

Faithful Love: Justice, Care, and the Witness of St. Valentine

The readings from Leviticus 25:1-24 and 1 Timothy 5:1-16 call for justice, responsibility, and compassionate care for the vulnerable. These themes resonate with the life and martyrdom of St. Valentine, who demonstrated self-giving love, faithfulness to God, and courage in the face of persecution. His witness reminds us that love is not just a personal emotion but a commitment to justice, care for others, and faithfulness to God's commandments.

Leviticus 25's Jubilee Year was a divine call to restore justice, cancel debts, and free the oppressed, ensuring that no one remained bound by poverty or injustice. It affirmed that God owns everything, and His justice must triumph over human greed. St. Valentine embodied this principle by defying Emperor Claudius II's ban on marriages, which sought to control people's lives. Seeing this as an attack on love and faith, he secretly officiated Christian marriages, upholding the dignity of love, the sacredness of marriage, and the freedom to follow God's will—a true act of justice and restoration in the spirit of the Jubilee.

Paul, in 1 Timothy 5, emphasizes caring for the elderly and widows, ensuring they are not abandoned, with families bearing primary responsibility and the church supporting only those truly in need. This is more than charity—it is about building a community where everyone is valued. St. Valentine lived this out through acts of kindness and healing, ministering to persecuted Christians and, according to tradition, restoring sight to a blind girl. His love was sacrificial, not just sentimental, extending to those who suffered for their faith. Like Paul's teaching, Valentine demonstrated that true love is compassion in action, rooted in responsibility and care.

St. Valentine's martyrdom was the ultimate act of love, not just for individuals but for Christ and His Church. Given the choice to renounce his faith or face death, he remained steadfast, embodying Jesus' words: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). His love was faithful, courageous, and willing to suffer for the sake of God's justice and truth. His story challenges us to ask: Do we stand for justice, care for others in action, and remain faithful despite hardships? True love is not mere romance but a transformative force—one that defends justice, upholds dignity, and remains steadfast in God's call. May we live with the same courage, compassion, and unwavering faith in our own lives. Amen.