

Real Life Safety Heroes: Saint Valentine



The real-life historical personage after whom the day of love was named was a priest who lived in Rome in the third century A.D. This was the height of the persecutions against Christians, but Valentine's didn't back off in his preaching of Christianity.

What really got Valentine into hot water was his defiance of Emperor Claudius II's ban on marriage. Claudius enacted the uncouth law to aid in army recruitment efforts—men tended to be reluctant to join the army when they were married. Saint Valentine began performing secret marriages until he got caught and tossed into the dungeon.

But prison only magnified Valentine's popularity and renown. The inmate became a magnet for young visitors, among them the daughter of one of his guards. The two would sit in Valentine's cell and talk for hours. Valentine preached the importance of love. On the day he was led off to be beheaded—February 14, 269—he wrote his friend a little note, thanking her for her friendship and loyalty. The note was signed "Love from your Valentine."

You might think it odd that I would label Valentine a hero of safety. But I think it's natural. You see, while he worked in a different discipline, Valentine was inspired by the same thing that drives any workplace safety director – ardor for humanity and life. In a sense, the safety director finishes

the work that Valentine began ensuring that the couples the Saint brought together in love and matrimony remain that way in body every single day of their working lives.

By Glenn Demby