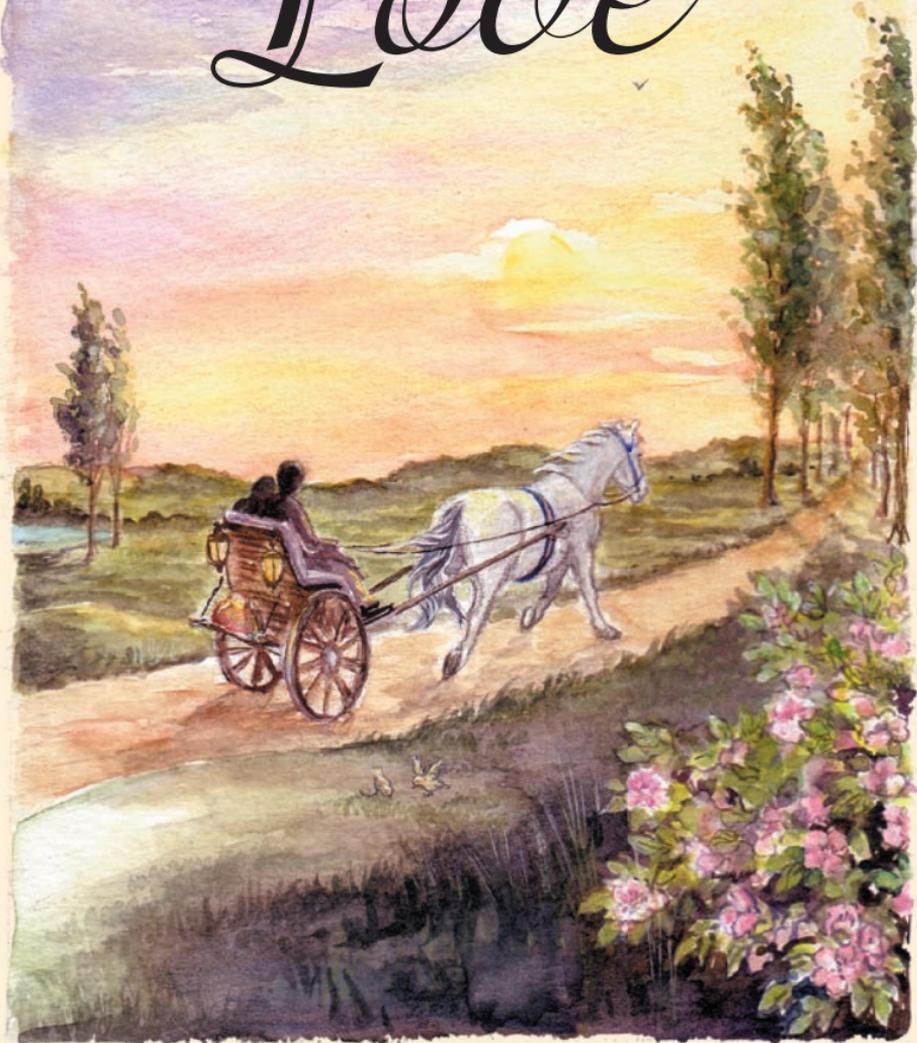
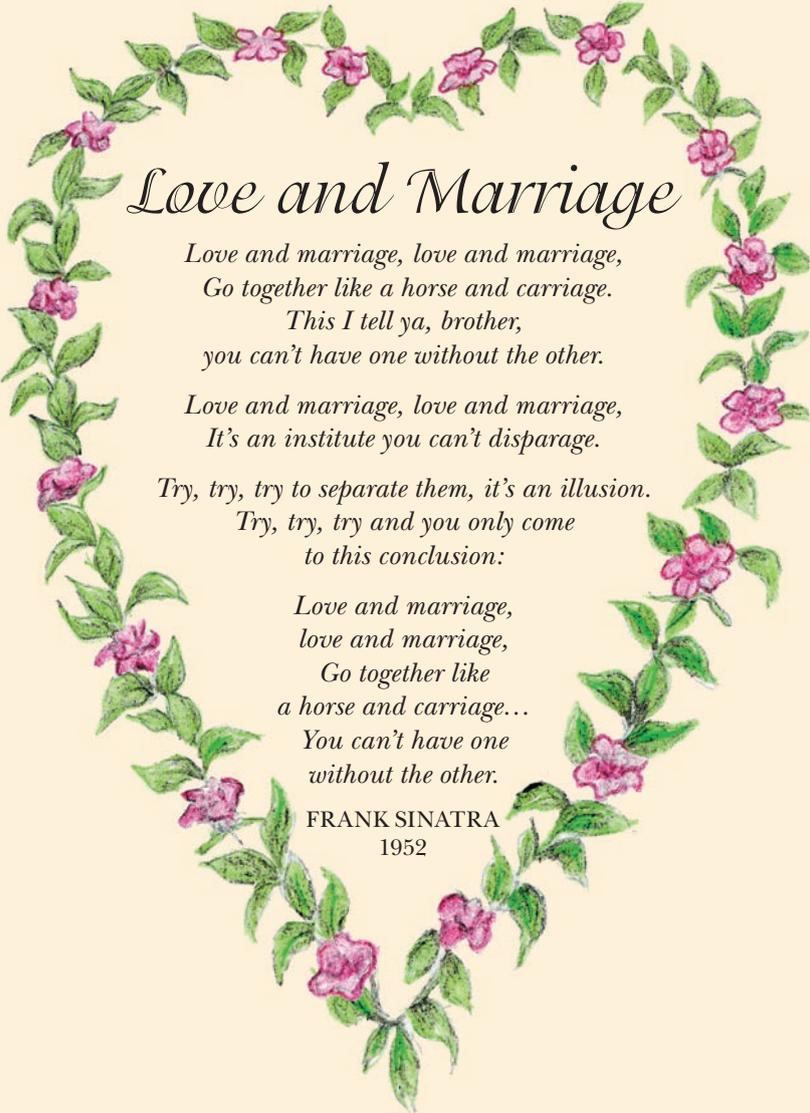


