



By: *Catriona M. Munro*, TA Editor in Chief

St Valentine



Apparently, there were not one, but two St Valentines, and they share 14th February as a Saint Day. There is rather a paucity of knowledge of either both of them.

Valentine's Day has its origins in a Western Christian feast day that honors two early saints named Valentinus. There are various stories and legends of martyrdom associated with these two primary Valentines, though little is known about them from a historical perspective.

According to one legend, Valentine or Valentinus was a priest who was martyred during the rule of Emperor Claudius II. Claudius believed that men who were single made stronger soldiers than those who had families and wives.

Thus, he decreed that no soldier be married under his leadership. Valentine believed that this decree was an injustice, and so, acted against the order, marrying soldiers in secret. Once found out by the Emperor, Valentine was imprisoned and sentenced to death.

"From Your Valentine"

In another story, Valentine was a priest who was jailed and sentenced to death for ministering to persecuted Christians in the Roman Empire. During his confinement, this Valentine supposedly fell in love, with a jailer's daughter no less. Upon the day of his death, a letter was sent to his lover. It was signed, "from Your Valentine."

February 14th is significant because this was the date that both Valentines were said to have been martyred. As such, it has been on this date that the two saints have traditionally been honored.

However, while there are many nice stories about saints named Valentine, the reality is that virtually nothing is known about them. So much has been embellished about these two saints, that in 1969, the Roman Catholic Calendar of Saints was revised to remove the feast day of Saint Valentine.

The Romans celebrated an ancient pagan fertility holiday called Lupercalia on February 15th

The driving force behind this was the fact that all that is really known for sure is that there was a Saint Valentine of Rome who was buried on the Via Flaminia on February 14th.

It's also worth noting that the Romans celebrated an ancient pagan fertility holiday called Lupercalia on February 15th. Some historians believe that our modern Valentine's Day actually has its origins in romantic love, but there are no established historical traces of flowers, romantic gifts for lovers or the commercial guff we associate with the day today.

Lupercalia was an intense, violent, and bloody celebration with animal sacrifices and random matchmaking and coupling. I wonder which barbaric corner of the Roman Empire indulged?

An exciting celebration of love

Apparently, the prime of Chaucer does seem to coincide with the emergence of the popularity of St Valentines. In the United Kingdom, Valentine's Day did not really take off until around the 17th century, with mass Valentine's Day cards being produced in America shortly after.

Valentine's Day is an exciting celebration of love for that special person or special people who bring joy and happiness into your life. Some call it a "Hallmark holiday" - just an excuse to celebrate, really?

While this may be true, as the holiday has yet to be recognised publicly by any state or country, Given that 62% of adults celebrate Valentine's Day in the United Kingdom alone. It's safe to say this holiday isn't going anywhere anytime soon.