

Saint Valentine

Read the story and answer the questions.

Saint Valentine was a real person and he lived in Rome when Claudius II was the Emperor of the empire. Claudius was a selfish ruler and was only concerned with building a strong army of men that could fight in many wars. He believed that any men who would marry and have families would not want to join the army and fight for him so he decided that he would ban them from marrying anybody. This was a dreadful law that made many people depressed in Rome. Valentine was a priest and he was also very sad because he had married many couples before the law was passed. He decided to do something about it – he married couples in secret! For a long time he managed to keep the marriages a secret and the army or Claudius didn't find out about what he was doing. One day, however, Valentine was arrested and taken to see the Emperor. Claudius tried to get Valentine to stop being a priest and a Christian but Valentine said he loved Jesus too much and refused the order. Claudius was furious and sentenced him to death. Valentine was sent to prison before his execution and while he was there he wrote letters to remind his friends to pray for him. This is where we get the tradition of sending Valentine cards and notes from. During February, in the year AD 269 or 270, Valentine was put to death. Because he died for his religious beliefs he is called a martyr and nowadays we remember him on the 14th of February each year when we celebrate Saint Valentine's Day.

When arrested and before being put to death Valentine fell in love with the jailer's daughter and it was her that he wrote a note to signed 'From Your Valentine' which is why we also use this expression on his feast day.

Did you know...?

Many churches around the world are named after Saint Valentine. In Dublin, Ireland, there is a special shrine to Saint Valentine in White Friar Street Church. People believe that saying prayers and leaving donations at this shrine will help them in finding their own valentine.



Saint Valentine Questions

Read and answer the questions. Remember to write in full sentences.

1. Who ruled the Roman Empire when Valentine was alive?

2. Why did the Emperor not want any men to marry?

3. Did Valentine agree with the Emperor's rule? Why/why not?

4. Can you suggest some tricks that Valentine may have used to keep the marriages a secret?

5. Which two rules did Valentine break?

6. How did Valentine die?

7. Why do we celebrate Saint Valentine's Day each year on the 14th February?
