

Everyone is familiar with Valentine's Day, but how well known is this patron saint of love, happy marriages and young people. In response to the ongoing secularization of religious feasts the Australian Bishops Committee for Pastoral Life have sought to reclaim Valentine's Day as a Christian celebration and have offered a reflection for this feast day: www.acmfc.org.au/resources/

Below is a quote from this resource that sheds light upon the origin of Valentine's Day.

St Valentine was a priest in Rome at the time of Emperor Claudius II. His association with young lovers is well known even in modern times. The story goes that Claudius, urgent to recruit soldiers for his armies, decreed that all weddings be suspended so as to encourage more single men without family responsibilities to serve in combat. Seeing the anguish of young couples forbidden to marry, St Valentine performed secret weddings in defiance of the Emperor. Another legend holds that while awaiting his execution, St Valentine restored the sight of his jailer's blind daughter. On the eve of his death, he is reported to have penned a farewell note to the young girl signing it, "From your Valentine".

He was beheaded on February 14, 269 AD and buried on the Flaminian Way where archaeologists have unearthed a catacomb and an ancient church dedicated in his name. He is the Patron Saint of engaged couples, happy marriages, love and lovers.

Valentine's Day is not just for starry-eyed young lovers, but an occasion for all married couples to deepen their love and affection for one another.

Peace and blessings,
Gerard