

## St. Martin of Tours

From *Story Library of the Saints*, Volume II, by Joan Windham, Copyright 1974, Harwin Press, Ltd., London

Once upon a time there was a boy called Martin, and his father was a Retired Roman Soldier and his mother was very Kind and they were all Pagans.

One day, when Martin was on the way back from school, he saw a whole lot of people going into a big Building.

"I wonder what they're doing?" he thought, "perhaps it is a Concert or something. I think I'll go in too, and see."

So he went in and sat on a bench near the door and waited to see what would happen.

Now as a matter of fact, it wasn't a Concert at all, but a Christian Church, and everyone was there for Vespers, and as Martin watched and listened he got very Interested. He was so Interested that at the end he went and asked the Priest what it was all about.

When the Priest had told him, Martin was so very much More Interested that he said that he wanted to be a Christian.

"Well," said the Priest, "I can't make you a Christian now because you aren't a Grown-up, and your Father and Mother mightn't like it."

"I'll go and ask them," said Martin, and he hitched up his Satchel and went home.

"Mummy," he said while he was having Tea, "do you know what?"

"What, darling?" said his mother, putting some more

From *Story Library of the Saints*, Volume II, by Joan Windham

sugar in her cup.

"I'd like to be a Christian. Would you mind?"

"I don't think I'd mind, darling," said his mother, "as long as you know what you're doing."

"Oh, *good!*" said Martin happily; "I was afraid that you and Daddy might Object."

"I don't exactly Object," said his father, "but you are Rather Young, you know, Martin. I want you to wait until you are Older, and then you can if you still want to."

"All right," said Martin, "but may I go to the Christian Church and Learn about it meanwhile?"

"Oh, yes," said his father, "you can do that." So Martin did, and soon he knew as much as the Christians did, but he wasn't a Christian yet himself.

When he left School Martin joined his father's old Regiment in the Roman Army, and the Roman Emperor's name was Julian.

One bitterly cold day Martin was riding along with his Regiment. Everyone was shivering, and, although their horses were tired, they made them Trot because all the Bobbing Up and Down kept them warmer. There was a Cutting Wind, and the soldiers wrapped their thick cloaks round them and wished that they were toasting their Toes in front of a nice warm Fire.

Suddenly Martin saw, a little way ahead, a Poor-and-Raggy man leaning against a tree so as to keep out of the Cutting Wind. Martin looked in his purse. Nothing there! (He was none too Well Off himself.)

"I say, you Chaps!" he shouted to the soldiers in front,

"has anyone got any money for that Poor-and-Raggy by the tree? I'll pay you back when we get home, if one of you will give him something!"

"Don't be silly, Martin!" answered one of the soldiers in front, "what do you want to go Wasting your money for? You haven't any too much yourself! The man will soon be dead in this Cutting Wind, so it would be a Terrible Waste to give him anything at all!"

By this time Martin had got up to the Poor-and-Raggy.

"What *can* I give him?" he thought, "he must be Perished with Cold!"

Then he had an idea . . . .

He took off his Thick Cloak and cut it Clean in Half with his sharp sword!

"Here, Sir!" he said to the Poor-and-Raggy. "This will keep you warm. You aren't very big, and it will cover you up nicely. I can't give you the whole cloak because if I caught Pneumonia (which is a Coughing Illness) my Commanding Officer would be Short-handed!" And Martin spurred up his horse to catch up the others, who all made a Mock of him because they said that he looked Ridiculous with only Half a Cloak. Which, no doubt, he did.

That night Martin had a Dream.

He dreamed that Our Lord came to him with a lot of Angels. The funny part was that Our Lord was wearing Half a Cloak! While Martin waited to see what would happen next, Our Lord turned to the Angels and said:

"Do you know where I got this Half Cloak? I got it from Martin, who gave it to me when he isn't even a Christian yet!"

When Martin woke up in the morning he thought this thought: "I'd better hurry up and be Baptised! I do want to be a Proper Christian for Our Lord!" So he went to a Priest and was Baptised at once.



After a time he thought that he would rather be a Priest and Serve people instead of being a Soldier and Killing people. So he went to the Emperor Julian and said:

"Please may I stop being a Soldier now? I've been one for several Years!"

Now Julian was an Apostate, which means that he had been brought up as a Christian, but that when he was a Grown-up Emperor he turned his back on Our Lord and turned into a Pagan and worshipped the Roman gods. That, of course, is a *Terrible* Thing to do. Pagans who are born

Pagans can't help it, and are not wicked at all because of it. But Christians who turn into Pagans commit one of the Worst Sins there are. Because they have *known* Our Lord and have laughed at him and left him. And that is an Evil and a Frightening thing. As well as turning into a Pagan, Julian used to Persecute the Christians and kill and imprison them.

(If anyone reading this book is called Julian, he mustn't mind at all about being like the Emperor Julian. Because there is a very nice Saint called Julian who built a Hospital by a River and then made himself into a Ferry Man to Ferry the ill people over in a Ferry Boat. And once one of the Ill People was Our Lord pretending to be a Leper, which was a Beautiful Surprise for Julian. So never mind about having the same name as Emperor Julian the Apostate.)

Well, now, we must go on with Martin.

When Martin asked the Emperor Julian if he could please stop being a soldier, Julian laughed.

"Ha! Ha!" he laughed Nastily, "I know why you came today about it!"

"Why do you think I came today?" asked Martin in a Surprised Voice, "I didn't really come today for any Particular Reason."

"Oh, yes, you did!" said the Emperor Julian, wagging his finger at Martin, "it is because there is a Big Battle tomorrow, and you are *a Coward!*"

"But I've been in heaps of Battles before," said Martin, "we are always having Battles, it seems to me!"

"Well never mind about the Other Battles," said Julian crossly, "I say that you are a Coward *this* time!"

Now no one likes being called a Coward, especially brave Soldiers like Martin, so Martin said Rather Huffily:

"Very well. I'll *prove* to you that I am not a Coward. I'll march in the Very Front of the Army without my Helmet or my Shield or my Breastplate or my Sword. The only Armour that I'll have will be the Sign of the Cross, and you'll see, I won't be wounded!"

"The Sign of the Cross won't help you, Coward Martin," said the Emperor Julian, "but I'll take you at your word!"

And he gave orders that Martin was to march in Front of the Army without his Helmet and things. But in the morning the Enemy sent a message to say that they would Give In without a Battle. Which just shows that God was looking after Martin!

Heaps of other Interesting Things happened to Martin. He did become a Priest, like he wanted to. And then, when he was Older Still, he was the Bishop of a place called Tours in France, and the people loved him so much that he has been called St. Martin of Tours ever since. One thing Important that he did was this: He built the first Monastery in France, near Poitiers.

St. Martin's Special Day is on Armistice Day, November 11th, and there are heaps of people called after him besides the people who have Birthdays on that day. And because there isn't a story about St. Julian in this book, people called after him may have this story for theirs. Because I did just Mention him. St. Julian's Day is January 9th.