Love can conquer all

I don’t have any statistical data to back this up, but if there are any intrepid researchers willing to take the ball and run with it, be my guest. Here is my hypothesis: February is rough. Possibly the roughest.

Because life from November to January is nonstop parties and planning and cooking and cleaning and wrapping and decorating and un-decorating and driving, once February rolls around, we’re all ready for a four-week nap.

February is cold, and it’s dark when we leave for work and dark when we get home. You know those dreary days when you don’t want to get out of your pajamas (much less leave the house)? February feels like 28 days of those.

Maybe it’s because of this – the darkness and coldness and the recent memories of too many celebrations – that, come mid-month, my beautiful, devout wife and I have no use for Valentine’s Day. None.

We do have one tradition on Feb. 14 to which we’ve adhered most of our 16 years of marriage, which is the following conversation:

Me: “Hey, sorry I didn’t get you a Valentine’s card. Again.”

Her: “Oh, right. It’s Valentine’s Day. It’s totally fine. I didn’t get you one, either. Again.”

We’re super romantic.

To be fair, as a Catholic and casual student of the saints, there isn’t much of a devotion to get behind. Legend has it that the saint himself – or saints, as there are two who share the feast day, and nobody is really certain which is being honored – had little to do with the holiday’s popularity. No, they are fortunes of circumstance, as the day was pegged to

honor lovers because it is in mid-February when birds commonly choose their mates.

But maybe we're doing ourselves, our family and our faith a disservice by ignoring the feast day of the mysterious Sts. Valentine. Yes, it's been hijacked by Hallmark and 1-800-FLOWERS and Whitman's Samplers, and somewhere along the way we've even stripped the poor Valentines of recognition of their sainthood, as it's not even liturgically celebrated as St. Valentine's Day (unlike St. Patrick's Day, which also largely has had the catholicity rung out of it).

But none of this means that we as a family, inside of our own home, can't take it back. Both St. Valentine and St. Valentine 2.0 were third-century martyrs, and while they are connected popularly with love for reasons outside of their control, they sacrificed their lives because of their love for Christ and his Church.

It is this sacrificial love – the love they had for Christ and the love Christ had for us, and not the type depicted on the Hallmark Channel or professed with roses or chocolate truffles – that deserves a day of recognition.

And so perhaps we can carry with us the fire they had for the Faith and allow it to brighten even the dreariest month.

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