Happy February everyone!

The Scripture tells us that God first loved us. God's greatest gift to us is his love, his offer of friendship, and his relationship with us.

Saint Valentine's Day reminds us to mirror God's love by offering it to others. It reminds us of our call to become signs of love to our families, friends, roommates, etc.

The Beatles got it right when they sang:

*All you need is Love. Love is all you need.*

As did Eric Clapton in his great song, "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You:"

*There’s a love that’s divine / And it’s yours and it’s mine / And it shines like the SUN
At the end of the day we will give thanks / And pray to the ONE

Brother Frank

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**Saint Valentine’s Story**

Let me introduce myself. My name is Valentine. I lived in Rome during the third century. At that time, Rome was ruled by Emperor Claudius. I did not like him, and I wasn’t the only one! A lot of people shared my feelings.

Claudius wanted a big army, and expected men to volunteer to join. Many men just did not want to fight in wars or leave their wives and families, so very few men signed up. Infuriated, Claudius thought that if men were not married, they would not mind joining the army. Due to this, he banned any more marriages. I and many young men found this law cruel and preposterous. I certainly was not going to support it!

Have I mentioned I was a priest? One of my favorite activities was to marry couples. Even after Emperor Claudius's law was passed, I continued performing marriages- in secret, of course. It was really quite exciting. Imagine a small, candlelit room with only the bride, the groom and myself. We would whisper the ceremony, listening all the while for the steps of soldiers.

One night, we did hear footsteps. Thank goodness, the couple escaped in time. I, however, was caught, thrown in jail, and told that my punishment was death.

I tried to stay cheerful, and you know what? Wonderful things happened. Young people came to the jail to visit me. They threw flowers and notes up to my window. They wanted me to know that they, too, believed in love.

One of these young people was the daughter of the prison guard. Her father allowed her to visit me in the cell. Sometimes, we would sit and talk for hours. She helped keep my spirits up. She agreed that I did the right thing by ignoring the law. On the day I was to die, I left her a note, thanking her for her friendship and loyalty. I signed it, "Love from your Valentine."

I believe that note started the tradition of exchanging love messages on Valentine’s Day. I wrote it on the day I died, February 14, 269 A.D. Now, every year on this day, people remember me, but most importantly, they remember love and friendship.
Small Faith Groups

**QUEST**- Come join us on Sunday nights- 8pm at Byrne! We are a group of Protestant students who come together for fellowship and Bible study.

**Catholic Connections**- We meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month in the PAR at 9:30pm. Come and see if you’d like to be a part of the group growing in their understanding of what it means to be Catholic today. Next meeting is 2/12.

**Jewish Hillel**- We meet Thursdays at 9:15pm in Byrne. Jewish students gather to celebrate and deepen their appreciation of Judaism. They welcome anyone who would like to learn about Judaism to join us.

**ARISE**- Our Evangelistic Protestant group invites you to come to our weekly prayer and social on Wednesdays at 8pm in Lowell Thomas 020.

Mardi Gras & Lent

Next Tuesday, February 12th, is Fat Tuesday (French Mardi Gras). It is a day to **feast**! We fill up, celebrating God’s good gifts of music, food, and drink, because Wednesday, February 13th, is **Ash Wednesday**. It’s a Christian day to **fast**.

We abstain from eating quantities of food and refrain from eating meat at all, to **remind ourselves** that we are beginning a very special time of preparation-Lent- that helps us get ready to celebrate **Easter**.

On Ash Wednesday we mark our bodies with ashes proclaiming publicly that we have sinned, and ask God for His forgiveness.

We refrain from eating meat on Fridays throughout Lent as a continued reminder to us that we are in “spiritual training,” hoping to get into our best spiritual shape to really joyfully celebrate the Risen Jesus in our lives come Easter.

Happy Lent!
February is **Black History Month**
During the month we recall the outstanding contributions African Americans have made to our nation!

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**Newtown Connecticut Fundraiser!**
**To DONATE:**
Go to [http://www.crowdrise.com/redfoxrelieffornewtown/fundraiser/kelleysullivan1](http://www.crowdrise.com/redfoxrelieffornewtown/fundraiser/kelleysullivan1)
Or Google “RED FOX RELIEF FOR NEWTOWN”
(it will be your first result)

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**A Heart Walk at Marist...**
We have been asked to promote a Walk taking place on:
**February 20 at 12:00 noon at Marist College**
For more info, contact Bernadette.Cookingham@marist.edu

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**ASH WEDNESDAY**
**At Marist**

**Services:**

**Mass** will be held at **8am, 12:05pm, and 7pm**

**Night Prayer** will be held at **9:15pm** in the Chapel
With the distribution of Ashes

*Ashes can be received all day at ANY TIME from 8:30am to 9:15pm*