

Feast of Saint Valentine

14th February 2021



In 1969 Pope Paul VI deleted the Feast of Saint Valentine from the calendar of the church because there was not enough evidence to support the many stories and traditions attributed to him.

Despite his relegation Valentine still remains a popular saint and the 14th February is still celebrated as a great festival of romance in his honour.

As a celebration it undoubtedly had its origins in pagan fertility rites, but the festival became part of our Christian tradition and I think we should continue to honour Saint Valentine and celebrate his feast.

I say this for two reasons :

firstly, if we choose to ignore Saint Valentine's day it will revert to a purely secular festival,

and secondly, because romance is very much a part of the Christian tradition it is always worthy of celebration.

There could be no more beautiful Valentine's verse than a quotation from the Bible, and here is one example taken from the Song of Songs

**Arise, my love, my fair one and come away;
for lo, the winter is past and the snow is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth,
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.**

**Arise, my love, my fair one and come away;
O my dove in the clefts of the rock,
in the covert of the cliff,
let me see your face, let me hear your voice,
for your voice is sweet and your face is beautiful.**

Of course, romance is only romance,
and sometimes it is mistaken for love.

Love and romance are two very different things,
love can exist without romance,
and in many relationships love goes on long after romance has died.

Romance is not love and it is never a solid foundation for a life-long
commitment.

But love is always enriched by romance, and romance can serve as the
language of love.

The pandemic and restrictions on meeting have left us with a bitter
winter lockdown starved of romance and human touch.

Young couples planning marriage and not already sharing living space,
teenagers deprived of normal social outlets and activities are all
experiencing touch deprivation, or skin hunger as it is also called,
and this leads to heightened anxiety.

I really do not know what can compensate for such deprivation, a bunch
of red roses, a box of chocolates, a Valentine's card might go some way
in answering the needs of young love

But if you think that you are too long in the tooth for such romantic
gestures maybe you should say to your partner :

'I think it is time we started reading the Bible.
we will begin with this book called the Song of Songs'.

And, believe you me,
the smouldering embers of romance will very quickly fan into a flame.

Happy Saint Valentine's Day!

