WHO WAS Saint Valentine?

Every February 14th, Valentines Day is celebrated in various ways around the world. Some people celebrate by giving away candy & cards to people they love. People celebrate love in remembrance of Saint Valentine, but... who WAS Saint Valentine, anyway? All we know for certain is that he was a <u>faithful priest</u> in <u>Rome</u> who lived <u>around the 3rd century</u> & died on <u>February 14th</u>. Here are a few reasons he has historically been associated with love...

One legend says that at the time when Valentine lived, a man named Claudius II ruled over Rome, and he believed that single men made better soldiers than married men, so in the hopes of building a better army for his empire, he decided to create a law that made it illegal for young men to get married. According to this legend, Valentine decided the law was unjust, so he chose to officiate secret weddings for young lovers. Claudius discovered Valentine's secret acts and sentenced 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, "From Your Valentine," a phrase that we still use on Valentines Day cards today.

While we may never know if these stories are completely true, we do know that Valentine died defending his faith in Christ & lived a life proclaiming the love of God. So, we can celebrate Valentines Day – and every day – by sharing that love with others like he did. After all, as the old song based on John 13:55 goes, "They'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love, yes they'll know we are Christians by our love!"