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 JOURNAL 50 – READ THE ARTICLE AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AT THE END.



Valentine’s Day

By Celesta K., Phoenix, AZ

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Valentine’s Day is a day of love and romance for some, a day of chocolate and cards for others, but for many, it is a day of bitter desperation and longing. Every year when Valentine’s Day comes around, I hear my friends whine about how they don’t have boyfriends. They go on about how much better the day would be if they had someone with whom to share it. Blah, blah, blah, whine, whine, whine! But I’m not like other girls. I’m your worst nightmare if you are having a pity party. I don’t need a boyfriend; I am just as happy (if not happier) with some cheesy romance movies and a big box of extra chocolatey don’t- hold-the-fat chocolates.

What I do find interesting about Valentine’s Day is how it came to be. Though this holiday makes big bucks for candy and card companies, they did not create the tradition. The holiday began with a priest known as Valentine, his illegal activities, and the price he paid.

A long, long, time ago in a galaxy not so far away, in a place known as Rome, lived an evil man named Emperor Claudius II, but for the sake of brevity we’ll just call him Claud. Now, Claud wanted to have a big, strong army but unfortunately, the men of Rome didn’t really want to fight in any wars, and can you blame them? Anyway, Claud got this brilliant idea that the men didn’t want to fight because they were married and had kids and all the fixings for a fabulous peaceful life. So, Claud decided to ban marriage for young men.

Image Credit: Julia K., Old Tappan, NJ

Here is where St. Valentine enters. A bishop and rebel who believed in love, he continued to marry couples in secret. That just makes it all the more exciting, in my opinion. On the other hand, how much would a secret wedding stink? It would just be you, Valentine, and your betrothed. Well, I suppose it would be considerably cheaper than having a big bash, but it still wouldn’t save you any money on car insurance.

Needless to say, Valentine got caught. No more secret midnight weddings for him. Claud ordered that Valentine be put to death. During his imprisonment, however, he fell in love with a girl. Yes, there is always a girl. Some sources believe the girl was the jailer’s blind daughter and that his loving devotion cured her blindness. Before his death on February 14, 270

AD, he wrote her a letter and signed it “From your Valentine.” Looks a bit familiar, doesn’t it?

There is some speculation as to how St. Valentine died. Some say that he was stoned and beheaded, others believe he became heartsick in jail and died. You can draw your own conclusions. I like to think that he was abducted by aliens and is still on Venus ... just kidding.

The above is only one of many versions of St. Valentine’s story. By now it’s probably so mixed-up that we will never really know what happened, but that is true for almost every story. What is important is that St. Valentine died a martyr for love and marriage and all that mushy stuff. And I respect him for that. I know a few girls who would probably die for the same things. As for me, a genius once anonymously proclaimed, “Forget love, I’d rather fall in chocolate.”

This piece has been published in Teen Ink’s monthly print magazine.

1. **What do you think of the history of Valentine’s Day? Does it relate to how it is celebrated today?**
2. **What does it mean to be someone’s Valentine?**
3. **What does Valentine’s Day mean to you?**
4. **How can Valentine’s Day be celebrated by everyone, single or attached?**
5. **What would be a good promotion we could do with the radio station for Valentine’s Day?**

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