

Valentine *February 14*
Bishop and Martyr -270 A.D.

Very little of certainty is known about St. Valentine who died around A.D. 270 and was commemorated by Christian communities around Rome from the early fourth century. His true identity was questioned as early as A.D. 496 by Pope Gelasius I, who referred to the martyr and his acts as “being known only to God.”

One account describes Valentine as a priest who was beheaded near Rome by the emperor Claudius II for helping Christian couples to wed. A different account claims Valentine was the Bishop of Terni, also martyred by Claudius II on the outskirts of Rome, for his persistent attempts to convert pagan Romans to Christianity.

Because of the similarities of these accounts, it is thought they may refer to the same person. Enough confusion surrounds the true identity of St. Valentine that the Roman Catholic Church discontinued liturgical veneration of him in 1969, though his name remained on its list of officially recognized saints. The Anglican Church of Canada officially removed the liturgical observation of St. Valentine with the publication of the Book of Alternative Services in 1985, along with a revised Calendar of Saints Days.

Sentence

Do not fret yourself because of evildoers: do not be jealous of those who do wrong.

Psalm 37.1 (BAS)

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, who kindled the flame of your Love in the heart of your holy martyr Valentine: Grant to us, your humble servants, a like faith and power of love, that we who rejoice in his triumph may profit by his example; thorough Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings

1 Corinthians 13.1-8,13 Psalm 37.1-9

Matthew 10.26-33

Prayer over the Gifts

Father,

you nourish the faith of early Christians by the encouragement of Valentine, who shed his blood in witness to the faith. Nourish us now, we pray, with the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, who reveals to us your message of love, this we ask in his name. Amen.

Proper Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Loving God,

we thank you for the witness of the martyrs who were willing to shed their blood rather than forsake their faith in Christ. May we have the boldness of Valentine in proclaiming Christ through divine acts of human love. This we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.