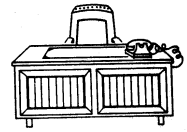


## 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

### February 14, 2021



From the Desk of  
Fr. Romanus

Dear Parishioners,

#### Valentine's Day:

As you know, the world celebrates Valentine's Day this weekend. Though the celebration falls on Sunday, it is observed through the weekend as a celebration of love and friendship. Valentine's Day is a great opportunity to remind those you love how much they mean to you. That message is conveyed in person or through cards, emails and social media. It is celebrated with roses, dinners, toasts, et cetera. Valentine's Day is one of those cultural celebrations designed to have a positive impact on society.

In a world that is hurting from the devastating effects of the pandemic, Valentine's Day celebration is a panacea for pain and misery. It is a welcome distraction from our preoccupation with the painful inconveniences of the Corona Virus. For those who have lost loved ones, it is an opportunity to recall and celebrate the love that once bound them together.

Whereas the day could be abused by some, for most people, especially married and engaged couples, it provides a wonderfully opportunity to enrich and strengthen relationships. For people in ruptured but redeemable relationships, it is an opportunity for healing. It is also a good time to evaluate, re-evaluate, and perhaps terminate dysfunctional, destructive, and unhealthy relationships. Valentine's Day presents parents an opportunity to reassure their children of their unconditional love, vice versa.

The history of Valentine's Day is somewhat ambiguous, but it is said to have roots in the Roman pagan feast of *lupercalia*, a fertility festival celebrated on February 15. Pope Delasius II changed this to a Christian celebration in 496, and designated February 14 as Valentine's Day.

Some believe the feast was named after a priest, Valentine, who fell out with Emperor Claudius II around the year 270. One legend has it that Emperor Claudius prohibited marriage for young men, claiming that unmarried young men made better soldiers. Their life and love were for the state and not shared with someone else. Ignoring the Emperor's prohibition, Valentine continued to secretly perform marriages, and was eventually arrested by the Roman soldiers and put to death.

Another legend continues the story while embellishing the previous legend. It states that while in jail, a guard asked Valentine if he would tutor his blind daughter. Valentine agreed and taught the girl many lessons and shared numerous academic and theological insights with her. Through him the girl became a Christian and regained her sight through a miracle. The day before Valentine was executed he sent a secret letter to the young girl urging her to love God and remain strong in the faith. He signed the letter, "from your Valentine." Hence, the origin of Valentine letters. The feast of St. Valentine remained on the Church's liturgical calendar until the reforms of Vatican II. The feast was one of the victims of the purging of the liturgical calendar whereby feasts with dubious origins were deleted.

Regardless of the veracity of the legends, Valentine's Day remains a very special day to celebrate love. Most of all, it is an opportunity to celebrate God's unconditional love manifested in the paschal mystery, that is, the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to die, for the expiation of our sins. The suffering and death of Christ reveal God's unconditional and sacrificial love for us. Love often involves pain, suffering, and inconvenience. Hence, true love demands sacrifice and commitment. Those unwilling to make those sacrifices and commitments should not claim to love.

Happy Valentine's Day!

*Fr. Romanus*