



## THE MINISTER'S CAT

This story really made me laugh so I decided to pass it on.

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A minister had a kitten that climbed up a tree in his garden and then was afraid to come down. The minister coaxed and coaxed ... but the kitten would not come down.

The tree was not sturdy enough to climb, so the minister decided that if he tied a rope to his car and pulled it until the tree bent down, he could then reach up and get the kitten.

That's what he did, constantly checking his progress in the car. He then thought if he went just a little bit further, the tree would be bent sufficiently for him to reach the kitten. But as he moved the car a little further forward, the rope broke.

The tree went "boing"! and the kitten instantly sailed through the air – out of sight.

The minister felt terrible. He walked all over the neighbourhood asking people if they'd seen a little kitten. No. Nobody had seen a stray kitten. So he prayed, "Lord, I just commit this kitten to your keeping," and went on about his business.

A few days later, he was at the supermarket and met one of his parishioners. He happened to look into her trolley and was amazed to see cat food. This woman was a cat hater and everyone knew it, so he asked her, "Why are you buying cat food when you hate cats so much?"

She replied, "You won't believe this," and then told him how her little girl had been begging for a cat, but she kept refusing. Then a few days before, the child had begged again, so the Mum finally told her little girl, "Well if God gives you a cat, I'll let you keep it." She told the minister, "I watched my child go out into the garden, get on her knees, and ask God for a cat. And really, minister, you won't believe this, but I saw it with my own eyes. A kitten suddenly came flying out of the blue sky, with its paws outspread, and landed right in front of her."

Never underestimate the power of God and his unique sense of humour!

***Contributed by Heather McIntosh***



## EASTER CELEBRATIONS IN MEXICO

Easter celebration in Mexico is a fusion of Christian rituals and native Indian traditions. As part of their effort to convert Indians, Christian missionaries allowed indigenous people to blend their customs with Easter rites, and many of these customs appear in passion plays.

Easter in Mexico is a combination of Semana Santa (Holy Week - Palm Sunday to Easter Saturday) and Pascua (Resurrection Sunday until the following Saturday). On Palm Sunday people use elaborately woven palms. Weavers ply their craft outside churches, and worshippers follow the priest into church with the woven fronds. Later, those palms are traditionally hung on the doors of Mexican homes to ward off evil.

In many communities across Mexico, locals stage Passion Plays depicting Biblical events such as the Last Supper, the Betrayal, the Procession of the 12 Stations of the Cross, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. These enactments are often spectacularly staged, costumed and acted, with volunteers preparing for their roles for nearly the full year leading up to Semana Santa.

The most spectacular of Easter traditions in Mexico is the burning of a Judas effigy filled with firecrackers. This custom, which takes place Holy Saturday, was outlawed in Guadalajara in the 1960s when several people died from a massive explosion, but it still continues in rural areas.