

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

February 14th is Saint Valentine’s Day, when traditionally love is in the air, engagements are announced and red roses cost a bomb! But who was St Valentine and what is his connection with lurv?

Valentinus was a Roman priest (or perhaps the bishop of Terni, Italy) and was known for ministering to persecuted Christians commonly thrown to the lions in the Colosseum as macabre entertainment. St. Valentine was also arrested for continuously trying to convert people to Christianity. St. Valentine was imprisoned for secretly marrying Christian couples and helping out Christians being persecuted by Claudius in Rome. Both acts were considered serious crimes. Nevertheless a relationship between the saint and emperor began to grow, until Valentine attempted to convince Claudius of Christianity. Claudius became very angry and sentenced Valentine to death, commanding him to renounce his faith or be beaten with clubs and beheaded.

St. Valentine refused to renounce his faith and Christianity and was executed outside the Flaminian Gate on February 14, 269 AD.

St. Valentine is the Patron Saint of affianced couples, beekeepers, engaged couples, epilepsy, fainting, greetings, happy marriages, love, lovers, plague, travellers, and young people.

Whilst February 14th is a special day for lovers, at the same time I cannot help but reflect on the love of God: how precious we are to him, and Jesus’ love for us in coming to earth, living among us, experiencing life. Think about his sacrificial love, in giving up his life so that we may receive redemption, forgiveness and the all-encompassing grace of God - thus opening the gateway to eternal life.

This Valentines Day celebrate with your Belovéd and treasure the time you have together, but also celebrate and be thankful for the Love of God to be found in Jesus Christ in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Your minister and friend,

Denise