

Liturgy We Live *by Dr. Gil Haas*

The fame of St. Valentine may have begun by early Christians' efforts to dodge the draft. Married Roman soldiers were considered inferior because their battle fervor might be diminished if they remembered their lover at home. Emperor Claudius II therefore forbade young men to marry. This edict prompted a Christian priest, Valentine of Terni, to perform secret marriages. Once discovered, Valentine was arrested and beheaded on February 14, 278 AD, in Rome. This bloody punishment is in stark contradistinction to those gay depictions on modern valentine cards. Valentine's bones were given to Spain's King Carlos IV in 1700, and they were deposited in Madrid's St. Anton's Church. Catholics venerated St. Valentine on February 14th until his feast was removed from their calendar in 1969 because of his obscurity. Anglicans and Lutherans still celebrate this feast, but Valentine has never been on the Episcopal calendar. Modern traditions associated with "Valentine's Day" may have sprung from Geoffrey Chaucer's poem, *The Parliament of Fowls*. In this poem, Mother Nature encourages her avian audience to choose mates on Valentine's Day. So although Chaucer was not the first CEO of Hallmark Cards, he did instigate the association of Valentine's Day with romance.

If you have a liturgical question or an inquiry about anything that transpires during or around our worship service, please forward the question you would like researched to: gghaas@aol.com, or drop the question in the offering basin. Please note whether we can credit you as the source of the question.