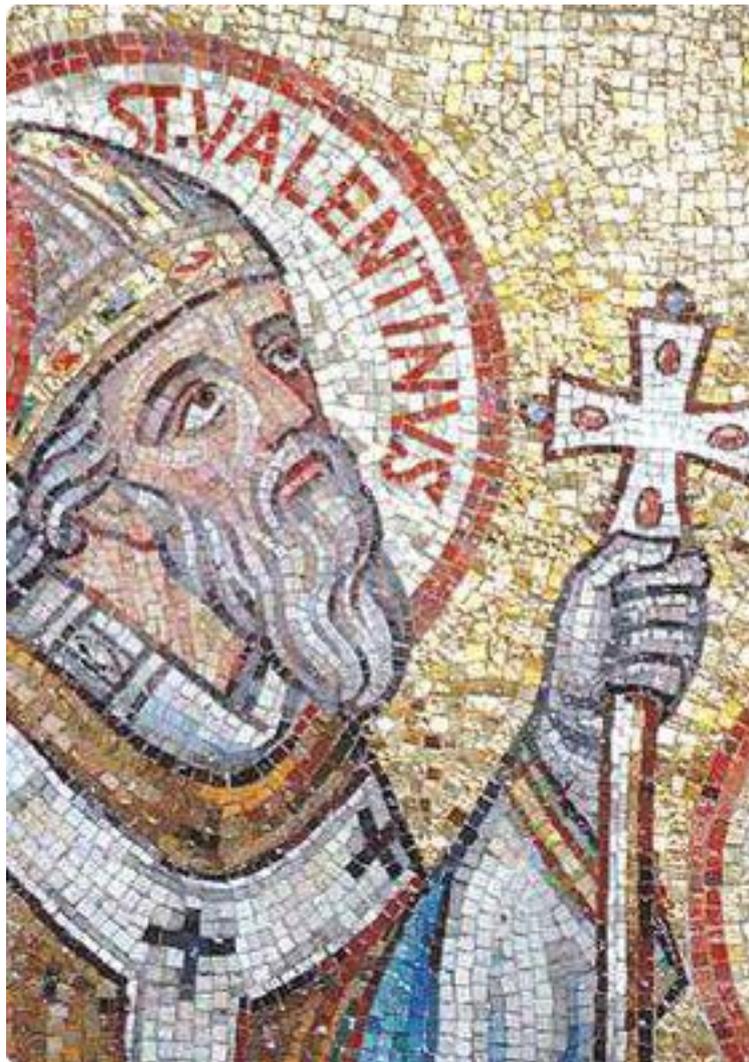




Love is all Around



1 John 4:7-12. Dear friends: let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love

A Service for St Valentine's Day

We say together the words printed in bold.

Preparation

May the Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Greeting

Praise God! For the Lord our God the almighty reigns!

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory.

Happy are those who have been invited
to the wedding-feast of the Lamb.

Amen. Praise the Lord!

cf Revelation 19.6,9

The story of Valentine.

It's a shame that the SAINT word has been dropped largely from the Feast Day of St Valentine. As a martyr priest, he stood for love - the love of Jesus.

As the story goes, the Roman Emperor Claudius II —who reigned from the year 268 A.D. to 270 A.D.—banned marriage because he thought unmarried men made better soldiers. Valentine thought this was unfair and decided to break the rules and perform marriages anyway. He kept the ceremonies quiet, but he was eventually caught and later killed on February 14 of the year 270 for defying the emperor.

Right before he died, Valentine supposedly wrote the first-ever “valentine” to his jailer’s daughter, with whom he’d fallen in love. Later, in the 5th century, Pope Gelasius I declared the day of his death as St. Valentine’s Day.

The celebration surrounding this day actually has roots in an ancient pagan festival that started centuries before Valentine was even alive. Held in Rome each February, part of the event focused on bringing new couples together.

During the festivities, it’s said that boys drew the names of girls from a container. The pairs would stay together during the festival, and some would actually get married when the festival was over. After Pope Gelasius I created St. Valentine’s Day, the festival turned into a Christian celebration that focused on the saint. The Church doesn’t recognize St. Valentine’s Day on its calendar anymore, but people throughout the world still celebrate the day. They just lost the Sainly link.

Valentine’s Day traditions have evolved a lot over the years. For example, in the Middle Ages, people started exchanging handmade cards with love notes inside. Today a small fortune is spent on Valentine’s Day cards and gifts each year around the world. A good day for florists too.

In a tradition that's also tied to the Middle Ages South African women actually wear their hearts on their sleeves ... well, sort of. Girls pin the names of their crushes on their shirtsleeves, sometimes revealing themselves as secret admirers to their sweethearts. Go on then, you know you want to.....

