



On February 15<sup>th</sup>, signs of “love” are at a discount. Every grocery, every drugstore, gift shop, and boutique has its clearance rack touting the fifty to ninety-nine percent off on the symbols of love that just a few weeks ago commanded a hefty price. The boxes of heart shaped chocolates, the stuffed animal clutching the heart emblazoned with the romantic cliché, the cupid statuette with the missing bow and arrow are now little more than missed opportunities to ignite or reignite the romantic sparks of our lives.

There were a few saints named St. Valentine. According to Roman Catholic doctrine the one we celebrate on February 14<sup>th</sup> is St. Valentine of Rome who neither was born nor martyred on this date but was buried. Its removal as a feast day according to the Second Vatican Council, is due to the following reason: “Though the memorial of Saint Valentine is ancient, it is left to particular calendars, since, apart from his name, nothing is known of Saint Valentine except that he was buried on the Via Flaminia on February 14<sup>th</sup>.”

The romantic notion of St. Valentine’s Day was first recorded with English author Geoffrey Chaucer, who in 1382 wrote: “For this was Saint Valentine’ Day, when every bird cometh there to choose his mate.” He only noticed the coincidence that mid-February coincided with the time birds would begin their courtship behaviors, and not that St. Valentine’s Day was a day to celebrate romance.

So aside from the commercial aspect of the day, why should it matter that it’s St. Valentine’s Day? It’s because St. Valentine’s Day is a reminder that we all have the capacity to demonstrate unbridled love. Love, not just between you and God or another person, but to yourself as well. When Christ was asked what is the greatest of the commandments he replied, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and your mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Happy St. Valentine’s Day!

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