

## The story of Saint Valentine

Written by By Sean Wells Contributing Artist  
Friday, 19 February 2021 03:45

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### FEAST DAY FEBRUARY 14

Death 269 A.D.

Patron of Beekeepers, Bees, Epilepsy, Travelers, Love, The Engaged, Happy Marriages.  
Invoked Against Plague and Fainting.

Although many of Saint Valentine of Rome's legends are unverified, all the stories center around love conquering fear. As a former Bishop, Saint Valentine was put under house arrest by Judge Asterius. He was mocked for his faith and challenged to restore the sight of the judge's blind daughter. Valentine laid his hands upon the child's eyes, restoring her vision.

Upon witnessing the miracle, the Judge swore allegiance to Valentine, converting to Christianity, along with his entire family and setting free all prisoners held for being Christian.

When Emperor Claudius II (also known as "Claudius the Cruel") said soldiers could not marry, believing that it created more focused warriors, Valentine married young lovers in secret. When he was discovered, Claudius jailed him. Claudius spoke with Valentine over many topics, but when Valentine began to encourage Claudius to convert, Claudius ordered Valentine to renounce his faith or face death. Valentine refused and was beaten by clubs and beheaded in

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public on Feb. 14. He is sometimes shown in his iconography holding a sword.

Shortly after putting Valentine to death, Claudius was stricken by the Plague of Cyprian and died. This may symbolize the revenge of St. Valentine. It sealed his association as one of the many Patron Saints invoked against the Plague.

The romantic holiday of Valentine's Day is likely intended by the Church to overshadow the pagan celebration of Lupercalia, a long-celebrated pre-Roman fertility festival which occurred on Feb. 15. In fact, the month of February takes its name from the god named in the rites of Lupercalia, Februus. The Catholic Church had learned that trying to erase pagan rituals often led to violence or other resistance. So, they attempted to fold the long-set traditions of pagan rituals into already-sanctioned Christian celebrations.

We see a similar action in more recent times, as when the Day of the Dead tradition was moved from August to Nov. 1, to align with the Christian calendar's All Saints Day and All Souls Day.

The long-standing association of bees with love is as undeniable as the phrase "the birds and the bees." The metaphor of pollinating flowers is just part of the love story. Honey was known as an aphrodisiac and has many miraculous qualities on its own. St. Valentine is called upon to insure the sweetness of honey, the health of the bees, and the safety of the beekeepers.

He is one of several Saints that protect our striped friends.

Although Valentine was removed from the official Catholic calendar of Saints due to lack of support to confirm his story, he is still recognized as a Saint by the Church and beloved across the world. Valentine's relics are distributed across churches throughout Europe, but his skull resides on display, surrounded by flowers in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome.

In his work "Parlement of Foules," Geoffrey Chaucer, the famed English poet, wrote, "For this was sent on Seynt Valentyne's day / Whan every foul cometh ther to choose his mate" in reference to the day commonly known as the day birds would chose a partner to be their mate. This is the first written record connecting Saint Valentine to courtly love, and credited as the

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birth of the modern St. Valentine's Day traditions.

Although rumors of St. Valentine and his day cannot be proven, no one can deny the great symbol of love and all the positive, tender events enacted in his name all across the world for millennia on his day. So, on this Valentine's Day, Bee Sweet to your lovers.

The Martyr's palm in his hand symbolizes that he died for his faith and should appear green. His garb is often shown as red and white with gold accents.

Enjoy coloring this image of the month!

By Sean Wells  
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