Love





Love and Marriage

Love and marriage, love and marriage,
Go together like a horse and carriage.
This I tell ya, brother,
you can't have one without the other.

Love and marriage, love and marriage,
It's an institute you can't disparage.

Try, try, try to separate them, it's an illusion.
Try, try, try and you only come
to this conclusion:

Love and marriage,
love and marriage,
Go together like
a horse and carriage...
You can't have one
without the other.

FRANK SINATRA
1952

This poem was made into a famous song in the early 1950s. It reflects a state of mind that has long since vanished from our society. So, why do love and marriage have to go together like a horse and carriage? You can see that a horse and carriage go together well, because if all you have is one or the other, they are both much less effective. A horse without a carriage is nice but cannot carry much weight. A carriage without a horse can carry a lot but it does not go anywhere. But the whole purpose of a horse and a carriage is to accomplish something. They have someplace to go and something to carry.

Love hardly falls into that category in our minds today. Like the trusty family horse, love has fallen into the “recreational” category. Love is just for feeling good these days... And marriage, like a carriage, is also becoming obsolete. It can be a fun big ceremony, but for the long haul it has often become a cumbersome weight for those who prefer the freedom of horseback riding. Marriage is a legal standing that holds the couple together for a while until it gets hard and then they divorce. What a sad state of affairs.

But if we can just get back to the Source... we can find that pure love. For Love is from God and is meant to take you somewhere. His love for humans has a big purpose. Love that dawns in the heart of a man and a woman is also for a purpose. Love is meant to create families that fulfill God's command to "be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it." (Gen. 9:7)

So, all the hearts and flowers of this day shall remind us that Love, *heartfelt love*, has a purpose. Love will carry us somewhere and can endure the great load of a carriage that will bring a family through the greatest of trials...

