

Saint Valentine February 14



Officially recognized by the Roman Catholic Church, St. Valentine is known to be a real person who died around A.D. 270. However, his true identity was questioned as early as A.D. 496 by Pope Gelasius I, who referred to the martyr and his acts as "being known only to God." One account from the 1400s describes Valentine as a temple priest who was beheaded near Rome by the emperor Claudius II for helping Christian couples wed. A different account claims Valentine was the Bishop of Terni, also martyred by Claudius II on the outskirts of Rome. Because of the similarities of these accounts, it's thought they may refer to the same person. Enough confusion surrounds the true identity of St. Valentine for the Catholic Church to discontinue liturgical veneration of him in 1969, though his name remains on its list of officially recognized saints.

Valentine is the patron saint of beekeepers and epilepsy, among many other things.

Saints are certainly expected to keep busy in the afterlife. Their holy duties include interceding in earthly affairs and entertaining petitions from living souls. In this respect, St. Valentine has wide-ranging spiritual responsibilities. People call on him to watch over the lives of lovers, of course, but also for interventions regarding beekeeping and epilepsy, as well as the plague, fainting and travelling. As you might expect, he's also the patron saint of engaged couples and happy marriages.

The flower-adorned skull of St. Valentine is on display in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome. In the early 1800s, the excavation of a catacomb near Rome yielded skeletal remains and other relics now associated with St. Valentine. As is customary, these bits and pieces of the late saint's body have subsequently been distributed to reliquaries around the world. You'll find other bits of St. Valentine's skeleton on display in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Scotland, England and France.

St Cross Newsletter February 2023



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The Vicar writes...

As I write, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has just finished and it has been a joy to share with our friends from Knutsford Methodist Church at our midweek services. The inclement wintry weather affected the turnout at the first service but it was wonderful to see so many people come together for our midweek service at St Cross. Revd Alan Bradley preached on the 'Body of Christ' reminding us that we are all part of Christ's body on earth where all have a contribution to offer. This followed on from my Sunday sermon earlier in the month where I focused on the question from Jesus to the first disciples 'What are you looking for?' and then adapted that to now, 'What *am I* looking for?' And the answer I gave was 'More foot soldiers', to enable us to function more effectively as a church.

As we enter February we have a brief spell of 'Ordinary Time' before entering the season of Lent, although our Ordinary Time will be an exceptional time of celebration and welcome: 'Celebration' in that two of our church members, Hannah Sperry and Victoria Campbell, will be confirmed on February 19th at our morning eucharist. Hannah has been part of our church family since birth, and it has been a delight for me to see her grow in our church with the support of her family. Victoria is more known to our Wednesday congregation, and I first got to know her when I conducted her marriage service to Brian at St Peter's, Hale. Mary and I have been preparing them both, respectively, for this special moment in their lives.

'Welcome' as we welcome their families and close friends who will be there to support them, and welcome also, to our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Revd. Mark Tanner, who, I am sure, will inspire and encourage us when he visits. As the last Bishop's visit to St Cross for a service was six years ago - also a Confirmation - I hope that our congregation will turn out in force to support the candidates and to welcome +Mark.

During Lent there will also be our customary Lent Appeal and there is a flyer with this Newsletter to explain more about this, including details of the Coffee Morning. Another development to report is the refurbishment of the Parish Hall and I hope to put up a display board soon to explain more about this project. These are exciting times then, and Ordinary Time / Lent will be far from mundane in the life of our church family here at St Cross.

Yours, in Christ
Paul

Bishop Mark Tanner, who has served as the Bishop of Chester since 2020 and was previously the Suffragan Bishop of Berwick in the Diocese of Newcastle.



Occasional Offices

Baptism

29 January Gracie May Harrie Smith

Funerals

9 January Gordon Fielding

17 January Sam Taggart



Readings for Services - Sundays and Wednesdays		
	Morning Services	Evening Service
1 February Wednesday	Psalm 103.1-2,13-18 Hebrews 12.4-7,11-15 Mark 6.1-6a	
Sunday 5 February 3rd Sunday before Lent	Isaiah 58.1-9a,[9b-12] 1 Corinthians 2.1-12,[13-end] Matthew 5.13-20	4.30pm Amos 2.4-end Ephesians 4.17-end Mark 1.29-39
8 February Wednesday	Genesis 2.4b-9,15-17 Psalm 104.11-12,29-32 Mark 7.14-23	
Sunday 12 February 2nd Sunday before Lent	Genesis 1.-2.3 Romans 8.18-25 Matthew 6.25-end	
15 February Wednesday	Genesis 8.6-13,20-end Psalm 116.10-end Mark 8.22-26	
Sunday 19 February Sunday next before Lent	Exodus 24.12-end 2 Peter 1.16-end Matthew 17.1-9	
22 February ASH WEDNESDAY	Joel 2.1-2,12-17 2 Corinthians 5.20b-6.10 Matthew 6.1-6	
Sunday 26 February Lent 1	Genesis 2.15-17,3.1-7 Romans 5.12-19 Matthew 4.1-11	

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