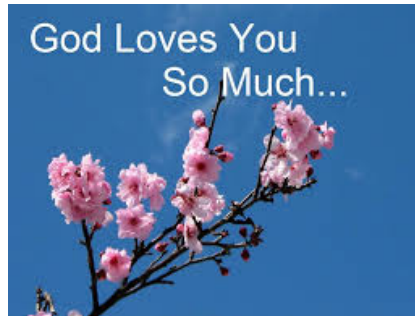


## *Valentine's Day Reflection on God's love*

Deborah Coles, Major

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It's that time of year again. The stores are full of red and pink hearts. "Show you love her by buying this fancy card – and some chocolate!" "Show you love him by buying that expensive card – and a gift!"

Some say that celebrating Valentine's Day is based on the story of Saint Valentine, but historical facts are sketchy. There are 3 different saints with the name of Valentine, and each of them was martyred for his faith, for loving God. They all have the same 'feast day' in the Roman Catholic church, February 14.

However, the legend I like is this one:

An Italian doctor who later became a priest, inspired the creation of the holiday of Valentine's Day. He was sent to jail for performing weddings for couples during a time when new marriages were outlawed in ancient Rome. Before he was killed for refusing to renounce his faith, he sent a loving note to a child he had been helping to teach, the daughter of his jailer, and that note eventually led to the tradition of sending Valentine's cards. Julia was blind, so came to visit him and be tutored.

The Emperor Claudius came to like Valentine and offered him a pardon IF he would renounce his faith and worship Roman gods. Valentine refused to do this, and instead, invited Claudius to come to Jesus. This enraged Claudius, and he sentenced Valentine to die. Before his death, Valentine wrote one last note to Julia, signing it "from your Valentine" – and this, some say, is the beginning of card exchanges on Valentine's Day.

It's only a story, but I am touched at how Valentine was so loving with his enemies.

Getting mail is great! But the best mail we'll ever receive is the 'valentine' we receive from God.

He has loved us with an 'everlasting love' (Jeremiah 31:3). He loved us so much that even when we were at our worst, He gave His son for us.

"But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

For me, one of God's best 'valentines' is found in Psalm 37:4

When I delight in Him, He gives me the desires of my heart. He knows that when I am delighting in Him, in His character and His presence, He gives me what I desire.... Which is MORE of Him!

I used notes from Hopley, Whitney. "Saint Valentine's Story." Learn Religions, Feb. 8, 2021, [learnreligions.com/st-valentine-patron-saint-of-love-124544](https://www.learnreligions.com/st-valentine-patron-saint-of-love-124544).