

Tony Thinking Aloud XLIV

Valentine's Day has grown probably due to commercialisation! I am sure it meant little to my parents. When I was at primary school my grandma always gave me a Valentine's Card, a sign of affection, I feel.

Some years ago, I was wearing my dog collar, buying a Valentine Card for Alison. When I came to pay the assistant said – 'You do know that is not a Birthday Card'. Clergy clearly do not do normal things!

What do we know about Saint Valentine and his day? Valentine was a priest martyred in the persecution of Christians by Claudius II in 270. The first connection with love and affection comes in the 14th century. The first significant mention being by Geoffrey Chaucer in 1375 in a poem 'Parliament of Fowls.' 'Birds gather together in early spring – Saint Valentine's Day – to choose their mates!' Over the years messages of love and affection have been exchanged on this day.

Valentine's Day is followed quickly this year by Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. People ask, what are you giving up for Lent?

Lent is a solemn Christian observance of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness before his ministry leading to Good Friday and Easter Sunday. To give up something helps to focus on how we live our lives.

Time can be given up and used in a positive way. The pandemic has meant just that, time has been given up to support and focus on the needs of others - that is an 'aspect of love'.

So Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday can be thought about together.

'Love will turn your world around. Love changes everything! Nothing in the world will ever be the same' *Andrew Lloyd Webber*