

Christianity • Sea Creatures May 30

Devilfish & Jesus Fish

The term "devilfish" has been applied to several marine creatures, including octopi, squid, and manta rays. For our purposes, however, we focus on a particular type of endangered stingray most common in the Mediterranean Sea. This devilfish, with feeding fins that resemble horns, inspires its ominous name and intriguing reputation.

One fascinating specimen resides in the **British Museum**, part of a set of 11 healing items collected from Mexico in the 1970s. This stingray belonged to an herbalist's collection and was used in traditional healing practices. According to its museum caption, the devilfish could be ground into powder, boiled into a drink, or worn as a **good luck amulet**.



Dried "Devilfish" from the collection of the British Museum



Detail of Dried Devil Ray, House of Good Fortune Collection

By contrast, consider the so-called "Crucifix Fish", a curious artifact created from the skull of the sailcat (or hardhead catfish), a saltwater species native to the Gulf of Mexico. In the mid-20th century, these bones became popular souvenirs, sold with an air of mysticism and paired with a haunting poem.

The Legend of the Crucifix Fish

Of all the fishes in the sea, our Lord chose the lowly Sailcat to remind us of his misery.

His body on the cross is outlined,

The hilt of the sword, which was plunged into his side, is clearly defined.

Look at the back of the fish's bone, Where the Roman shield is shown.

When you shake the cross, You will hear the dice being tossed, for our Lord's blood stained dress.

Those who can hear them —will be blessed. — Conrad S. Lantz*

This legend highlights the intricate skeletal structure of the sailcat, whose bones are said to resemble the image of Jesus on the cross, complete with Roman shields and the sound of dice when shaken. These rattle-like pieces inside the skull became a clever marketing tactic: **a blessing in disguise, quite literally.**

Fish, Faith, and Symbolism

The Crucifix Fish isn't the only link between Christianity and the sea. The ichthys, or "Jesus fish," served as a discreet symbol of faith for persecuted Christians in ancient times. Today, it remains a powerful emblem for modern believers, representing both sustenance and spirituality.

Together, the devilfish and the Crucifix Fish remind us of the enduring connection between the mysteries of the deep and humanity's quest for meaning, healing, and faith.



Dried Devil Ray, House of Good Fortune Collection, courtesy of [Dark Interior](#)



Crucifix Fish, House of Good Fortune Collection

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