VALENTINE'S DAY

We all know February 14th is a very romantic day, but how did it become that way? There are many different theories, and there is no way to tell which is true. But the most popular legend is the story of Saint Valentine.

Saint Valentine was a priest who lived in the Roman Empire around 200 AD. During this time, Emperor Claudius II was known to have outlawed marriage for young men—he believed that married men did not make good soldiers and that his army of single men would be much stronger. But Valentine did not agree with this mandate, and he continued to perform secret marriages for young couples. Sadly, he was caught and sentenced to death. It is said that while he was in prison, Valentine too fell in love, and that he actually sent the first "valentine card" to his love, signing it: "From your Valentine." Supposedly, he died in the middle of February, thus Valentine's Day is celebrated on February 14th, in honor of his death.

Other Theories

In ancient Rome, February 15th was the first day of a fertility festival called Lupercalia, dedicated to the Roman god of agriculture. On this day it was tradition for men and women to be paired up randomly by a lottery system to be married.

It is claimed that the Pope Gelasius declared February 14th St. Valentine's Day during the late 400s AD. Allegedly, Pope Gelasius actually banned the Lupercalia festival because it was a pagan ritual, but perhaps he wanted to see the festival continue on as a Christian holiday.

During the Middle Ages in France and England, February 14th was known as the first day of birds' mating season, and was known as a romantic day.

Activity

There is no way to tell exactly how any holiday came to be, but stories can lead us to ideas that help us create new ideas and maybe better ones. Try to find any similarities in all four stories and piece together a story of your own.