

Today is St. Valentine's Day. Valentine was a Roman priest. The story tells that St. Valentine was imprisoned for marrying Christian couples and aiding Christians who were being persecuted by Claudius II in Rome. A friendship between the Saint and the Emperor began to grow, until Valentine attempted to convince Claudius of Christianity, at which point Claudius became enraged and sentenced Valentine to death, commanding him to renounce his faith or be beaten and beheaded. St. Valentine was martyred in Rome on February 14, 269.

It is not necessary to celebrate St. Valentine's Day, as it is not a Holy Day of the Church. But for those who choose to observe it, it is an opportunity to celebrate human love in all its dimensions, including romantic, which is part of God's gift to husbands and wives in the ancient and blessed bond of marriage.

Thanks to the "Theology of the Body" of Pope St. John Paul II, the church understands more deeply than ever the meaning of the verse from Scripture:

*"God created man in his image; in the divine image He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27)*

What God is saying here is that man and woman together present to the world an image of God's love.

In St. John Paul II's way of thinking, the vocation of woman is to reveal God's beauty to the world. Woman is made to be beautiful. The deepest way a woman is beautiful is when she reveals to others their own goodness by showing them the love God has for them. This is what the late Pope termed the Feminine Genius, referring to how women naturally reveal the goodness of the human person, and thus the beauty of God.

What Blessed Teresa of Calcutta did for the poor, every woman can do in her own environment. What a beautiful role we women play in God's creation.

From Matthew Eickoff

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