

Foreword by Michael Hamilton

To the presentation I attach the usual disclaimer. I have researched this in good faith and hope everything is factually right but there may be errors and omissions and as with everything from the WWW it is open to interpretation.

AB – Alan Briggs; MH – Michael Hamilton

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From the very beginnings of the order in 313 AD., crosses have been intrinsically linked with the Order. This in effect covers the period from Constantine's Conversion at the Battle of Milvian Bridge which took place between the Roman Emperors Constantine I and Maxentius on 28th October 312 to the present day, and a scene is depicted in this slide.

We intend in this relatively short presentation to describe some of the crosses associated with the order, their history and how they evolved or were derived.

While this collection of information on Christian Crosses reflects a great deal of history from crosses of the past, we also reflect on the stylistic and artistic elements of current crosses.

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These are just a few of the hundreds of designs of Crosses.

The cross is one of the earliest and most widely used Christian symbols. It represents Christianity in general and the crucifixion in particular. A great variety of crosses has evolved, with leading examples illustrated here. With the possible exception of the face and figure of Jesus, the cross is the pre-eminent symbol of Christianity.

Crosses with names such as Latin Cross, Passion, Calvary, Coptic, Celtic, St. James, Maltese, Armenian, St. Nicholas, Crenel, Toulouse, Rugged, Julian, Cofi, Cuthbert Cross are just a few of the hundreds of types of different crosses that have evolved.

The Fylfot Cross (Swastika) this is a religious symbol, also used in a secular context. Being a cross, one of the religions using this symbol was Christianity in the Middle Ages and referred to as a **Gammadion**, a group of four Greek letter *gamma* (Γ), the capitalised third letter of the Greek alphabet. In a Christian context, 'three' is a reminder of the Trinity, and each *gamma* represents one of the four Evangelists, who radiate from the central **Greek Cross**, which represents Christ. Early Christians carved it on their tombs as a symbol of everlasting life. It wasn't until the 4th century, when Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire, that Christians started to use the **Latin Cross** as a tomb sign for everlasting life. Today, **Fylfot's** are sometimes seen as decoration in medieval church architecture such as stained-glass windows.

As a Roman pagan symbol, the **Fylfot Cross** represented the four classical elements, four directions, and the recycling of life and death. By extension this meant life, regeneration, resurrection and everlasting life. The symbol appeared on Roman coins and also on tombs.

What we intend to do is look at the Crosses associated with the Order and the ranks and offices of the Order.

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This red cross is the cross of the Order (Red Cross of Constantine), it is the Cross Fleury with the Initials of the words 'In Hoc Signo Vinces'. At the ends of the arms is a stylised fleur-de-lys. The Trefoil, Budded or Fleur-de-Lys End Cap. They consist of some form of three prongs. This symbol of three represents the Holy Trinity or Godhead. The points of the Fleur have several interpretations, but the 12 points are often said to represent the 12 disciples.

The Bud also represents buds of a flower where there is no guarantee that the buds will bloom but we have faith that they will. The faith is rewarded with a beautiful flower.

This red cross has the basis on the Greek Cross which is a square cross with arms of equal length. The **Greek cross** is a very early form of the Christian cross. Often found in conjunction with the ankh, the Greek cross predates the Latin **Cross** and was not intended to represent the cross of the crucifixion, but instead, the four directions of the earth, representing the spread of the gospel and the four platonic elements. The Greek cross was a popular floor plan for eastern churches at one time.

This style of cross dates back to ancient Babylon, where it was a symbol of the sun-god Shamash. It was also popular in pre and post Christian Celtic art.

The Greek cross also has a hidden, esoteric meaning. The four directions correspond to the fixed cross of the zodiac (Leo, Taurus, Scorpio, Aquarius), as represented by the Four Evangelists; the cross can be divided into thirteen cubes, representing the twelve apostles - and of course, the twelve zodiac signs. This cross is often referred to as the **cross of earth**, and is a basic element of many alchemical symbols.

MH

The **Conqueror's** or **Victor's Cross** is the Greek cross with the first and last letters of "Jesus" and "Christ" on top, and the Greek word for conqueror, *nika*, on the bottom. The lines over the top letters indicate that they are abbreviations.

This cross teaches that Jesus Christ was victorious over death and through Him we can all conquer death.

