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PUTTING THE SAINT BACK IN VALENTINE'S DAY

The Catholic Church has moved to reclaim St Valentine's Day in a bold campaign focusing on the true meaning of the saint's feast day and the importance of romance in marriage.

The national initiative, featured in an article in the February issue of *The Southern Cross*, provides parishes and Catholic school families with practical suggestions for celebrating St Valentine's Day and encouraging married couples to spend more time together.

St Valentine was executed on February 14, 269AD for going against a decree by Roman ruler Claudius that weddings be suspended because he needed unattached men to serve in his armies.

Archbishop Philip Wilson said the campaign was an opportunity to advocate the sacred bond of marriage. He said one of the great tragedies in society today was the breakdown of marriage and home.

Brochures and other resources such as prepared homilies, items for newsletters and discussion points for community groups have been sent out to parishes and schools.

The St Valentine's Day campaign is also being publicised through the Catholic Church's monthly newspaper *The Southern Cross*, which for the first time is available online in a new publishing arrangement with Solstice Media.

The first digital edition of the 143-year-old *Southern Cross* comes 10 years after the publication was revamped as a free newspaper distributed to all Catholic school families as well as to parishes throughout the State.

To view the digital version of the February issue of *The Southern Cross*, visit www.thesoutherncross.org.au