

# February

## February 2nd

### Presentation of the Lord

It was Jewish Law that the firstborn son belonged to God and had to be bought back from God 40 days after his birth. At that time the mother was to be ritually purified after childbirth. On February 2nd, 40 days after Christmas, the Church celebrates the day when Jesus was presented in the temple. This feast has been celebrated in the Eastern Church since the sixth century and in the Western Church since the seventh century. Candles are blessed on this day to commemorate Simeon's prophesy about Christ as "a light to the Gentiles." The popular name for this feast day is Candlemas Day.

If possible participate in Mass this day in order to enter most fully into the mystery of this day. If that is not possible have a candlelight supper for your whole family. At the beginning of the meal say together this short prayer:

Leader: Forty days ago we celebrated the joyful feast of the birth of Christ. Today we recall the holy day on which he was presented in the temple. Led by the Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the temple, recognized Christ as their Lord, and proclaimed him with joy. Simeon said: "With my own eyes I have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people."

Leader: Christ is the light of the nations

Response: Christ is the light of the nations

Leader: and the glory of Israel his people

Response: and the glory of Israel his people

## February 3rd

### Feast of St. Blase

St. Blase was the bishop of Sebaste--of Armenia in modern Turkey. It is known that he was tormented and killed during the persecution of Licinius (320-324). Among the stories about St. Blase is that he cured a young man choking from a fishbone. At all Masses on this day there is traditionally the blessing of throats. St Blase is invoked against throat ailments of all kind.

## February 11th

### Our Lady of Lourdes

It was on February 11, 1858, that a beautiful lady first appeared to Bernadette Soubirous of Lourdes, France. Bernadette was a sickly girl. Her family was so poor they lived in a cellar that had once been a jail. Even though she was fourteen, Bernadette still could not read or write. She never could remember her catechism lessons, but she was a good girl. She loved God very much. Although her memory was poor, Bernadette kept trying hard to learn all she could about God. She was pure and obedient, too.

The beautiful lady Bernadette saw wore a white dress and a light blue sash. A white veil covered her head and fell over her shoulders to the ground. On her feet were two lovely golden roses. Her hands were joined and a rosary hung from her right arm. Its chain and cross shone like gold. The lovely lady encouraged Bernadette to say the Rosary. She appeared eighteen times to St. Bernadette. She asked her to tell the people to pray, to do penance, and to recite the Rosary for sinners.

During the last apparition, Bernadette asked the beautiful lady who she was. The lady replied, "I am the Immaculate Conception." She was Mary, the Mother of God.

A large Church called a basilica was built where Bernadette saw Our Lady. Although the apparitions took place over a hundred years ago, miracles still happen there. Many people are cured of sicknesses. Crippled people walk again. Blind people see again. Lonely, broken people find hope again. There, where she once appeared to St. Bernadette, Our Lady still shows her love for us.

Rent the video *Song of Bernadette* and watch it as a class or family.

## **February 11th**

### **World Day of Prayer for the Sick**

"The Most Holy Virgin knows how to convince ever fresh should to unite their sufferings with Christ's sacrifice, in a joint 'offertory,' which surpasses time and space and embraces the whole of mankind and saves it." John Paul II

Archbishop Sheen once commented on how much wasted suffering there was in the world: individuals who do not know that they can unite their sufferings to those of Christ so that they can become effective for the redemption of the world.

#### **Activities:**

Park outside a hospital and say a prayer, or a rosary, for the sick people there.

Get in the habit of saying a prayer when you hear an ambulance.

Visit a nursing home today and arrange to pray with the individuals who live there.

Bring a card or a meal to the family of a sick person and say a prayer with them.

Make cards for the people who live in a nursing home or children in a hospital.

"A Christian sees meaning in suffering. He bears such suffering with patience, love of God and generosity. He offers it all to God, through Christ, especially during the sacrifice of the Mass. When suffering is associated with Christ's passion and redemptive death, then it has great value for the individual and for society. I also know personally what it means to be sick and to stay in the hospital for a long time, and how it is possible to comfort and support others who share the same lot of confinement and suffering, and how necessary it is to pray for the sick and to show them one's loving concern."

*John Paul II*

