

The Story of St. Valentine

About two thousand years ago, a new religion was born. This religion was Christianity.

The Christian faith spread quickly through the Roman empire. This change scared the Roman government. The government responded by persecuting Christians. The government ordered Christians to stop worshiping and teaching others about Jesus Christ.

A priest named Valentine continued to practice his faith in spite of the persecution. He refused to worship the Roman gods. This made the Emperor Claudius II angry. Claudius II had Valentine arrested and put into prison.

Valentine spent one year in prison. The prison was very uncomfortable. He had to sleep on a cold, hard floor, and he had little food. But Valentine was not sad. He had always been kind to children, and they remembered his kindness. The children threw flowers and kind notes to him through the prison bars.

Valentine made friends with the jailer's blind daughter. She would bring these notes and flowers to him. Whenever he could, Valentine sent notes back out to the children.

Claudius II was impressed by Valentine's kindness. He said that Valentine could go free if he would worship the Roman gods. Valentine refused. Instead, he tried to convert Claudius II to Christianity.

This made Claudius II furious. He ordered Valentine to be killed.

During the days before his execution, Claudius prayed for the jailer's blind daughter, and she regained her sight. Valentine was beheaded on February 14. Before he died, he wrote a farewell message to the jailer's daughter and signed it "From Your Valentine." Some people say we remember his death by sending kind messages to our friends.

Vocabulary

arrest
blind
convert
execution
faith
farewell
furious
impress
order
persecute
religion
worship

Read and answer.

Why did the Roman government dislike Christians?

What does "persecute" mean?

Why was Valentine thrown in prison?

Who were Valentine's friends?

What bold thing did Valentine do?

How did the Emperor respond?

According to the legend, how did people honor Valentine's death?

St. Valentine chose to disobey what he believed to be a bad law. Do you agree or disagree with his choice? Why or why not?

List two adverbs that you would use to describe St. Valentine's actions.

