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Saintly Fun Facts

 daring deeds

 heroic happenings

 serendipitous surprises

FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES

by Bernadette McCarver Snyder



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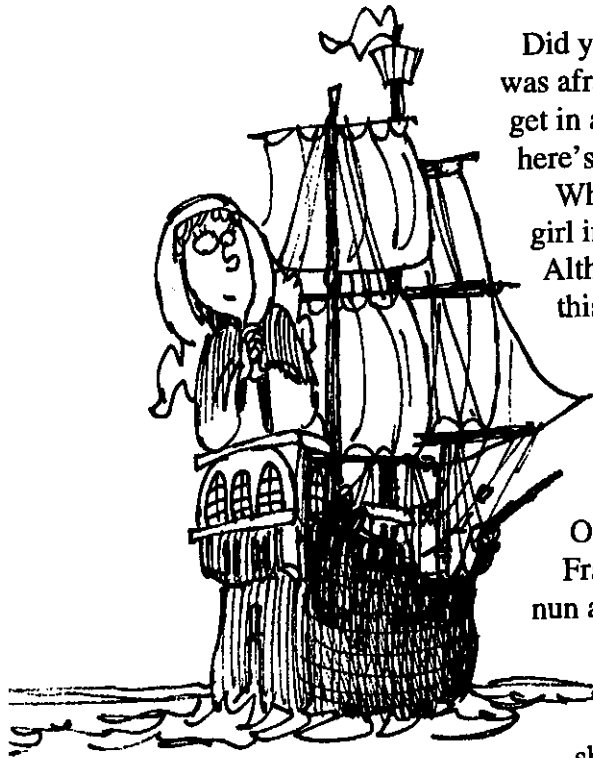
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Frances Xavier Cabrini



Did you ever know anyone who was afraid to go swimming, afraid to get in a boat, afraid of water? Well, here's a saint who was!

When Frances Cabrini was a little girl in Italy, she fell into a river. Although she was saved quickly, this was a terrifying experience for her; after that, she was always afraid of water. But when she grew up to do God's work, she had to cross NOT just a river but an OCEAN!

Frances always wanted to be a nun and go to work in the foreign missions, but there were .. no orders of missionary sisters, so she founded an order herself! It

was called the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and they worked to give Christian education for young girls. Then one day the pope told Frances that she should take some of the Sisters and go to work across the ocean in America!

After that first long voyage by sea, Frances—in spite of her fear of water—found herself traveling back and forth across the ocean many times, opening orphanages, hospitals, and schools in both America and Italy. Within a few years, her first group of eight Sisters grew to over a thousand nuns working in eight different countries. Pretty good for a little girl who was afraid of water!

Are you afraid of water? What ARE you afraid of? Does that fear STOP you from doing things you want to do or SHOULD do? Ask God today to help you forget fear and welcome adventure—like Saint Frances Cabrini did.



