

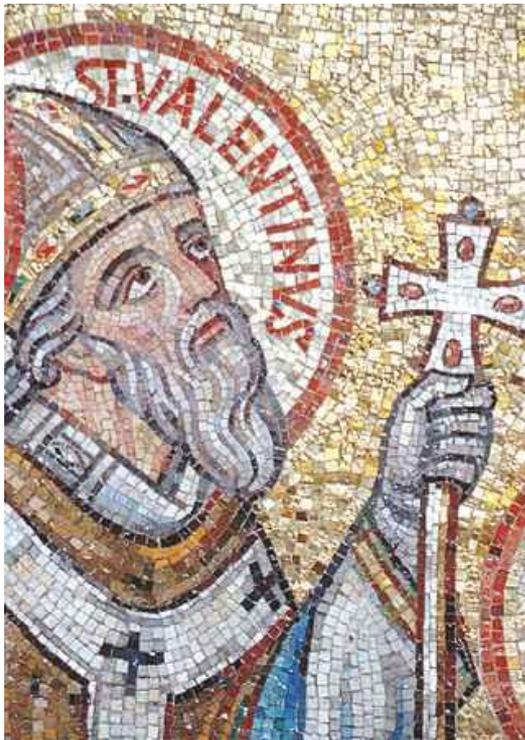
Valentine's Day

The story of a religious holiday gone commercial

Who was (were) Saint(s) Valentine?

- Early Christian martyrs
 - Valentine of Rome, killed in the 3rd century
 - Valentine of Terni, also killed in the 3rd century
 - some other Valentine, killed in Africa in ???
- None of them were connected to romantic love.
- They were originally celebrated like other saints, with visits to their shrines and special prayers for their intercession.

The Legend of St. Valentine



The Roman Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriage, because single men were easier to recruit into the army. A priest named Valentine believed so strongly in the sacrament of marriage and the value of love that he married young couples **in secret**. He was arrested for breaking the law. On the night before his execution, he wrote his last **love letter** to his own sweetheart and signed it, “**From your Valentine.**” He was martyred on February 14.

Happy... *Lupercalia*?

- Lupercalia dates to antiquity.
- February 13-15, feasts honored the she-wolf who nursed Romulus and Remus.
- Festivities celebrated fertility and included sacrificial rituals with blood and **hearts**.
- Outlawed by the *Pope* in 5th century.
- Saint Valentine's Day may have started as the "Christianized" version of Lupercalia.



Valentine's Day takes hold – the 15th Century

- Chaucer and Shakespeare both refer to lovers as “**Valentines.**”
- The Renaissance is all about “courtly love” – the idea that people gained love by showing affection and admiration in a courteous, well-mannered, and civil way.
- Tokens of affection included ribbons, **poems**, carved spoons and bouquets of symbolic **flowers.**

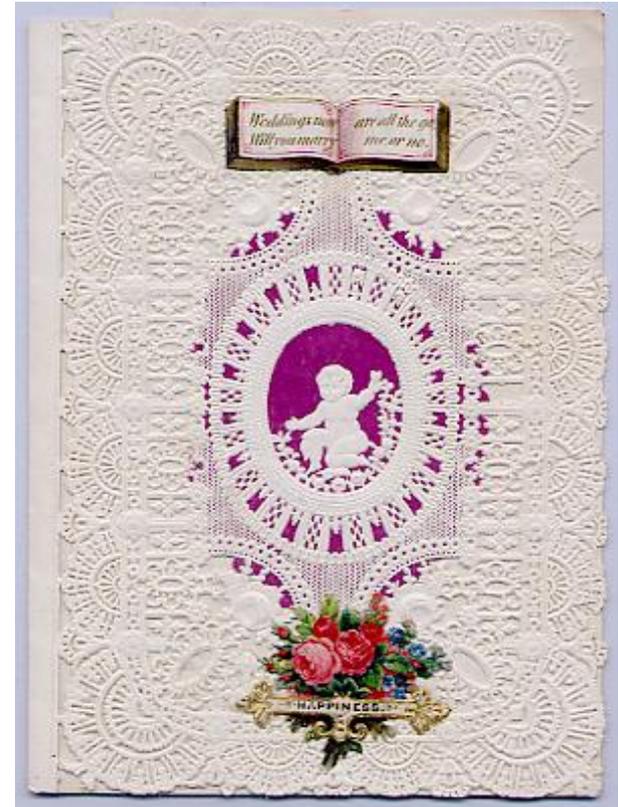
What's Cupid got to do with it?

- **Cupid** is the Roman god of love.
- Cupid may be a throwback to fertility and Lupercalia.
- Valentine's Day really hit its stride in the 18th century, the *neoclassical* period in the arts, when all things Greek and Roman were supercool.



The 19th & 20th Centuries: Valentine's Day Goes Commercial

- First mass-produced Valentine's Day **cards** sold in 1847.
- By the late 1800s, Valentine's Day was the first holiday with a market of goods all its own (Christmas and Halloween eventually copied this success).
- In the 20th century, Valentine's Day expanded to **flowers, chocolates,** and gifts.



For love... or money?

- More than 1 billion Valentine's Day cards are sent each year (85% sent by women).
- Average Valentine's Day spending per person in 2016 was \$147. (U.S. News and World Report)
- The three major industries of the Valentine's Day machine are fueled by **violence, child labor, and exploitation** of natural resources in developing nations:
 - chocolate
 - diamonds
 - flowers



Valentine's Day – the sweet stuff

- 61% of men say they'd love to get flowers from their sweetie.
- Kids ages 5-10 exchange 650 million valentines with classmates and friends.
- Teachers receive the most valentines, followed by children, mothers, and wives.
- 49% of people mailing long-distance valentines will follow them up with a phone call.... Awww.



Valentine's Day Outside the U.S.

- Marketing has spread the holiday to other countries.
- In Japan, the holiday is known as *giri-choko* (*giri* means “obligation” and *choko* means “chocolate”).
- In Finland and Estonia, the day is marked by acts of friendship.
- But there are countries that have banned this holiday. In Saudi Arabia, the holiday was outlawed in 2008. The ban on all things Valentine (seen as Western and un-Islamic) has led to a black market in roses and red wrapping paper.

The Lonely Hearts Club

- One in four Americans does not celebrate Valentine's Day, including people who are:
 - single
 - widowed
 - divorced
 - elderly

*Valentine's Day maybe a good day to think of lonely hearts and remind them that they're loved!

Discussion Questions

What other religious or sacred *holy days* have become *secular* and *commercial*? What other sacred holidays have become about “stuff”?

List four:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.