



February 2018

Grace and peace in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and savior.

It has been a cold start to 2018, and we have finally gotten a little snow. When February rolls around every year, our minds turn to Valentine's Day. My mind also turns to my wife's birthday, which is February 15. Now, my birthday is December 12, and it seems my birthday celebration and gifts always get rolled into our Christmas celebrations. Not so for Heather's birthday. It has been made clear to me that Valentine's Day and her birthday are two distinct days, therefore there needs to be two distinct ways that I mark those days. So much for no double standard!

I have always wondered who St Valentine was. I never knew anything about who he was, other than he was a Roman Catholic saint. So, I decided to look it up, and the following is what I have found out from Wikipedia.

Saint Valentine, officially Saint Valentine of Terni, is a widely recognized third-century Roman saint commemorated on February 14 and since the High Middle Ages is associated with a tradition of courtly love.

All that is reliably known of the saint commemorated on February 14 is his name and that he was martyred and buried at a cemetery on the Via Flaminia close to the Ponte Milvio to the north of Rome on that day. It is uncertain whether St. Valentine is to be identified as one saint or the conflation of two saints of the same name. Because so little is reliably known of him, in 1969 the Catholic Church removed his name from the General Roman Calendar, leaving his liturgical celebration to local calendars. The Roman Catholic Church continues to recognize him as a saint, listing him as such in the February 14 entry in the Roman Martyrology, and authorizing liturgical veneration of him on February 14 in any place where that day is not devoted to some other obligatory celebration in accordance with the rule that on such a day the Mass may be that of any saint listed in the Martyrology for that day. Saint Valentine's Church in Rome, built in 1960 for the needs of the Olympic Village, continues as a modern, well-visited parish church.

Saint Valentine is commemorated in the Anglican Communion, as well as in Lutheranism. On February 14, The Lutheran Service Book, with its penchant for the old Roman calendar,

commemorates Valentine on this date. By some of the Eastern Orthodox Church, Saint Valentine the Presbyter of Rome is celebrated on July 6 and Valentine (Bishop of Interamna, Terni in Italy) is celebrated on July 30. Notwithstanding, because of the relative obscurity of these two saints in the East and since there is no commemoration of St. Valentine in the Greek Orthodox Church, members of the Greek Orthodox Church named Valentinos (male) or Valentina (female) may observe their name day on the Western ecclesiastical calendar date of February 14.

Whether you celebrate Valentine's Day or not, may you be blessed this month, as we strive to be a loving congregation of believers. Remember that when Jesus was asked "what is the greatest commandment," He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Rev. G. Wiley Gladney