On this cross **IC** represents the Greek characters *iota* (I) and *Sigma* (Σ) - the first and last letters of *Jesus* (IHΣOYΣ). (**UC** is sometimes seen in place of, or in addition to, **IC**. The letters **XC** represent *Chi* (X) and *Sigma* (Σ)

IC XC are often accompanied with the letters **NIKA**, which is taken from the Greek form of *In Hoc Signo Vinces*, meaning 'to be victorious' or 'to conquer'. Constantine adopted this motto when he witnessed the sign, hence the **Conquerors Cross**.

The **Triumphant Cross** is a cross atop an orb. The cross represents Christianity and the orb (often with an equatorial band) represents the world. It symbolises Christ's triumph over the world and is prominent in images of Christ as *Salvator Mundi* - the Saviour of the World. This cross is symbolised on many of the Constantine battle paintings

The **Triumphant Cross** is used by the **Carthusian** monks, with the motto *Stat crux dum volvitur orbis* ('The cross is steady while the world is turning.')

When used as royal regalia, it takes the Latin name **Globus Cruciger** and is often encrusted with jewels. The holder of the Globus Cruciger shows he or she takes responsibility as the titular head of the state religion and is defender of the faith. The orb is also a great way to symbolise a monarch ominously holding an empire.

Before Christianity, Pagan rulers would hold a similar orb in their hands to symbolise their power over the world. When Christian rulers adopted this practice, they added the cross to show Christ's dominion over the world. In this way, it symbolises Christianity's triumph over Paganism.

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The **Chi-Rho** emblem can be viewed as the first Christian Cross.

As a pre-Christian symbol, the Chi-rho signified good fortune. The Chi rho became an important Christian symbol when adopted by the Roman Emperor Constantine, representing the first two letters in the name of Christ- the Chi, or 'ch,' and Rho, or 'r.'

According to Church Father Eusebius, on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, the Emperor saw the emblem in a dream, with the inscription, "By this sign, you shall conquer." According to the story, the battle was won. In return for the victory, Constantine legalized the religion and erected Christian churches.

Unfortunately, this story is very unlikely, as Constantine's conversion occurred on his deathbed, if at all. In any case, the symbol was the standard of the Emperor's army, prominently displayed on the Emperor's *labarum*, or battle standard.

Before it became the monogram of Christ, the chi rho was the monogram of Chronos (whose name also begins with a Chi-rho), the god of time, and an emblem of several solar deities.

The Chi-ro is also the origin of the tradition of abbreviating "Christ" in "christian" or "Christmas" to "X." The small letters in the image are the alpha and omega.

The chi rho was used in hermetic alchemical texts to denote *time*.

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The Jerusalem Cross is also known as the Crusader's Cross or Cantonee Cross.

It is the Cross of the Appendant Orders and represents Christ's command to spread the Gospel around the world; a mission that started in Jerusalem. The earliest depiction we've seen of anything like the **Jerusalem Cross** is on the Bayeux Tapestry. The tapestry itself was probably completed in the 1070's.

The Jerusalem Cross is often called the **Crusader's Cross** because it was on the papal banner given to the crusaders by Pope Urban II in the Middle Ages. The Jerusalem Cross was first used as a coat of arms for the Latin Kingdom in Jerusalem. During the Crusades, it was referred to as the "Crusaders Cross." The four small crosses are symbolic of the four Gospels proclaimed to the four corners of the earth, beginning in Jerusalem; the large cross symbolizes the person of Christ. The Kingdom of Jerusalem was established in 1098, when the members of the First Crusade captured Jerusalem and elected Godfrey of Boulogne, Duke of Lower-Lorraine, as King of Jerusalem, and the Crusader Cross was first used. The city was taken back by the Muslims in 1291.

Christians in Jerusalem call this cross the **Pilgrims Cross**. This cross is also sometimes referred to as the **New Jerusalem Cross**, focusing attention on the Divine and heavenly restoration of Jerusalem. The term 'New Jerusalem' occurs twice in the Bible and is understood by most Christians to mean Heaven.

The **Jerusalem Cross** is sometimes confused with the **Teutonic Cross** (also called 'Cross Potent'), assigned by Pope Innocent III to the Teutonic Knights near the end of the 12th century. Five crosses representing the five wounds of Jesus on the cross; small crosses for the hands and feet pierced by the nails, and the large central cross for the spear wound in His side.

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The **cross of Calvary** or Graded Cross has three steps leading up to it, which can represent the hill of Calvary or faith, hope, and love.

In our order this may represent Faith Unity and Zeal.