The Collect

God of wonder and of joy:
grace comes from you,
and you alone are the source of life and love.
Without you, we cannot please you;
without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.
Send your Holy Spirit,
and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may worship you now
with thankful hearts
and serve you always with willing minds;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Confession

God shows his love for us
in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Let us then show our love for him
by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

All Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

cf Hosea 6

Absolution

May the God of love
bring *us* back to himself,
forgive *us our* sins,
and assure *us* of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All

Amen.

Hymn

The Word

Alleluia, alleluia.
God is love;
let us love one another
as God has loved us.

All

Alleluia

cf 1 John 4.8-11

Reading from Paul to the Corinthians

The Way of Love

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

When you fall in love it is a temporary madness. It erupts like an earthquake and then it subsides and when it subsides you have to make a decision, you have to work out whether your roots have become so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part, because this is what love is.

Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the desire to mate every second of the day, it is not lying awake at night imagining he is kissing every part of your body. No, don't blush, I am telling you some truths. This is just 'being in love,' which any of us can convince ourselves we are in. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away. It doesn't sound very exciting does it? But it is.'

Sermon

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.

We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

cf Ephesians 3

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

We pray for the family of the Church, for loving relationships,
and for the life of families around us.

Jesus, Lord of love,
in your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, born in poverty and soon a refugee, be with families today who are poor
and live in hunger and want ...

Jesus, Lord of love,
in your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, as you grew in wisdom and in favour with God and the people
in the family of Joseph the carpenter,
bring wisdom and the presence of God
into the work and growth of families today ...
Jesus, Lord of love,

in your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, as you blessed marriage in the wedding at Cana,
be with those preparing for marriage.

Jesus, Lord of love,

in your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, as you healed Peter's mother-in-law, bring healing to those in our
families who are ill today ...

Jesus, Lord of love,

in your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, when you were dying you called Mary and John to
care for one another.

Provide today for those who lose their families: the bereaved and childless,
orphans and widows ...

Jesus, Lord of love,

in your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, as you ate breakfast on the beach with your disciples after you were
raised from the dead, bring the whole Church on earth and in heaven into your
risen presence to eat at the eternal banquet.

Jesus, Lord of love,

in your mercy, hear us.

Lord of Love and life,

**Hear our prayer and make us one in heart and mind to serve you with joy
forever. Amen**

The Peace

To crown all things there must be love,
to bind all together and complete the whole.
Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.

cf Colossians 3.14

All and also with you.

The Great Thanksgiving

(Eucharistic Prayer H)

The Lord is here:

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts:

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God:

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation; in your love you made us
for yourself. When we turned away you did not reject us, but came to meet us
in your Son.

**You embraced us as your children
and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.**

In Christ you shared our life that we might live in him and he in us.

**He opened his arms of love upon the cross
and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.**

On the night he was betrayed, at supper with his friends he took bread, and
gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to them, saying: *Take, eat; this is my
body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.*

**Father, we do this in remembrance of him:
his body is the bread of life.**

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine, he gave you thanks, and said:
*Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you
for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me.*

**Father, we do this in remembrance of him:
his blood is shed for all.**

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory, send your Holy Spirit that this bread and this wine may be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

**As we eat and drink these holy gifts
make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.**

With your whole Church throughout the world we offer you this sacrifice of praise and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom,
as we pray in the words you gave us.

**Our Father, who art in Heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

Lord, we died with you on the cross.
Now we are raised to new life.

We were buried in your tomb.
Now we share in your resurrection.
Live in us that we may live in you.

Rev Gary receives Communion on behalf of the people of our parishes - we then join in our spiritual Communion In Christ , saying:

Spiritual Communion

**Lord Jesus Christ we thank you
for all the benefits
you have won for us,
for all the pains and insults
you have borne for us.**

**Though we may not receive you now
in bread and wine,
you most certainly abide in our hearts
and dwell in our souls.**

**O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may we know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly,
day by day. Amen.**

St Richard of Chichester (Richard de Wyche) adapted

Recessional Prayer

Eternal God, we offer our thanks that through our earthly lives
you speak of your eternal life.

We rejoice in the wonder of creation,
the gift of human life
and the many blessings that our relationships bring.
Renew in us the fruits of your Holy Spirit;
that love, joy and peace may abound in our homes,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

All Heavenly Father,
we offer you our souls and bodies,
our thoughts and words and deeds,
our love for one another.
Unite our wills in your will,
that we may grow together
in love and peace
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Hymn

The Blessing

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

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Blessing of Couples

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, let us turn to the Lord and pray that He will continue to bless your marriages with His grace.

Father, look with tenderness upon your daughters gathered here; give them love, grace and peace. May they always follow the example of the holy women whose praises are sung in the scriptures.

Bless your sons gathered in your name; may they always have the strength and compassion which comes from the Gospel.

Together, may each couple continue to both praise you in their gladness and turn to you in their troubles so that you may fill them with the joy of salvation. Keep them faithful in their marriages, and let them be living examples of Christian love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen