

The story of Valentine's Day begins in the third century with an oppressive Roman emperor and a humble Christian martyr. The emperor was Claudius II and the Christian was Valentinus.

Claudius had ordered all Romans to worship twelve gods, and he made it a crime punishable by death to associate with Christians. Valentinus was dedicated to the ideals of Christ, and not even the threat of death could keep him from practicing his beliefs. He was arrested and imprisoned.

As the legend goes, during the last weeks of Valentinus's life a remarkable thing happened. Seeing that he was a man of learning, the jailer asked whether his daughter, Julia, might be brought to Valentinus for lessons. She had been blind since birth. Julia was a pretty young girl with a quick mind. Valentinus read stories of Rome's history to her. He described the world of nature to her. He taught her arithmetic and told her about God. She saw the world through his eyes, trusted in his wisdom, and found comfort in his quiet strength.

Valentinus, does God really hear our prayers? Julia asked one day. *Yes, my child. God hears each one,* he replied. Julia said: *Do you know what I pray for every morning and every night? I pray that I might see. I want so much to see everything you've told me about!*

God does what is best for us if we will only believe in God, Valentinus said. *Oh, Valentinus, I do believe,* Julia said intensely. *I do.* She knelt and gripped his hand. They prayed together. Suddenly, there was a brilliant light in the prison cell. Julie cried, *Valentinus, I can see! I can see! Praise be to God!* Valentinus exclaimed. On the eve of his death, Valentinus wrote a last note to Julia, urging her to stay close to God, and he signed it *From Your Valentine*.

His sentence was carried out the next day, February 14, 270 A.D., near a gate that was later named Porta Valentini in his memory. He was buried at what is now the Church of Praxedes in Rome. It is said that Julia herself planted a pink-blossomed almond tree near his grave. Today, the almond tree remains a symbol of abiding love and friendship.

Let's look at the deeper spiritual meaning or the metaphysics of this story. All of the people and places in this story represent aspects of us.

The *Emperor Claudius II* represents our personal will. The personal will is the part of us that desires to be in control and desires to have things our way. Rome represents the intellect and lack of compassion.

The *Twelve Roman Gods* represent things that distract us and limit our ability to fully express our potential. We limit our personal power when we make things outside of ourselves gods. These false gods can include money, power, our fears and our erroneous beliefs in lack and limitation.

The *Jailer* is the part of us that is aware that there is a spiritual awareness that desires to be expressed in us. The jailer made it possible for Julia to be exposed to the wisdom of Valentinus.

Valentinus represents Divine wisdom which we all have access to.

Julia represents that part of us that lacks the realization of spiritual understanding and awareness. Her beauty represents the pure beautiful potential for enlightenment that we all possess. Julia *Prays* to see and know the Truth. The *Brilliant Light* represents the arrival of spiritual understanding. Julia planting the *Almond Tree* represents extending our love to all people and all situations.

Here are four Steps to Creating Love. They form an acronym for the letters in the word LOVE.

Let go of your old beliefs and fears that no longer serve you. Use a denial such as, *I release any beliefs in unworthiness. This error belief has no power over me!*

Open your heart and mind to the Truth. Affirm: *My heart is open and I know my truth.*

Visualize and pray for love. Affirm: *Love is the natural expression of who I am!*

Extend love to everyone and in every situation. Affirm: *I behold love in my life and see it in the world.*

Affirmation: *Love is the natural expression of who I am.*