish bone lodged in his throat. At Blaise's command, the child was able to cough up the bone. Thus he became the patron saint of throat ailments.

The governor of Cappadocia tried to persuade Blaise to worship to the pagan gods. When he refused he was beaten. The next time he refused, he was hung from a tree and his flesh was torn with iron combs. Finally he was beheaded.

Prayer: St. Blaise, pray for us that we may not suffer from illnesses of the throat and pray that all who are suffering be healed by God's love. Amen.

### Sore Throats

We are all familiar with the tight, scratchy feeling of a sore throat. Often that is the first sign of a cold or flu. Most sore throats are not harmful and will go away on their own in a few days.

**What can be done to help ease a sore throat?** There are several things that can be used to ease the discomfort of a sore throat, including:

- Increase your fluid intake. Water, juice, tea and warm soup help to keep the mucus thin and easy to clear. Caffeine and alcohol are not helpful as they can dehydrate you.
- Gargle with warm salt water. Mix ½ teaspoon of salt in a full glass of warm water & gargle. This helps soothe the throat and clear the mucus.
- Suck on lozenges or hard candy or chew sugarless gum. These stimulate the production of saliva which can bathe and cleanse the throat.
- Drink honey mixed with warm tea or warm lemon water. This soothes the throat. However, this remedy should not be used for young children since they should not have honey before the age of one.
- Take pain relievers. Tylenol, ibuprofen or aspirin for adults. Children and teenagers should not be given aspirin.

- Rest your voice. If the sore throat is causing hoarseness, rest the vocal cords since talking can cause more irritation and lead to laryngitis.
- Add humidity to the air. More humidity prevents the mucous membranes and sinuses from drying out, which reduces irritation, especially when trying to sleep. Saline nasal sprays also help.
- Avoid smoke and other pollutants. If you smoke, stop. If you don't smoke, avoid others who do. Also limit exposure to household products that cause fumes.

**What causes sore throats?** Most sore throats are caused by viruses, especially those associated with colds or the flu. Typical symptoms include: a sore, scratchy feeling in the throat, hoarseness, coughing and sneezing, runny nose and postnasal drip, a mild fever or no fever.

A less common cause of sore throats is bacteria. However, sore throats caused by bacteria can be more serious. The most common bacterial condition is strep throat. This can develop within 2 to 7 days of being exposed to someone else who has strep throat. Children often get this after being exposed at school. The streptococcal bacteria is highly contagious and can be spread by airborne droplets from a cough or sneeze. It can be spread through shared food or drinks and can live on objects such as doorknobs. Touching them and then touching your nose or mouth transfers the bacteria.

Untreated strep throat can lead to serious complications such as kidney inflammation or rheumatic fever. Strep throat requires a trip to the a health care professional and treatment with antibiotics and pain relievers.

What are the symptoms of strep throat? The symptoms of strep throat include:

- Inflamed, swollen tonsils and lymph nodes
- Pain when swallowing
- Bright red color with white patches in the throat
- Fever, generally more than 101, often accompanied by chills

When experiencing any sore throat, medical help should be sought if:

- Any of the symptoms of strep throat are present
- There is drooling
- Difficulty or pain on swallowing or breathing
- Stiff, rigid neck and severe headache
- Fever higher than 101
- Rash
- Persistent hoarseness or mouth ulcers lasting 2 weeks or more

**Prevention:**

- Frequent hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand cleansers, especially during cold & flu season
- Keeping hands away from the face to avoid getting the viruses or bacteria into the mouth or nose

Sources: Mayo Clinic Book of Home Remedies, [www.catholic.org/saints](http://www.catholic.org/saints), [www.americancatholic.org/features/saints](http://www.americancatholic.org/features/saints)

