

WHO WAS ST. VALENTINE?

By Margarita Santos

“**M**OTHER, what is the meaning of ‘Valentine’?” asked Remy, while she studied the Valentines on her favorite magazine.

“Please, Mother, tell us about it,” rejoined Teresita. “I heard my teacher say that he will give a valentine to his friend. I also heard Luz say something about the valentine party that her sister is giving.”

Mother smiled and said, “If you are quiet, I shall tell you all about these red hearts that you see in that magazine.

“St. Valentine lived many, many years ago in Rome, Italy. He loved not only his fellowmen but birds and beasts as well. When his neighbors or friends were sick or lonely, he sent them flowers and tried his best to make them happy. He loved little boys and girls also.”

“I wish he lived near us now,” remarked Remy.

“At that time,” continued Mother, “Clau-

dius was emperor of Rome. This emperor wanted to have a very strong army. He thought that married men did not make good soldiers, so he issued an order forbidding the young men of Rome to marry.

“Valentine, who was a very kind priest, felt sorry for the young people. He secretly married the young people who came at his invitation. When the emperor found out about this, he had Valentine arrested and jailed. The good Saint died on February 14, 271 A. D.

“When the people learned of his death, they were very sad. They decided to honor the martyr by celebrating St. Valentine’s Day on the date of his death. Beautiful cards of various shapes and sizes with little verses written on them are sent by young people to the ones they love best.”

Teresita took the magazine from Mother’s lap and went slowly to bed, murmuring under her breath, “To the ones they love best.”

Next morning, Mother found a small envelope on her dressing table. She opened it at once. She smiled happily and kissed the little red heart so carefully made by childish hands.

