

# THE HISTORY OF SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY



**Write a word in each gap to complete the text.**

Every February, across the country, sweets, flowers, and gifts are exchanged **1)** \_\_\_\_\_ loved ones, all in the name of Saint Valentine. But **2)** \_\_\_\_\_ is this mysterious saint and **3)** \_\_\_\_\_ do we celebrate this holiday? The history of Valentine's Day — and its patron saint — is surrounded **4)** \_\_\_\_\_ mystery. But we do know that February has **5)** \_\_\_\_\_ a month of romance. Saint Valentine's Day, **6)** \_\_\_\_\_ we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition.

One legend contends that Valentine **7)** \_\_\_\_\_ a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers **8)** \_\_\_\_\_ those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice **9)** \_\_\_\_\_ the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers **10)** \_\_\_\_\_ secret. When Valentine's actions **11)** \_\_\_\_\_ discovered, Claudius ordered that he should be put to death.

**12)** \_\_\_\_\_ to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love **13)** \_\_\_\_\_ a young girl — who may **14)** \_\_\_\_\_ been his jailer's daughter — who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, **15)** \_\_\_\_\_ he signed 'From your Valentine,' an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth **16)** \_\_\_\_\_ the Valentine legends is not clear, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure.

While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February **17)** \_\_\_\_\_ commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial, **18)** \_\_\_\_\_ claim that the Christian church may have decided to celebrate Valentine's feast day in the middle of February **19)** \_\_\_\_\_ an effort to 'christianize' celebrations of the pagan *Lupercalia*, which was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as **20)** \_\_\_\_\_ as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to **21)** \_\_\_\_\_ popularly celebrated around the seventeenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century, it was common **22)** \_\_\_\_\_ friends and lovers to exchange small gifts **23)** \_\_\_\_\_ affection or handwritten notes. By the end of the century, printed cards began to replace written letters due **24)** \_\_\_\_\_ improvements **25)** \_\_\_\_\_ printing technology.