

Quiz Answers

1) False would seem to be a safe bet, but thankfully the answer is True.

Joan of Arc is perhaps the strongest example, having been not only excommunicated in 1431, but also burned at the stake. This decision was later reversed in 1456, to no relief of Joan, and she was beatified in 1909 and canonized as a saint in 1920. Oops...

2) Again, the safe bet is not the correct one.

Martin Luther, excommunicated in 1520 for his role in igniting the Reformation, was a songwriter as well as a theologian. Indeed, he once said “I have no use for cranks who despise music” (he also wrote eloquently in praise of beer, which he considered a gift from God bordering on a sacrament). His hymn “A Mighty Fortress is our God” is a standard in both the American and Canadian Catholic hymnals.

3) One might think not, but apparently Yes is the historical answer.

Pope Formosus was Pope from 891-896 AD in a time involving great papal political intrigue. His successor Boniface VI was Pope for a mere 15 days, and his successor Stephen VI took great Umbridge at the papacy of his predecessor, so he had him exhumed for a trial at what became known as the Cadaver Synod. Formosus' body was dressed in his gowns and ring, and a deacon (the poor deacons always get the worst jobs) was ordered to answer for him. Needless to say, the trial was short, he was posthumously driven from the Church, and his three fingers of blessing were cut off, and his remains thrown into the Tiber. A monk rescued them, and things got murkier when Pope Stephen VI proved bad enough to be strangled by his own court, and the relics of Formosus were brought back within the bounds of St. Peter's where they remain to this day. There were subsequent attempts to both affirm and reverse aspects of the findings of the farcical tribunal, but the Roman Catholic Church has uniformly disregarded the conclusions, and thus Formosus is not considered to be an anti-Pope, and he remains in the traditional Apostolic Succession.

4) St. Sebastian, the patron saint of athletes, soldiers and of defense against plague (timely) lived at the end of the 200s.

When discovered to be a Christian he was ordered to be used for archery target practice by Emperor Diocletian and was said to have resembled a sea urchin when it was all over. A saintly woman, St. Irene, went to retrieve the body, discovered him still alive, and nursed him back to health. After recovering, he could not apparently leave things alone, and confronted the emperor with a harangue against his treatment of Christians. When the Emperor had recovered from the shock of seeing a supposedly dead man talking, he ordered his guards to kill him, this time by the more traditional and certain means of clubbing him to death. Almost all art reflecting St. Sebastian, however, shows him as arrow filled.

The sheer humanity of the Saints of God should give us all courage, in the face of our own. God knows His. own, and seems often to get the best from us, despite ourselves.

Perhaps more saintly trivia will follow?

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