

The Story of St. Valentine

The Roman Emperor Claudius II was fighting many wars. He wanted a strong army, but many men did not want to be soldiers. Claudius thought the men wanted to stay home to be with their wives and children instead of leaving to fight wars.

Claudius thought of an awful solution to his problem. He decided to cancel all marriages! No one in all of Rome could get married. Claudius thought that if the men couldn't get married, the men would ignore the women and want to be soldiers.

Valentine, who was a priest, believed that people needed to get married. He thought that if they were not married, they would be tempted to sin by living together without being married. So he secretly and illegally married couples anyway! He performed the weddings in secret places, so the Roman soldiers would not find out.

But they did find out. Valentine was arrested and brought before the Emperor. The Emperor thought Valentine was a well spoken and wise young man, and encouraged him to stop being a Christian and become a loyal Roman. Valentine would not deny his beliefs, and he refused. He was sent to prison until he could be executed. While he was in prison, he sent out letters to his friends and asked to be prayed for by writing Remember your Valentine.

Valentine was killed on the 14th or the 24th of February in the year 269 or 270. We celebrate Valentine's Day on February 14th in honor of St. Valentine.

Although it is not known whether this legend is factually true, it is a good story anyway. It is nice to think of someone who believed in marriage and was willing to risk death to do what he believed was right.

***martyr comes from the Greek work martus, which means "witness". A martyr is a person who would rather suffer, and even die, than give up the things he or she believes in.**