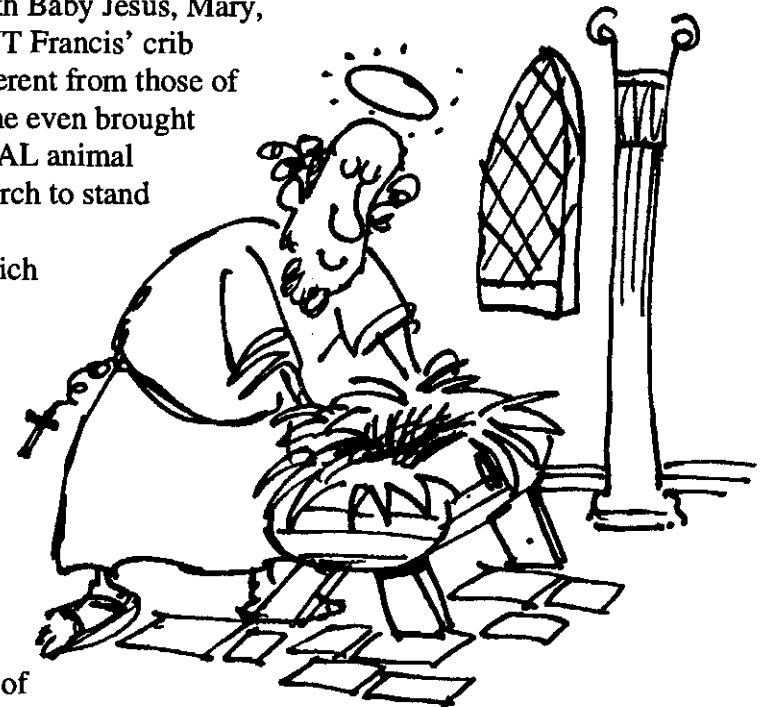
Francis of Assisi

This is the saint who got the idea to put a Christmas crib scene in church every year! And today most Catholic churches—AND homes—copy Francis' idea each Christmas. BUT when Francis was a young man, he only had ONE idea. He just wanted to have a good time!

Francis was the son of a rich man, and he LIKED leading the life of a rich man's son! But when he decided to CHANGE his life, he changed it dramatically! Instead of wearing expensive clothes, he wore a simple brown robe and sometimes even gave away his shoes and went barefoot. He became a monk, prayed a lot, and was a friend to everyone—even the animals.

And then one Christmas he got the idea that he should try to help people FEEL like they were THERE when Jesus was born in a stable. So he got busy, building and arranging, and when people came in church that night for Midnight Mass, they saw a Christmas crib scene—with Baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. BUT Francis' crib was a little different from those of today because he even brought some of his REAL animal friends into church to stand by the crib!

Francis, the rich man's son, learned to love God and ALL his creatures. AND, just like when he was young, he spent his life having a GOOD time—just a different KIND of good time!





Everybody likes to have a good time! But **SOME** people have the idea that means wild parties and doing things that are **NOT** good! What is **YOUR** idea of having a **GOOD** time?

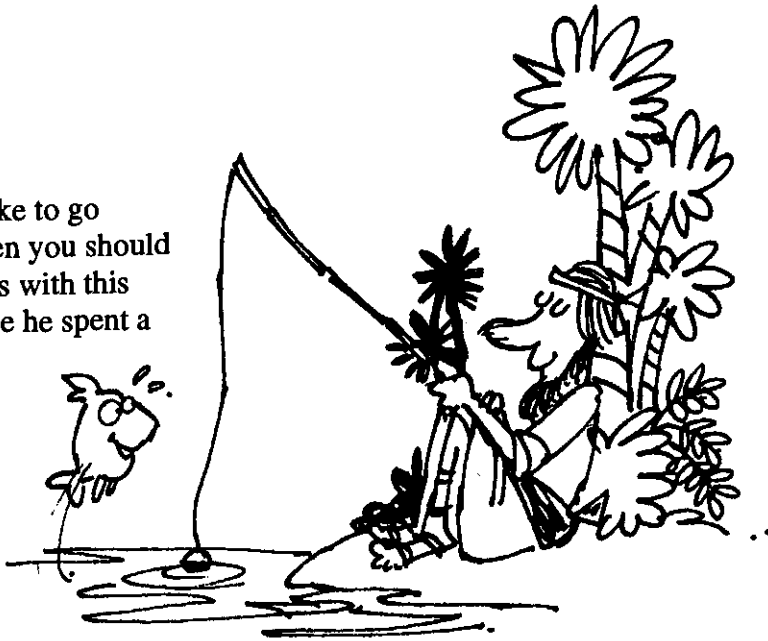
Gall

Do you like to go fishing? Then you should make friends with this saint because he spent a lot of time fishing! He also spent a lot of time preaching and

converting people to Christianity, but whenever he had any spare time, he spent it knotting fishing nets and sitting on the bank of a river or lake enjoying the sport of fishing.

