

## **In Today's Gospel**

Today, we celebrate the Presentation of the Lord. On this day, we remember the presentation of Christ at the temple in Jerusalem. According to the Mosaic law, every firstborn male of both human and animal, are dedicated to God. They are instructed to present the firstborn male to the priest. In the case of children, they then offer a sacrifice of either a lamb, two turtledoves, or two pigeons to redeem the child.

Not only was Jesus dedicated to God, Jesus is God. In today's gospel, Mary and Joseph fulfill their obligations under the Mosaic law. Although Jesus, the author of the Law, is not subject to the Law, he made himself subject to the Law for our sake. When he entered into his creation, Jesus became like us in all things but sin. Jesus came, not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. In fulfilling the law, Jesus paid the price for our sins. In fulfilling the law, Jesus offers himself as the sacrifice to redeem us and to bring us to the Father.

## **Email Scams**

Recently, we have been targeted by a couple of email scams. Last week we received a notice from the Archdiocese that parish business managers were being sent emails that look like they came from a staff member. These emails were requesting to change the direct deposit information for that staff member. While we were targeted by this scam, our Associate Business Manager, Talana Gaskin-Butler, recognized it before any damage was done.

A second scam has been going on for some time. This scam uses both text and email. Somebody, pretending to be me, is sending text messages and emails asking for money, usually in the form of a gift card. Originally, the emails they used were pretty generic. More recently, people have begun receiving emails from *frsean.stmarywayne@gmail.com*, and similar addresses that look an awful lot like a legitimate email address.

Currently, reports of these texts and emails have come from people whose phone number or email address is published in our bulletin or on our website. This means that our staff and volunteers been targeted along with the advertisers who make this bulletin possible. I apologize for this inconvenience but unfortunately there is not much that we can do about it other than to warn you. If you receive a text or an email that looks like it comes from me and is asking for money, please do not respond. I will **never** ask for money via text or email. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the parish office.

If you receive a text, a phone call, or an email asking for gift cards, it is probably a scam. Scammers will claim to be your grandchildren, the IRS, or even your parish priest. They will use your fear or your generosity to manipulate you into giving them money. If you are ever in doubt, contact the person directly. Do not contact them through the email or phone number that they used to contact you. Use a phone number that you are familiar with or have received from a trusted source.

## **Feast of St. Blaise**

St. Blaise was a physician and Bishop of Sebastea, the modern-day city of Sivas, Turkey, but historically part of Armenia. Not much is known about the life of St. Blaise. He is believed to have been martyred 316 AD and is the patron saint of animals, wool carders, wool trade, and

throat illnesses. He is probably best known for the last one on this list. According to legend, while he was being led to prison in Sebastea, a woman approached him with a child who was either choking on a fishbone or suffering from a throat disease (sources vary). Touched with grief, St. Blaise prayed for the child and the child was healed. Because of this, the blessing of St. Blaise is often invoked for protection from illnesses and injuries of the throat.

While in prison, the woman came to him and gave St. Blaise two candles to dispel the gloom of his prison cell. Because St. Blaise would not renounce his faith, he was beaten and had his flesh torn apart by iron combs (the tools used in carding wool), and was eventually beheaded.

The feast of St. Blaise is Monday, February 3rd. On this feast day, it is traditional to bless the throats of the faithful and to invoke the intercession of St. Blaise for those who have diseases of the throat. To allow everyone to receive this blessing, we are offering it after each Mass this weekend.

To receive the blessing, come forward to the priest, deacon, or lay minister performing the blessing. They will place two candles on the throat; no, the candles will not be lit. The minister will then say the blessing: "Through the intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and every other illness: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit." A minister who is a priest or a deacon will make the sign of the cross over the person being blessed while saying the prayer, a lay minister will say the prayer, but will not make the sign of the cross.