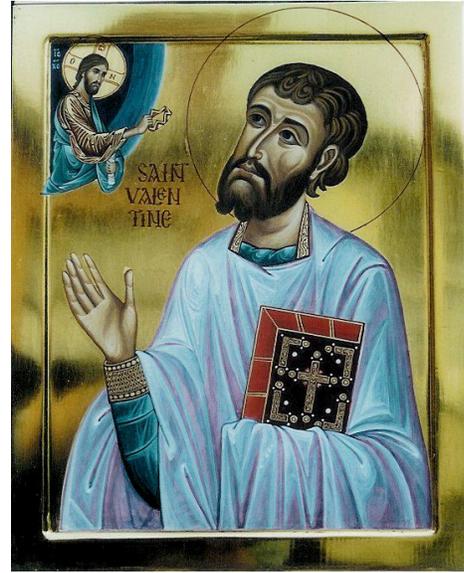


+++ The Life of St. Valentine +++

Saint Valentine was a Roman priest and physician who was beheaded for his Apostolic zeal in 269 when Gallienus was emperor of Rome. Saint Valentine's holy relics were buried on the estate of Sabinilla. In the fourth century a church basilica was erected over his relics. During the fourteenth century this church fell into ruin.



After the death of Christ, the early Christians were mistrusted by the Roman Civil authorities throughout the vast Roman Empire and lived under the constant threat of persecution. Roman civil authority required its citizens to pay homage to their Emperor as though he were a god. In order to insure the loyalty of all citizens during times of religious and civil unrest the Roman Emperor and provincial governors instigated periods of persecution particularly against Christians, and, in order to flush them out of hiding, they required all citizens to worship the Emperor and offer incense before his image knowing that faithful Christians would surely refuse and reveal their identity. Christians rightly believed that while they could accept the civil authority of the Roman Emperor, even if he were pagan, they could not worship him as a god. Bishops and Priests were particularly suspect of treasonous acts because it was well known that they not only refused to offer incense themselves, but they taught the faithful to follow their example and to also refuse to concede in this matter.

Because of his Holy Zeal and his open confession of faith, St. Valentine was arrested and threatened with death by beheading if he did not repent of his treason against the state. St. Valentine refused to repent and he was thrown into prison to await his end. The jailer at the prison was deeply impressed by St. Valentine's warm love and his kindness toward other prisoners and toward his captors who unjustly held him prisoner. The jailer began to befriend St. Valentine and he could see that St. Valentine was learned in all things. Not only did St. Valentine have a vast knowledge of history, literature, philosophy and science but also, St. Valentine had great ability in teaching and encouraging others.

Unbeknown to St. Valentine, the jailer had a beautiful young daughter who had a great thirst for learning in spite of the fact that she had been blind since birth. Whenever the jailer's daughter heard people speaking about things of interest she would go to sit at their side and listen intently in the hope of learning something new about the world she could not see but, nevertheless, believed that it must be very beautiful. When the jailer came to know and trust St. Valentine he told him about his daughter and how she ached with yearning to know as much as possible about the world and its history. After telling St. Valentine all about his daughter the jailer asked the Holy Saint if he would teach his daughter as much as possible while he was in prison under his guard. St. Valentine agreed and the jailer began bringing his daughter to the Saint each day so that she could spend time with him in his jail cell and learn about the wonderful world.

The girl was extremely enthusiastic and remembered in great detail all that St. Valentine

taught her. St. Valentine, being a man of God, taught very matter-of-factly about how God had created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. He taught her about Adam and Eve and the Paradise God created for them and how they fell from paradise through their disobedience and their pride. He taught her how God never abandoned Adam and Eve even after the Fall and worked always for their salvation and the salvation of all men. He taught her about Noah and the flood, about Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, about Joseph and the migration of the tribes of Israel into Egypt. He taught her about how they became slaves and how God raised up Moses and Aaron to lead them and all of their generations out of bondage to Pharaoh and his demons into a land filled with milk and honey and the promise of eternal salvation. St. Valentine taught her about the prophets and how they foretold the coming of the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Seeing that she was prepared to receive the Gospel of Christ, St. Valentine revealed to her the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God through His miraculous conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, His birth and the revelation of the Holy Trinity at His baptism. St. Valentine taught her about Christ's life, His teachings and His miracles. And finally, he told her about His Holy Passion, His arrest, His imprisonment, His false trial, His scourging, His crucifixion, His death and His burial. When his catechumen thought that all hope for mankind had been lost, St. Valentine taught her about Christ's most Glorious Resurrection from the dead and the Divine life in eternity that became possible to all who believed in Him and were baptized by water and the Holy Spirit in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

St. Valentine taught his catechumen well and she saw Christ in the union of her heart and mind by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, more vividly than if He were there before her in the flesh. With all of her heart, her mind, her soul and her strength she confessed Jesus Christ to be her Savior and insisted that she be baptized immediately. The catechumen's father had been witnessing the remarkable transformation of his daughter into a child of God and all the while in the evening he learned from her all that she learned each day. When she converted, he converted and when his daughter asked him to take her to be baptized he was baptized with her and together they entered into the joy of salvation.

Within a few days of their baptism, the time for St. Valentine's execution was set. As he considered the final moments of his life and the scourging, torture and death he faced, he prayed for the strength to remain true and faithful to the end. In those remaining days St. Valentine also composed a letter filled with the Divine Love of God for his spiritual child exhorting his newly illumined to become the bride of Christ and to unite herself to Him in perfect Love by fulfilling His Word and Commandments with all of her being in every aspect of her life. St. Valentine then signed his letter,

+ "With all of my love in Christ, Your Valentine" +

That next day St. Valentine was beaten, tortured and then beheaded. With the strength of God working in him he remained faithful to the end so that we could remember his life and be enlightened by his example.

+++ Glory to God for All Things +++