The cross itself is a long cross, also called a passion cross, with the bottom arm significantly longer than the other three, like the old heraldic crosses that were drawn when the shields were very elongated. Since then the shield has been shortened greatly so that the arms of most other crosses are roughly equal, and the passion cross rarely exists now except as a Calvary cross. It is also sometimes called a holy cross.

*On the cross of Calvary,
Jesus died for you and me;
There He shed His precious blood,
That from sin we might be free.
O the cleansing stream does flow,
And it washes white as snow!
It was for me that Jesus died
On the cross of Calvary.*

MH

This is combination of the Red Cross of Constantine and the Chi Rho Crosses with a Crown above.

This is also the breast jewel worn by members of the English jurisdiction of the Order and the breast jewel of the third degree Prince-Mason the Sovereign's Jewel.

The Latin Cross when used singularly is the sign of a Worthy Knight, Knight Companions and the sign of a Eusebius or Viceroy when used as a double.

The simplest and most common cross the **Latin cross**, pictured here. Came into use during the 2nd or 3rd centuries. The empty cross, favoured by Protestants, reminds Christians of the resurrection, while the crucifix, with the body of Jesus on it is favoured by Catholic and Orthodox Christians and calls to mind the sacrifice of Christ.

AB

Sovereign – Most Puissant Knight – the sign of a Sovereign

This is derived from the **Patriarchal Cross** (French/heraldic: *Patriarcale*), which can be with or without a Corpus, the Body of Christ, is a cross (such as a Latin Cross or Budded Cross) with an additional cross-beam.

This cross is often confused with the Cross of Lorraine, which originates from the Patriarchal Cross.

There are several explanations for this 'extra' beam: The most popular idea is that the upper beam, also seen on the Russian and Eastern Orthodox cross, represents the plaque bearing the name of the crucified victim. For example, Pontius Pilate's inscription "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews" (see INRI). Such a plaque is known in Latin as *titulus cruces* and therefore this form is sometimes called the Titulus Cross.

Another explanation is that the first beam represents the death of Jesus Christ and the second beam His resurrection.

A third view is that the first beam symbolises secular power and the second beam the ecclesiastic power of Byzantine emperors.

The **Cross of Lorraine** consists of one vertical and two evenly spaced horizontal bars. It is a heraldic cross, used by the Dukes of Lorraine (previously known as the Dukes of Anjou). This cross is related to the Crusader's cross, the standard of Joan of Arc, and the six globes of the Medici family. The Lorraine cross was carried to the Crusades by the original Knights Templar, granted to them for their use by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Hermetic alchemists of the Renaissance used the emblem as a symbol of earth and spirit by combining the square earth cross with the cross of Christ.

When drawn symmetrically, it symbolized the hermetic maxim, "As above, so below." The Lorraine Cross is used in Freemasonry as a degree symbol. In the Catholic Church, the equal-armed Lorraine Cross denotes the office of Cardinal.

MH

Intendant-General – Right Illustrious Knight – the Sign of Intendant General.

An interpretation of the meanings of the cross bars to this order; the three cross bars may symbolise the 3 tenets of Faith, Unity, and Zeal.

This is derived from the **Papal Cross** is the official symbol of the papacy, and may be used only by the Pope. The three bars of the cross most likely represent the three realms of the Pope's authority: the church, the world, and heaven or represent the trinity: God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Papal cross is often confused with the three armed **Cross Lorraine**.

AB

The sign of a Grand Sovereign – Most Illustrious Knight.

It has been adopted by the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite, and also Grand Masters of the modern Knights Templar.

It is like the three-barred Papal Cross, the Salem Cross signifies the ultimate rank of the bearer.

Seal of the United Grand Imperial Council.

Constantine Red Cross (Cross Fleur-de-le) with IHSV with the 16 stars representing the letters, Imperial Crown appended above with the double headed Imperial Eagle behind

MH

There are 1700 recognised crosses, most are or have religious symbolism attached, the rest are chivalric or heraldry crosses with their own historical symbolism enshrined.

Basically they fall into 4 families derived from these simple crosses

Cross Immissa – Latin Cross

Cross Commissa – Tau Cross

Cross Simplex – Uprturned Cross

Cross Decussata – X Cross – used in some crucifixions

Tonight we have just given you an insight into those associated with **the Red Cross of Constantine**

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Our thanks to the World Wide Web and in particular 'Seiyaku' who has studied these crosses extensively.

On behalf of us both, we thank you for your indulgence in listening to us and for your attention.

P. Knights Alan Briggs and Mike Hamilton