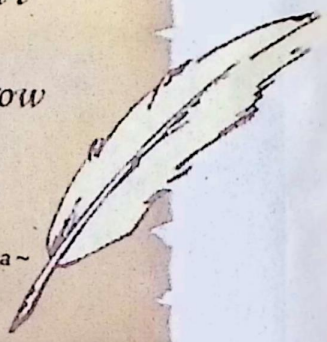
The history of Valentine's Day

Smile at each other, smile at your wife
Smile at your husband, smile at your children,
Smile at each other-it doesn't matter who it is –
And that will help you to grow up in
Great love for each other

~ Mother Teresa ~



Muhammad Shafaq Hussain

....3 days left !!!!! 14th February is coming.....

The history of Valentine's Day -- and its patron saint -- is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition.

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men -- his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl who may have been his jailor's daughter or who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'From your Valentine,' an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France. While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial which probably occurred around 270 A.D. Others claim that the Christian church may have decided to celebrate Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to 'christianize' celebrations of the pagan Lupercalia festival.

In ancient Rome, February was the official beginning of spring and was considered a time for purification. Houses were ritually cleansed by sweeping them out and then sprinkling salt and a type of wheat called spelt throughout their interiors. Lupercalia, which began at the ides of February, February 15, was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus. To begin the festival, members of the Luperci, an order of Roman priests, would gather at the sacred cave where the infants Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were believed to have been cared for by a she-wolf or lupa. The priests would then sacrifice a goat, for fertility, and a dog, for purification. The boys then sliced the goat's hide into strips, dipped them in the sacrificial blood and took to the streets, gently slapping both women and fields of crops with the goat hide strips. Far from being fearful, Roman women welcomed being touched with the hides because it was believed the strips would make them more fertile in the coming year. Later in the day, according to legend, all the young women in the city would place their names in a big urn. The city's bachelors would then each choose a name out of the urn and become paired for the year with his chosen woman. These matches often ended in marriage. Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day around 498 A.D. The Roman 'lottery' system for romantic pairing was deemed un-Christian and outlawed.

Later, during the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February Valentine's Day should be a day for romance.

Source: www.history.com
(Student of IUB)