

Did You Know...

✠ News and trivia from our parish and the Catholic Church ✠
-- contributed by the Christ Child Church Women's Club --

Christ Child Catholic Church

Dedicated to Growth in Christ and to the Challenges of Loving Service

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Pizza -- a Favorite of Bishops for More Than 1000 Years

During the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season, most of us are focused on the traditional meals of turkey-and-stuffing, ham, roasts, and other heaping platters of irresistible delights.

But let's face it, during a work lunch break, maybe for an easy weekday dinner, or just as a change of pace, we're likely to sneak in a pizza or two, maybe more, in any given month. Even during turkey season.



Of course, we all have long known that "pizza" originated in Italy, and some casual accounts mark the origins of today's meal-on-a-platter in the late 1800's. But in fact, the "dawn of pizza" is officially marked by the first recorded use of the term -- on a property deed to a Catholic Bishop, in the year 997AD.

At that time, the term used was "pizze", which was derived from the Greek "pitte" -- which itself has evolved to the current-day "pita". Pizze must have been a highly-valued commodity, to be included as an obligatory payment for a land sale.

Since its quiet but auspicious beginning, pizza has changed over the course of time. The pizza that we know today is generally regarded as being birthed by the use of tomato sauce in the early 1800's. Until that time, tomatoes (members of the nightshade family) were widely thought to be poisonous. But when the (desperate) poor began using tomatoes on pizza crusts -- and not perishing for the action -- the marinara-style concoction quickly caught on.

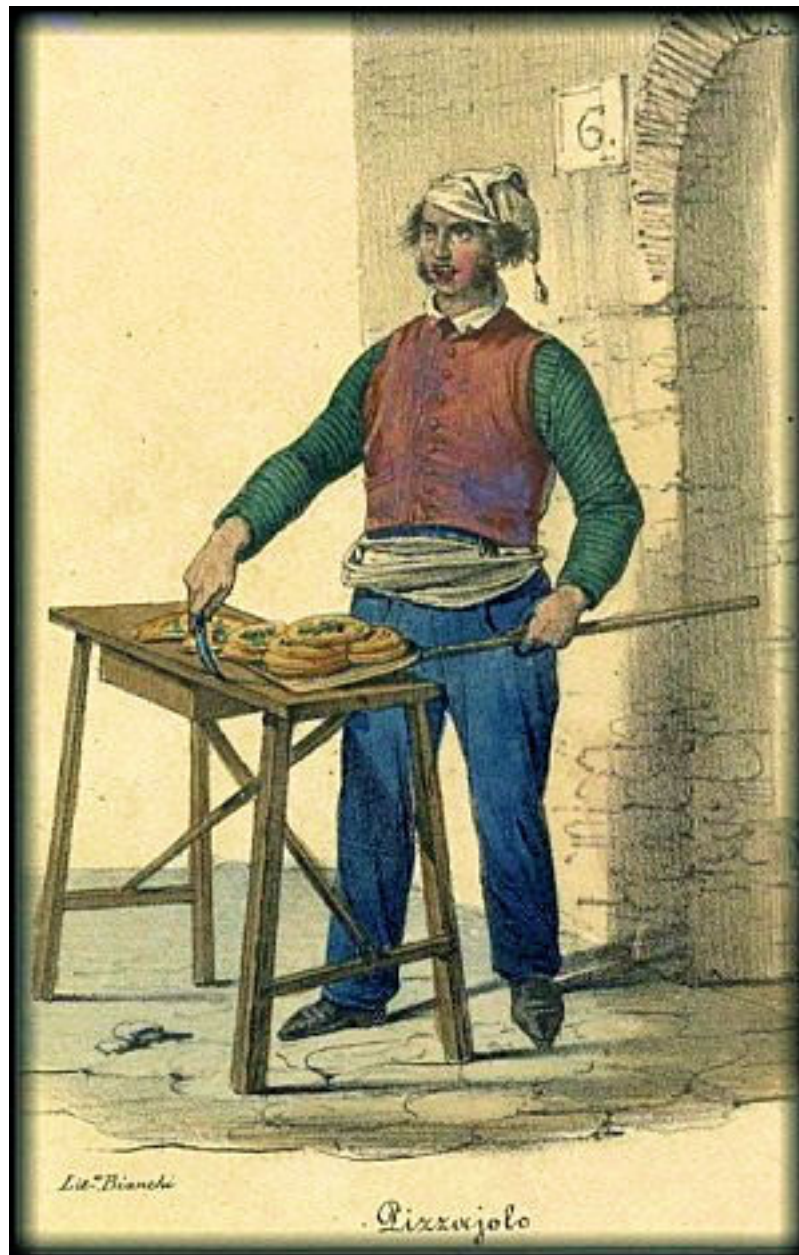


image by *By Civica Raccolta delle Stampe [Public domain], via Wikimedia*

But even with its Italian popularity, pizza never achieved world-wide status until the Allied occupation of Italy during WWII. The hungry soldiers immediately recognized what the Bishops had seen 1000 years before: "Hey, this is GREAT!".

The soldiers took their enthusiasm home after the war, and pizza has today become a world-wide "blessing", in small part bestowed by an early Bishop who sold some land and got paid in food.

Isn't it marvelous how foods, and their associated cultures, migrate around the world with relative impunity? Meals which seemed strange, or even poisonous, could become widely accepted and adored.

Perhaps this is a subtle message for us all, to treat each other -- no matter how strange or different we may seem -- with the same love and accord with which we would regard a tasty slice of pepperoni pizza.

Still Curious? See these links ---

<https://aleteia.org/2017/06/28/the-medieval-and-catholic-origins-of-your-pizza/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_pizza

--- *Karin and Greg Illes*

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