St Valentine’s Day, on 14th February, has become a worldwide celebration of love. But how did it start—and who was St Valentine?

There are at least three different saints called Valentine or Valentinus. The one most people associate with St Valentine’s Day was a Roman priest who lived when Emperor Claudius II ruled Rome.

The Emperor had a problem getting men to join his army, because they didn’t want to leave their wives and children. So he decided to stop marriages. But Valentine secretly performed marriage ceremonies for couples. When the Emperor found out, Valentine went to prison.

In prison, Valentine fell in love with the prison guard’s daughter. According to the story, on the day of his death (14th February, AD 269) he wrote her a note, and signed it, ‘Love from your Valentine’.

In 1849, an American, Esther A. Howland, sold her first handmade Valentine card in America.

Now, people all over the world send about one billion Valentine cards each year (more than the number of Christmas cards!).

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**Glossary**

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**St Valentine’s Day**

1 **Leggi il brano e rispondi alle domande.**

   1. Why did Emperor Claudius II stop marriage ceremonies?

   2. How did Valentine help couples?

   3. What happened when the Emperor found out?

   4. Who did Valentine fall in love with?

   5. When did Esther A. Howland sell her first handmade Valentine’s card?

   6. How many Valentine’s cards are sold each year?

**My Love Is Like A Red Red Rose**

O, my love is like a red, red rose that’s newly sprung in June,
O, my love is like a melody that’s sweetly played in tune.
As fair thou art, my bonnie lass, so deep in love am I;
And I will love thee still, my dear, till a’ the seas gang* dry.
Till a’ the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi’ the sun;
And I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands of life shall run.

*gang (Scottish) = go (English)

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2 **Ascolta e leggi una canzone d’amore tradizionale scozzese di Robert Burns. Qual è il simbolo d’amore citato nella canzone?**

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3 **Scrivi un breve paragrafo sul giorno di San Valentino in Italia. Prendi degli appunti usando le seguenti domande per aiutarti.**

   - What do people do on Valentine’s Day?
   - Is it very popular?
   - Are shops full of Valentine’s cards?
   - What do you think of Valentine’s Day?
   - Do you send Valentine’s cards? Why/why not?