

## Additional Announcements

**Pierogi Sale:** Benefiting Ryan Anderson's Eagle Scout Project. Pierogis are hand made with natural and fresh ingredients-NO PRESERVATIVES! Hand rolled dough, hand pinched, pre-cooked. Orders must be placed by **Monday, March 1**. Drive through pickup and the church on Sunday Marcy, 7<sup>th</sup> from 11 am until 2 pm. Potato/Farmer Cheese \$8/doz. To place an order, call (610) 967-3757. Checks should be made payable to St. Mary's U.O. Church.

**Kovbasa Sale for Pascha:** Ukrainian American Veterans Post 42 is currently taking orders until April 18. And will be ready for pickup after services on Palm Sunday weekend (Saturday, April 24 and Sunday, April 25. Regular kovbase are small/medium/largh and range from 1.75-2.5 lbs. Price is \$6/lb. Kovbanosy is \$7/lb. Krakowska is \$6.50/lb. To place an order please call Bohdan Zelechiwsky (610.972.3712) or Father Richard (201.240.5888)

**Gift Card Fundraiser:** New order form for gift cards is posted on the website. Orders must be received by March 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Prayers:** Among your daily prayers, please remember: Fr. Yakiw Norton, Fr. Oleh Hucut, Tanya Antoniewicz, Richard Antoniuk, Bohdan Baranczyk, Madeline Chorney, John Chorney, Susan Cooke, Gloria Dunski, Joan Hepner, Jennie Kramer, Eva Lazor, Mary Maksymiak, Daniel Milinichek, Michael Onushko, Rosalie Onushko Mary Ellen Mackiewicz, Mary Radio, William Radio, Kathryn Solan, Michael and Elsie Moroz, Myroslav Kmet, Mariya Kmet, Andriy Kmet, Dan Gulack. Rodney Townes, Karina Strashinsky; Katherine Cox

## Focus on the Saints: The Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste

(Commemorated on February 24)



The Hieromartyr Blaise (Blasius), Bishop of Sebaste, was known for his righteous and devout life. Unanimously chosen by the people, he was consecrated Bishop of Sebaste. This occurred during the reign of the Roman emperors Diocletian (284-305) and Licinius (307-324), fierce persecutors of Christians. Saint Blaise encouraged his flock, visited the imprisoned, and gave support to the martyrs. Many hid themselves from the persecutors by going off to desolate and solitary places. Saint Blaise also hid himself away on Mount Argeos, where he lived in a cave. Wild beasts came up to him and meekly waited until the saint finished his prayer and blessed them. The saint also healed sick animals by laying his hands upon them. The refuge of the saint was discovered by servants of the governor Agrilaus, who had come to capture wild beasts to loose on the Christian martyrs. The servants reported to their master that Christians were hiding on the mountain, and he gave orders to arrest them. But those sent out found there only the Bishop of Sebaste. Glorifying God

Who had summoned him to this exploit, Saint Blaise followed the soldiers.

Along the way the saint healed the sick and worked other miracles. Thus, a destitute widow complained to him of her misfortune. A wolf had carried off a small pig, her only possession. The bishop smiled and said to her, "Do not weep, your pig will be returned to you..." To the astonishment of everyone, the wolf came running back and returned his prey unharmed. Grateful, the woman reportedly later visited Blaise in his prison cell and gave him candles so that he might have light to read the Scriptures. Another incident, one for which he is most known, occurred when a mother pleaded for Blaise to cure her son who was dying from a fish bone lodged in his throat. Blaise prayed over the boy, and the child coughed up the bone.

Agrilaus, greeting the bishop with words of deceit, called him a companion of the gods. The saint answered the greeting, but he called the gods devils. Then they beat him and led him off to prison. On the next day, they subjected the saint to tortures again. When they led him back to the prison, seven women followed behind and gathered up the drops of blood. They arrested them and tried to compel them to worship the idols. The women pretended to consent to this and said that first they needed to wash the idols in the waters of a lake. They took the idols and threw them in a very deep part of the lake, and after this the Christians were fiercely tortured. The saints stoically endured the torments, strengthened by the grace of God, their bodies were transformed and became white as snow. One of the women had two young sons, who implored their mother to help them attain the Kingdom of Heaven, and she entrusted them to the care of Saint Blaise. The seven holy women were beheaded. Saint Blaise was again brought before Agrilaus, and again he unflinchingly confessed his faith in Christ. The governor ordered that the martyr be thrown into a lake. The saint, going down to the water, signed himself with the Sign of the Cross, and he walked on it as though on dry land.

Addressing the pagans standing about on shore, he challenged them to come to him while calling on the help of their gods. Sixty-eight men of the governor's retinue entered the water, and immediately drowned. The saint, however, heeding the angel who had appeared to him, returned to shore.

Agrilaus was in a rage over losing his finest servants, and he gave orders to behead Saint Blaise, and the two sons of the woman martyr entrusted to him. Before his death, the martyr prayed for the whole world, and especially for those honoring his memory. This occurred in about the year 316.

The relics of the Hieromartyr Blaise were brought to the West during the time of the Crusades, and portions of the relics are preserved in many of the lands of Europe [and his memory traditionally honored there on February 3]. We pray to Saint Blaise for the health of domestic animals, and for protection from wild beasts, as well as deliverance from ailments of the throat. A special blessing for throats using candles is given on his feast day.