For Love and Marriage go together...

LIKE THE HORSE AND CARRIAGE.



Legends... St. Valentine...

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

The story goes that just before 270 A.D., Emperor Claudius II, the head of the Roman Empire, had issued an edict forbidding marriage for all of his soldiers. He believed that married men made poor soldiers, not wanting to leave their families to go into battle. He also considered it to be a distraction for his soldiers to give their "hearts" in marriage when their focus should be serving the Empire. He forbade all marriages and betrothals. This is where Valentine comes on the scene. He was a courageous leader in one of the early churches in Interamna. He considered the emperor's ban to be a great injustice to the young men and women of that society. He had compassion for the young couples who were so in love.

He recognized that humans had a deep and normal need for marriage. Valentine ignored the Emperor's decree and was caught in the act of secretly marrying a young couple. The Emperor was incensed. He had Valentine seized and put into prison. When he refused to change his views, Valentine was condemned to be executed.

Tradition tells us that while Valentine awaited his execution, he corresponded with his dear friends in the church by sending love notes signed "From Your Valentine." It is also said that grateful friends and children tossed loving notes between the bars of his cell window... "*To My Valentine.*" These tales may explain why people exchange loving messages on Valentine's Day.

This legend also makes a handy link between this "Christian celebration" and its pagan predecessor, the Roman Feast of Lupercalia. It has been recorded that the actual roots of today's celebration of Valentine's Day grew out of a tradition that began long ago in ancient Rome. The

Roman Feast of Lupercalia was celebrated on February 15. This ancient festival involved the celebration of fertility, and honored two Roman gods, Juno and Pan. Among the festivities of this occasion was the practice of young maidens writing love messages. The messages were placed in a large urn and then drawn out by unmarried men who then courted the fair maidens whose message they had chosen.

In A.D. 496, when the Roman Church was the major power in Europe, Pope Gelasius outlawed the celebration of Lupercalia Festival. It was a very common practice during that time of history for the Roman church to try find a way to link their religion with the religious festivals already in vogue of the day, making the conversion of the masses easier, Gelasius cleverly replaced the love feast of Lupercalia with a holiday he called “St. Valentine’s Day.” It has been speculated that to make the legend of this “holy man” called “Valentine” more appealing they may have embellished Valentine’s life story a little bit. Since it happened so long ago, actual historic records no longer exist. If it didn’t happen this way, it certainly makes for an interesting story.

The Emperor’s ban on marriage for his soldiers was soon lifted when it became impossible to enforce. But this story now takes an odd turn. A short time after the execution of Valentine, the Roman Church came under the leadership of a priest named Augustine. Strange as it may seem, he formulated a church doctrine on marriage that resembled the edict of the former emperor Claudius.

As can be seen by his own writings, Augustine was a man tormented over the whole subject of human sexuality. He finally came to the conclusion that for a man to be truly a “good soldier of the Faith,” he must not be distracted by any “carnal thoughts” like marriage. He thus instituted a practice that is still observed today, called the celibacy of the priesthood. Predictably, as with the soldiers of Emperor Claudius, this rule of celibacy brought much trouble upon

