

February is our shortest month. It always seems to be most compressed as we get near Valentine's Day. There never seems to be time enough to pick up the chocolate and flowers and to find just the right card. For those of us with children, the right card also comes in packs of 20, and we helping our little ones address, sign and deliver to each classmate, trying hard to make sure no one is overlooked. As we bustle about to celebrate Valentine's Day, we should also take time to think about the Saint who inspired the celebration.

St Valentine was an priest in the Umbria region of Italy. He was arrested by a local judge during one of the Roman persecutions and he defended his faith and himself by sharing his faith with the judge. The judge was a cynical man, and thought he would put Valentine in his place by challenging him to cure his blind daughter through his faith in Jesus. St Valentine accepted the challenge and the little girl received her sight. The judge himself was converted and released not only St. Valentine, but all the Christian prisoner he had sentenced.

St Valentine continued to preach and spread his faith after his release, and eventually he attracted the attention of the Emperor Claudius II. The Emperor had him arrested, but did not give St Valentine the same chance to prove his faith. He sentenced him to death by beheading and sent him to the Imperial prison. While awaiting his fate, he wrote every day to the little girl whose sight he had restored. He signed his letters to her with the closing, "from your Valentine". Those letters became the inspiration for our love notes to this day.

St Valentine is also the patron saint of beekeepers. I think about that when I write my own love notes to my "honey". Which reminds me that I have a "honey-do"! I would like to invite you all to join us for a St Valentine's day Italian dinner on Saturday, February 12th at 6:00 PM in our parish hall. It will be a great way to celebrate your love, and remember the Saint who inspired the Day.

God bless you all

Father Michael