

## MANY REASONS TO CELEBRATE SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY

By Woodrow Wilcox

There are many reasons to celebrate Saint Valentine's Day.

Some people believe that Saint Valentine's Day originates from pagan holidays. There may have been pagan holidays that were similar to Saint Valentine's Day, but those were not the same or of the similar origins.

One of my friends was the minister of a church in the Northridge district of Los Angeles. I attended his church on the Sunday before Saint Valentine's Day in 1997. My friend gave a very well researched sermon about the origins of Saint Valentine's Day. He was kind enough to share his research with me. Here is the story of the unique origins of Saint Valentine's Day.

In the early days of Christianity in the Roman Empire, the people who followed the new religion of worshipping a Creator God of love and kindness were persecuted. So, many Christians kept their worship practices secret.

The Roman Empire government did not like anything that related to love and kindness. The government of the Roman Empire wanted power and obedience. The Roman leaders made a law that no Roman soldier could get married and have a family. The Roman leaders decided that unmarried men were more ruthless soldiers. When an enemy was defeated, the Roman leaders wanted the Roman soldiers to murder, rape, pillage, and plunder the enemy population. Roman leaders believed that a married soldier was more likely to be kind and merciful to a defeated enemy.

Rome did not want its soldiers to be merciful to any enemy that had defied Rome. Roman leaders wanted potential enemies to be so terrified of what might happen if Roman leaders did not get their way that the potential adversaries would capitulate to any Roman demand.

Some Roman soldiers were converted to Christianity. They met women with whom they fell in love and wanted to marry. On two occasions, rather close together in time, a Christian priest secretly performed a wedding ceremony for a Roman soldier. In each case, when the Roman government discovered what had happened, the Christian priest who performed the wedding ceremony was executed by getting his head chopped off. In each case, the name of the Christian priest was VALENTINE or VALENTINO.

Although Saint Valentine's Day originated with the early Christians, it can be celebrated by many people of other faiths, too. Saint Valentine's Day is a day to honor true romance, true love, marriage, family, and children. It is a day to honor the Creator for allowing us to experience these things in our mortal lives. It is a day to honor two Godly men who defied evil, greedy government officials that did not want to practice kindness and mercy toward fellow human beings. There are many reasons to celebrate Saint Valentine's Day.

Written on January 25, 2006 by Woodrow Wilcox