Gall was born in Ireland. He was a friend of Saint Columban and traveled around with him preaching and teaching. In his later life, he became a hermit and spent his days in prayer—but it is noted that the place where he lived was very near a river that was known to be a good fishing spot!

It's easy to think that saints did nothing but pray, but many of them also liked to fish, sing songs, play ball, and all the ordinary things that **YOU** might like to do too. The big difference is that many people today spend **ALL** their time doing things like fishing, singing songs, playing ball, and watching TV and **NEVER** save even a little bit of time each day to pray. **YOU** would never do that, would you?



Genesius the Comedian

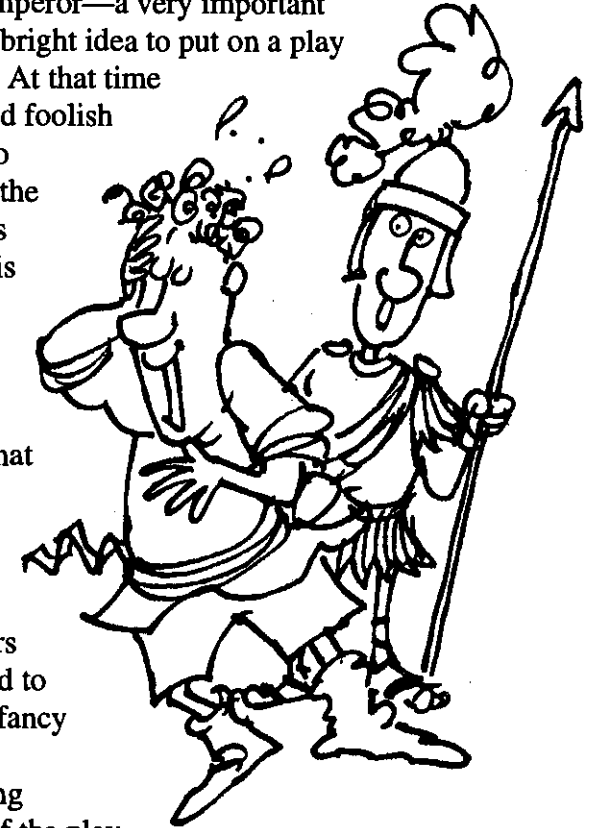
Did you ever watch a comedian on TV or in the movies? They are sooo funny that they make you giggle and guffaw, chuckle and chortle. Well, legend says that is what Genesius did as a career. He appeared with a group of players and put on funny plays.

One day Genesius and his group were asked to put on an “entertainment” for the emperor—a very important assignment. They got the bright idea to put on a play making fun of Christians! At that time Christians were considered foolish people, and they were also people in danger because the emperor had all Christians killed. So Genesius and his friends knew the Romans would laugh if they made fun of Christians!

When the play began, Genesius would pretend that **HE** wanted to become a Christian and be baptized. He would make it look very funny. And then some other actors would come in and pretend to be priests and go through fancy rituals baptizing him.

But an even funnier thing happened! In the middle of the play when Genesius said he wanted to be baptized, he was suddenly filled with a great love of God and truly **DID** want to become a Christian! When the play was over, he told everyone that God had touched him and he was sorry he had made fun of Christianity and he hoped everyone else would also believe in Jesus Christ.

Genesius had tried to play a joke on God. Instead, God played a happy joke on Genesius!



Did you ever play a joke on someone? Was it a funny joke or a MEAN joke? God gave you the wonderful gift of laughter, AND he filled the world with lots of things for you to laugh about—giraffes with long funny necks and turtles with short funny necks that fit inside a shell, puppy dogs and kitty cats that do such silly things, monkeys that make funny faces and people who make funny faces too! The next time you have a really good giggle, tell God thanks for comedians like Saint Genesius AND for the gift of laughter.



