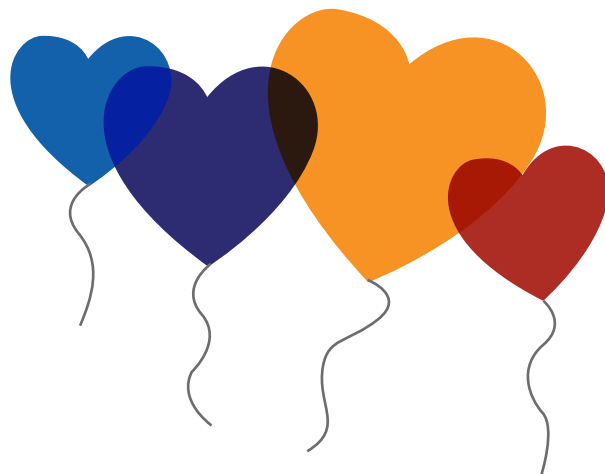




WILL THE REAL SAINT VALENTINE PLEASE STAND UP?



FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE WORDS FROM PAGE 2 TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ST. VALENTINE.

Every February 14th, Valentine's Day is celebrated in various ways around the world. Some people celebrate by giving flowers, candy and cards to those they love. People celebrate love in honor of Saint Valentine, but... who WAS Saint Valentine, anyway?

One legend says that Valentine was a priest who served in Rome during the third century. At that time, Emperor Claudius II ruled over Rome. Emperor Claudius II believed that single men made better soldiers than married men. In the hopes of creating a stronger military for his empire, he decided to enact a law that prohibited marriage for young men. According to the legend, Valentine decided this decree was unjust, and he chose to officiate secret wedding ceremonies for young couples. Emperor Claudius II discovered Valentine's illegal acts and condemned him to death!

Another legend claims that Valentine was a prisoner who fell in love with his jailor's daughter. Before Valentine was put to death, he wrote her a letter and sent the first "valentine" card. He signed the letter "Your Valentine", a closing that we still use on Valentine's Day cards today.

Perhaps we will never know who the real Saint Valentine was, or the truth behind his story. However, because of his legend, February has been the month to celebrate love for centuries. In fact, the number of cards sold each year for Valentine's Day ranks second only to Christmas.

Another Valentine's Day figure you may know is Cupid. The word "Cupid" comes from the Latin word "cupido", which translates to "desire." If you have ever studied Roman mythology, you'll know that Venus was the goddess of love. Cupid was her son. In Greek mythology, Cupid is known as Eros (which sounds like "arrows"). Cupid was known as a mischievous character that often went around striking gods and humans with arrows from his bow, making them fall in love. Today, we consider a picture of a heart with an arrow through it as a symbol of love, or falling in love.

