

# God's Valentine



(Photo of the Sacred Heart found in Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil's Bible)

Valentine's Day originated with a Roman fertility festival called Lupercalia, celebrated annually on February 15<sup>th</sup>. When the Roman empire was under attack on all sides, Emperor Claudius II issued an edict forbidding young men to marry. He needed them in his army and felt married men attached to families made poor soldiers. The young men, however, went secretly to the priest Valentine to be married. When the emperor learned of this "**friend of lovers**," he had Valentine imprisoned. It is said that the prison jailer's blind daughter, cured and converted by Valentine, was allowed to visit him. Later, when Valentine refused to renounce his Christian faith to the Roman gods, the emperor sentenced him to death. The night before his martyrdom, February 14 (around 270 AD), Valentine wrote the girl a note and signed it "**From your Valentine.**" In 496 AD Pope Gelasius turned Lupercalia into **St. Valentine's Day**, celebrated February 14<sup>th</sup>, the day he was martyred. Many claim **that loving note** from the priest to encourage the neophyte in her faith is the origin of **the valentine** card of today.

Nearly everything about Valentine's Day is symbolized by a heart, the universal symbol for love. C.S. Lewis wrote a book on the nature of love called **THE FOUR LOVES**. He identifies them as Affection, Friendship, Eros and Charity. Affection has to do with familial love while friendship concerns those deeper relationships where another person becomes like another self. Eros has to do with sexual love, being "in love." Charity speaks of the love of God, that primal love that is gift-love, which theologians call "agape-love." Since God is complete in Himself, He has no needs to fulfill; His Love is pure gift. He created us simply so He could love and perfect us. He is the author of all human love and has created us with both gift-loves and need-loves. Some of our human loves mirror His own gift-love, as a Mother's selfless love for her child, or a soldier's who lays down his life for a comrade without regard for himself. Our need-loves force us to depend on one another, but our greatest need-love is the one God created in us for Himself. There is nothing we can do of our own power and there is no creature who can satisfy the longing within ourselves for He Who loved us first and made us for Himself. God has poured out His love in creation and providence. In the appointed time, He gave us His own Heart, His

Beloved Son, to redeem us from slavery to sin and to offer us God's own Holy Spirit to be our life and joy. God gives to us so we may give back to Him and thus enter into His glorious exchange of love within the Trinity. His is the only Love that can satisfy us completely. This is grace, supernatural grace, the Charity of God. When Jesus took on our nature and identified with us, He thereby allows us to love Him back when we care for each other's needs. There is no greater love than that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that poured out every drop of His blood to show us how much He loved us! The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the first and best of all Valentines. All creation and every love is written in its Word. It is this Sacred Humanity that lays its life down for us in every Eucharistic feast wherein Jesus gives Himself to us as the Lover of all lovers and as heavenly food to sustain our love.

The Beloved disciple John, who laid his head on the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the Last Supper, tells us:

**“ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. ... Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”** (1 John 4: 7-17.)

On February 3, 1957 Our Lady spoke these words to Sister Mildred Neuzil:

**“My Son asks of souls love, that true love willing to sacrifice itself for the One loved. Man fears to sacrifice himself because he is selfish. If souls would place themselves into my keeping, I would teach them the way of true love. ... But to make your hearts grow more and more like to the Heart of the Son, you must go to the Mother, whose heart is most like His. From this Pure and Immaculate Heart you will learn all that will make you more pleasing to the Divine Heart of the Son of God. The Holy Trinity looks down with infinite delight upon such souls and makes them Its heaven upon earth. (Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Fostoria, Ohio, Pgs. 15-17.)**

In his encyclical on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, *Haurietis Aquas, You Shall Draw Water*, Pope Pius XII wrote, "We do not hesitate to declare that devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the most effective school of the love of God; the love of God which must be the foundation on which to build the Kingdom of God in the hearts of individuals, families, and nations."(#123) In 1984, on the feast of the Sacred Heart, Pope St. John Paul II said, "In the Sacred Heart every treasure of wisdom and knowledge is hidden. **In that Divine Heart beats God's infinite love for everyone, for each one of us individually.**" Pope Benedict XVI, in *Deus Caritas Est, God is Love*, gives a beautiful explanation of the necessary unity of *eros (ascending love)* and *agape (descending love)* and of the **necessary union of both body and soul if eros is to be true to its ordered ascent to what is eternal and divine. He states:**

**...man cannot live by oblation, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive**

love as a gift. Certainly, as the Lord tells us, one can become a source from which rivers of living water flow (cf. *Jn 7:37-38*). Yet to become such a source, one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God (cf. *Jn 19:34*). ... Love looks to the eternal. Love is indeed “ecstasy”, not in the sense of a moment of intoxication, but rather as a journey, an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God: “Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.” (*Lk 17:33*) (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, #7, #6, December 25, 2005.)

