

VIEW FROM THE HEIGHTS

February 2019

Greetings,
And St. Valentine's blessings to you all!

The story of this Third Century Roman martyr has been lost in the mists – and myths – of time. But it is believed that he performed weddings at a time when the Emperor was limiting engagement & marriage. (Claudius II thought that marriage was a ploy to escape military service!) For centuries, his saint's day has been associated with love and devotion.

Whoever - & whatever- Valentinus was, his presence in Christian hagiography reflects the importance of love in our religious tradition. Friendship, romance, neighbourly concern and care, and devotion to the Divine are all honoured in our faith. St. Valentine's Day is the perfect occasion for celebrating the awesomeness of a God whom is named as Love!ⁱ

Jesuit scholars Daniel Harrington and James Keenan have cogently argued that all sin is a failure to love. Every act of wrongdoing springs, fundamentally, from lack of love.ⁱⁱ "Love," they write, "*is not so much an ethical principle as it is an experience of God's love for us.*"ⁱⁱⁱ

When we grasp how much God loves us and what God has done for us, how can our hearts not overflow with love also? Neighbour and Nature, God and self must all be encompassed by the Divine love that pours upon and within us.

Harrington and Keenan go even further. If we truly open ourselves to God's transformative power, then the same love that constitutes the Holy One will gradually constitute us.^{iv} In other words, we will BECOME love just as God's own self IS love.

What a wonderful thought! And what a super Valentine's Day present to give ourselves! This February 14th, let us all BECOME a little more love.

Wishing you a Day of Love and a month of blessings,
Brenda

ⁱ 1 John 4:8

ⁱⁱ Daniel Harrington, SJ & James Keenan, SJ, "Jesus and Virtue Ethics," Sheed & Ward, 2002, p.101

ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid.* p.77

^{iv} *ibid.* p.84