

KINS COMMUNITY COMMENT (442-5744)

This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.

Tomorrow is Valentine's Day. As I walk through the stores I see the chocolates and candies, I listen to the multitude of ads about romantic gifts, and I see the fancy cards, I wonder what happened to the shoebox and the construction paper valentines I used to exchange with my friends when I was in grade school. That decorated shoe box and the cupcakes my mother brought into my school classroom for treats, are the memories I like to reflect on when February 14th comes along. Over the years, the changes to this day have turned a pretty simple occasion into one of the most commercial days of the year. Just as the day has changed from what it was when I was a young man in grade school, the origin of Valentine's Day has changed greatly over the centuries from the life of a priestly martyr ministering to the people of Rome in the year 269 AD.

"February 14 arrives each year as a blessing to those so shy that they need a disguise for expressing their affections. The custom of sending "valentines" or love notes had its origin in a popular belief in the Middle Ages that halfway through the second month (on February 14) birds began to mate. For this reason the day was regarded as especially consecrated to lovers, and the saint whose feast was celebrated on this day was inevitably chosen as their patron and protector. It was nothing more than coincidence, then, that made Valentine the esteemed patron. Probably the first reference to Saint Valentine in his role as love patron was made by the poet Chaucer (1340-1400) in his poem, "Parliament of Fowls" For this was on Saint Valentine's Day, When every fowl cometh to chose his mate."

The person St. Valentine is thought to be a priest and physician in Rome in the years 257 to 269, and details of his life are extremely sketchy. The details available reflect on an individual of remarkable skills in curing illnesses using miraculous cures, and in giving wise counsel.....Valentine was beaten, beheaded, and martyred in 269 by order of the Roman Emperor Claudius. Most of his relics are now in the Church of Saint Praxedes in Rome. The reason Valentine is remembered is because of his closeness to the people of Rome.

His writings and traditions of ministering to the sick with a most loving spirit, have been preserved over the centuries attesting to the miraculous nature of his ministries.

As we fast forward to 2014, I doubt that few people reflect on what makes a person devote himself to someone else, and ultimately giving his life because of his faith. Like many of the days we celebrate, the origin of the remembrance is based on someone of strong belief and extraordinary spirit. Someone who is embedded in our personal successes and failures. Someone who provides the love in our life.

When I want to find someone who, for me reflects those attributes, I need look no further than my wife Jan..... Happy Valentine's Day Jani

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