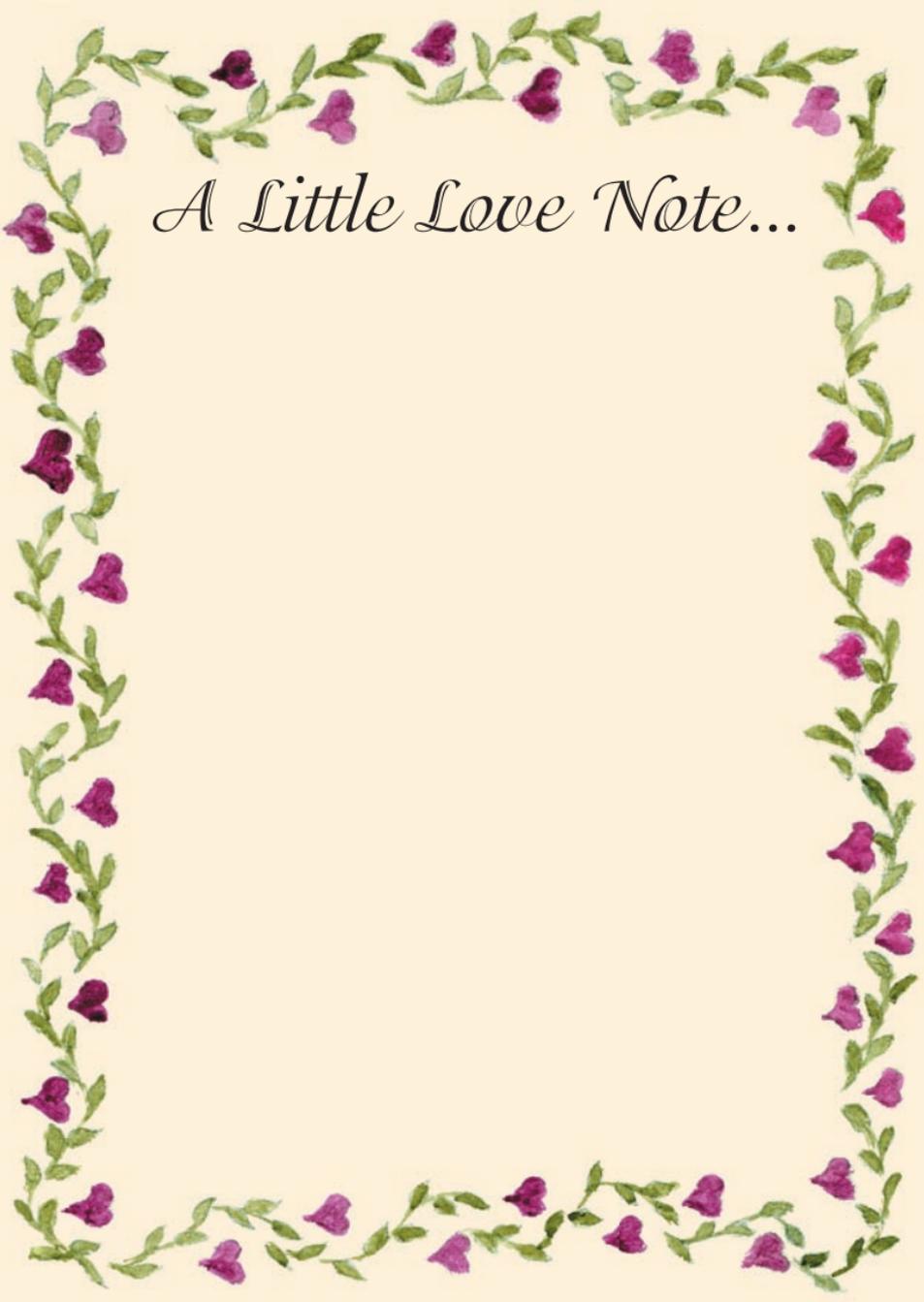
the church, and has been a violently debated topic down through history.

But if the decision had been left up to old Saint Valentine, you can be sure what his verdict would have been. Had he known what the future held for his own church perhaps he could have warned them.

It seems odd indeed, that though Valentine had given his life in protest of the injustice of forbidding marriage, becoming a martyr, and being proclaimed a “Saint” by the church for his courage to stand for what was right, only a hundred years later to again see that same prohibition imposed within that very church... and so goes the great *love story* of Valentine... The legend of Valentine is an interesting one, and gives us some valuable insights...

In these confusing days we live in, we are looking for a new day when there can be a restoration of pure love relationships. Perhaps we need to return to the days of the “horse and carriage.” Old fashioned morals and life-long marriage covenants make this day of celebrating “love” much more meaningful. 🐾





A Little Love Note...