

February 2023 Pastoral Thought

In this month of February I'd like to focus attention on two dates that appear on our calendar. The first is Valentine's Day and the second is Presidents Day. In looking at the origins of Valentine's Day, there were several saints with the name Valentinus. We trace Valentine's Day to the Saint Valentinus who was martyred in the year 269. Whether it was legend, myth, or fact, it was said he performed marriages for soldiers who at the time were not allowed to be married in the church. It was celebrated on the 14th of February by the early Christian Church. On Valentine's Day, cards are given asking someone to be their "valentine" - someone to whom we would like to express our love and fondness. This differs from the love that Jesus has for us. We hear "It was not you who chose me but I chose you... to go and bear fruit" (John 15:16). Our Lord has chosen us to be his "Valentine" and through his life, death, and resurrection showed us His great love for us.

The evolution of Presidents Day began in 1799 after the death of George Washington. His February 22nd birthday became a day of remembrance. In 1870 it became a federal holiday. Later it became known as Presidents Day. We might also remember a time when February 12th, the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, was also celebrated as a holiday. In the 1960s, Congress proposed a measure known as the Uniform Monday Holiday Act. This sought to combine the celebration of certain holidays into predetermined Mondays thereby creating more three-day holiday weekends. This year, Presidents Day is on February 20th the closest Monday to Washington's Birthday. Today, we honor all Presidents of the United States past and present.

There are a lot of controversies and debates about our current President Biden, his administration, decisions and policies. The ongoing coronavirus, inflation raising the prices of everything, the crisis at our southern border, energy policies at home, and military tensions and national security issues abroad are all causes of concern for our country. At this time we must pray and leave it in the hands of God that the President and his administration will succeed in keeping America safe and preserving our Constitution and way of life. Their success is the success of America and us all.

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