Genevieve

This saint was a shepherd-girl and a vegetarian and is said to have SAVED the city of Paris!

When Genevieve was just a little girl, she spent most of her days with other children tending the flocks of sheep who grazed on Mount Valerien in France. When she was only fifteen, she became a nun AND a vegetarian! As a sacrifice, she often fasted, eating only bread and beans, and NEVER ate meat.

One time the people of Paris heard that Attila the Hun and his armies of cruel barbarians were coming to capture the city. Many people wanted to run for their lives and abandon the city, but Genevieve told them to stay in their homes. She told them to pray and fast, asking God to save the city. Following her example, many of the



people DID stay and pray. And after many days of prayer, Attila suddenly changed the direction of his march and did NOT come to Paris. The city was saved, and the people never forgot. Saint Genevieve is now the patron saint of Paris.



Attila the Hun is known as one of the most brutal warriors in history. No wonder the people of Paris were afraid of him! Do YOU know anyone who is mean like Attila—a school bully, a cruel neighbor, a relative with a terrible temper? You should probably try to keep out of that person's way, but it would ALSO be a good idea to PRAY for the brute!

George

Have you ever heard the story of Saint George slaying the dragon? It is a purely legendary story, like a fairy tale, and there may be NO truth to it, but it IS a wonderful story.

According to the legend, George was a Christian knight (in shining armor and probably riding a white horse)! He happened to be traveling through a city when he met a group of people, and they told him that their city was in terror of a horrible dragon who ATE one of their citizens each day!

The people said that they had put all their names down on a slip of paper and each day they would draw one name and that person would have to go out to be eaten—and that very day, the name drawn was that of their beloved princess. George immediately went out and fought the terrible dragon and killed him, saving the princess and the whole town.



This story is so popular that it has been used in books, cartoons, and even on postage stamps! In fact, the picture of Saint George has been used on more stamps and in more countries than that of any other saint!

Do you ever NOTICE the pictures on postage stamps? Some of them are very special. That's why so many people are stamp COLLECTORS. Do YOU have any kind of collection—shells, marbles, baseball cards? What about HOLY cards? There are many beautiful holy cards that have pictures of Jesus, Mary, and the saints. If you ever go to a religious store, ask to see some holy cards, and maybe you'll find one with a picture of Saint George and his dragon!



Gregory the Great (Pope)



You know about rock music and rap music and maybe even elevator music—but did you ever hear of Gregorian chant? Well, that was a beautiful chant once sung in church, and it was named after this saint—although he probably didn't have anything to do with music, since he was very busy with other matters.

In fact, he did so many OTHER things that he became known as Gregory the GREAT! At one time Gregory was the richest man in Rome. Then

he decided to give all his money to the Church and became a monk. He wanted to live a quiet life, but he was known to be so talented that he kept getting named to prestigious positions and finally became pope.

Gregory had a fine sense of justice and treated all with charity and humility. He had to battle many enemies of the Church but was never too busy to care about individuals. One of the last things he did before he died was to send a warm cloak to a poor friend who was suffering from the cold. Gregory was the first pope to call himself "Servant of the servants of God."



Do you know anyone who is so smart or good or wise or successful that you could call him or her "The Great"? Think about that today—and then think what YOU might like to do someday so that people could call YOU "The Great"!

Gregory the Wonder-Worker

This saint became bishop of a town where there were only SEVENTEEN Christians! His work—and wonders—changed that.

The very first day Gregory arrived in the town where he would be bishop, he went right out and started preaching. He was such a good preacher that quite a few of his listeners decided to become Christians! By the next morning, the town was abuzz with news about him, and more and more came to listen to him and soon there were LOTS of Christians in town. And they all got together and gave their time and/or money to help Gregory build a church where they could pray together.

During his years as bishop, legend says that Gregory—by the power of God—was able to heal the sick, change the course of rivers, drive out evil spirits, and foretell the future! And that's how he got his name, the Wonder-Worker.