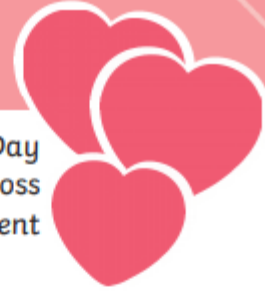


# Valentines Day



Valentine's Day, also often referred to as St. Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, is celebrated annually across the globe on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February. Valentine's Day is an event associated with acts of love, devotion and gift giving.

## The Real Saint Valentine

As there have been many significant Christian people named Valentine or Valentinus throughout history (including three who the Catholic Church officially recognise as saints), there is often speculation surrounding the exact person that Valentine's Day is named after. As a result of this lack of clarity, it could be the case that modern-day versions of the stories associated with Saint Valentine are a mixture of tales pertaining to all three canonised figures. However, the figure who is most commonly associated with Valentine's Day (and to whom most people are referring when they use the name Saint Valentine) is a Christian priest who lived in Rome during the third century AD.

Very few facts about the life of Saint Valentine can be verified though it is widely accepted that he lived during the reign of the Roman emperor, Claudius II. (To add to the confusion, this is also believed to be the case for the two other canonised figures with similar names). It is reported that Emperor Claudius II wanted to assemble a formidable army and he thought that Roman soldiers performed their duties more effectively when they were unmarried: reportedly, it was his belief that soldiers with wives and children at home were less willing to dedicate their lives to the expansion of the Roman Empire. He also thought that married soldiers were less efficient, weaker and more merciful than their unmarried counterparts. As a result, the Emperor is said to have implemented a new law – one which strictly prohibited members of the Roman army from marrying.



Saint Valentine – who regularly ministered to persecuted Christians – did not support Claudius's ruling forbidding marriage; instead, he used his position within the church to secretly marry Roman soldiers who still wished to do so. Before long, Saint Valentine's covert actions were uncovered. When he was implored to stop, Saint Valentine refused so the Emperor ordered for him to be imprisoned.

### 'Your Valentine'

According to some accounts, it was during this time that Saint Valentine is believed to have performed a miracle. It is reported that Saint Valentine became close to a woman named Julia – the daughter of Asterius, who was the judge detaining Saint Valentine on behalf of the Emperor. It was reported that Asterius questioned the validity of Saint Valentine's Christian faith and provoked him by stating that he would convert to Christianity if Saint Valentine could restore Julia's sight. Saint Valentine is said to have placed his hands over Julia's eyes, recited a prayer and restored Julia's vision.

After this event, some legends tell that Saint Valentine wrote a letter for Julia to read; at the end of this letter, he signed off by writing 'your Valentine'. This is believed to be the origin of the concept of sending romantic letters from 'your Valentine' though many scholars believe that this account of events has been heavily embellished.

### St. Valentine's Day

In AD 496, Pope Gelasius established the Feast of Saint Valentine in honour of the influential Christian. The date for this event was set as the 14<sup>th</sup> of February as this is believed to mark the date that Saint Valentine died in AD 269. Although the Feast of Saint Valentine is generally still celebrated on this date, it wasn't until the 1500s that this date became associated with love - as we know it today - and the act of gift giving is only believed to have begun hundreds of years after this. Initially, couples would express their affection for one another through the giving of flowers, confectionery and cards, which became known as valentines: this is a tradition that we still observe today. It is estimated that the UK population spent £855 million celebrating Valentine's Day in 2020.



1. **Valentine's Day is an event associated with acts of love, devotion and gift giving.**

Which of the following is a synonym of the word 'devotion'? Tick one.

- loyalty
- romance
- distrust
- enthusiasm

2. **Which of these did Emperor Claudius II think to be true about married soldiers? Tick two.**

- They could be members of a formidable army.
- They were less willing to dedicate themselves to expanding the Roman Empire.
- They were less merciful than unmarried soldiers.
- They were less able to perform their job efficiently.

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LO: To learn about the history of Valentine's Day.

3. Find and copy one phrase from the opening paragraph of the text which shows that Valentine's Day is marked worldwide.

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4. **It is reported that Emperor Claudius II wanted to assemble a formidable army...**  
Define the word 'formidable' in this context.

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5. Look at the section called **The Real Saint Valentine**.  
Find and copy one synonym for the word 'secret'.

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6. Summarise why there is confusion about the true identity of Saint Valentine.

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7. Explain the beliefs of Emperor Claudius II using 20 words or fewer.

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8. **According to some accounts, it was during this time that Saint Valentine is believed to have performed a miracle.**

Why might this recount of events only happen in 'some accounts' of the story?

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9. Discuss where you think the concept of Valentine's Day cards originated from based on what you've read in the text.

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10. I don't think that we will celebrate Valentine's Day at all by the year 2050.

State whether you agree or disagree with this statement, using evidence from the text to support your argument.

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