St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal taught their followers to lodge in the pierced side of the Savior and to pray with their heads on His Heart so He might communicate His tender Love to them. St. Catherine of Siena spoke of Jesus taking her heart and giving her His own. When St. Gertrude complained to Jesus about her distractions, He said, “**Behold my Heart, the delight of the Holy Trinity. I give it to thee that it may supply for what is wanting to thee.**” St. Margaret Mary Alacoque has given us the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus crowned with thorns, surmounted with a cross and resting upon a throne of fire.

**[Our Lord told St. Margaret Mary]... that His Heart signified His immense love for us who are the cause of His sufferings that He, in His humanity, willed freely to undergo for our redemption, and especially the outrages He is exposed to in the Blessed Sacrament. He lamented that man largely ignored His great thirst to be loved in the Blessed Sacrament. He told the saint that in Gethsemane, immediately after the Last Supper, as He sweated blood, His great suffering was caused by the ingratitude of men, particularly toward the Blessed Sacrament.**

There is a story of a man and his son who collected famous artwork and often sat admiring it. Then the son went to war in Vietnam and died while saving a number of his comrades. One day one of the young men whose life the son had saved came to the father's door and gave him the portrait he painted of the man's son. The father was overwhelmed with how accurately the soldier had captured the features of his son. He placed the portrait in the most prestigious spot in the room. When the father died the artwork was to be auctioned and crowds came to buy it. The auctioneer began with the portrait of the son. No one made a bid and the crowd grumbled; they were only interested in the famous artwork. Finally, the gardener bid \$10. When no counter bid was made, the auctioneer stopped the auction. When the crowd grew rowdy, asking why, the auctioneer informed them there was a stipulation in the father's will, not to be disclosed ahead of time, that whoever bought the portrait of his son would get the whole inheritance, artwork and all. How like our Father in heaven is this story! Are we interested in the famous art of the world or in the priceless portrait of His own Son?

Sister Mildred Neuzil, the visionary for Our Lady of America®, like the son was called to war, war with Satan for the salvation of souls. She wrote how Our Lord appeared to her with his cross and His crown of thorns, asking if she still wished to suffer for the salvation of souls and if she would allow Him to nail her to His cross. She told her director, “How could I refuse Him anything?” Jesus then said to her, “Then I will place you on the altar of

sacrifice.” And so He did. And she suffered with Him for the salvation of souls. This is the prayer she prayed with her life. Dare we pray it with her?

### **Prayer to the Indwelling Most Holy Trinity**

**O my Love, my only Good, Most Holy Trinity, I adore You, hidden in the depths of my soul. To You, to Your honor and glory, I dedicate my life. May every thought, word and deed of mine be an act of adoration and praise directed towards Your divine Majesty enthroned in my heart.**

**O Father, Infinite Goodness, behold Your child clothed in the likeness of Your Son. Extend to me Your arms that I may belong to You forever.**

**O Son, Divine Lord, made man, crucify me with Yourself that I may become, in union with You, a sacrifice of praise for the glory of Your Father.**

**O Holy Spirit, Fire of Everlasting Love, consume me on the altar of Divine Charity, that at the end of life, nothing may remain but that which bears the likeness of Christ.**

**O Blessed Trinity, worthy of all adoration, I wish to remain in spirit on my knees, to acknowledge forever your reign in me and over me, to Your everlasting glory.**

**Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the pure heart of St. Joseph , I consecrate my life to Your adoration and glory.**

**At the moment of death, receive me, O my Triune Love, that I may continue my adoration of love through all eternity. Amen. (200days)**

**Nihil Obstat: Daniel Pilarczyk, S.T.D.  
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