

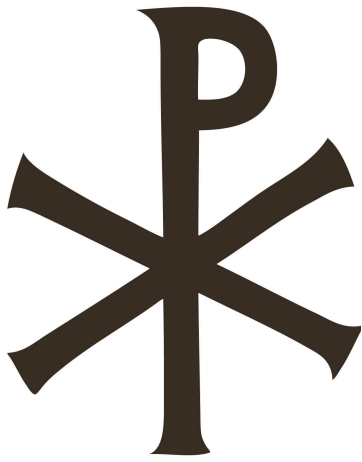
Catholic Symbols and their meanings



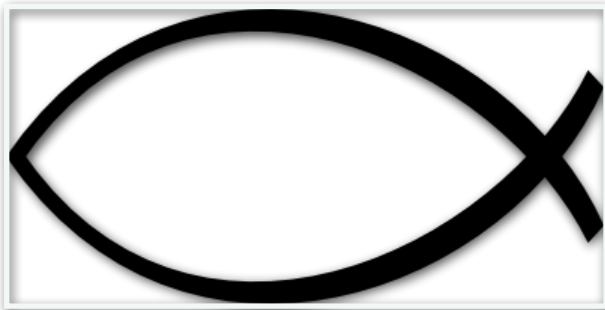
1. Alpha and Omega: Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. They are used at various times in the Church liturgical year. The alpha and omega have been used by Catholics since the fourth century as symbols of Christ. In the book of revelation 22:13, Christ refers to himself as the alpha and the omega. That is, the first and the last. These two letters symbolize the fact that Christ is the beginning and the end of all creation



2. IHS: Letters IHS often appear on liturgical items, building plaques, gravestones, and sacred vessels. IHS is a shortened form of the Greek word for Jesus, which is "ΙΗΣΟΥΣ."



3. The letters X and P are often used as another symbol for Christ. The first two letters of Christ's name in Greek are X and P. In the Greek alphabet, X equals "CH," and P equals "R." Also known as the Chi-Rho cross, the letters are usually inscribed one over the other and are sometimes enclosed within a circle, becoming both a cosmic and a solar symbol.



4. The Fish: One of the oldest Christian symbols is the fish. It was used by Christians to identify themselves and each other, often in times of persecution. It is often found in the Roman catacombs, a secret meeting place during the time when the Christians were persecuted for their faith by the Romans. What Is the Meaning of the Fish? The fish is based on an acronym of the initial letters of the Greek words for Jesus Christ. To understand this symbol, you need to know the

meaning of the acronym. The Greek word for fish is "Ichthus," which is also an acronym for Jesus. The Latin, "Iesus CHristos THEou Uios Soter" translates in English to, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour." Christ also referred to his apostles as "Fishers of Men," while the early Christian fathers called the faithful "pisculi," which means "fish."



5. The Lamb is one of the most important symbols of Christ. Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God is mentioned in John 1:35-36 and Revelation 5:6-14, and always in the words of the Mass. What Is the Meaning of the Lamb? The whiteness of the Lamb symbolises innocence and purity. Lambs are also often associated with sacrifice in the Old Testament. Christ, the sacrificial lamb, died for the sins of humanity. The lamb can also symbolize subservience to God. The lamb is sometimes portrayed with a flag. This is symbolic of Christ's victory over death in his resurrection.

Signs & Symbols of the Catholic Faith



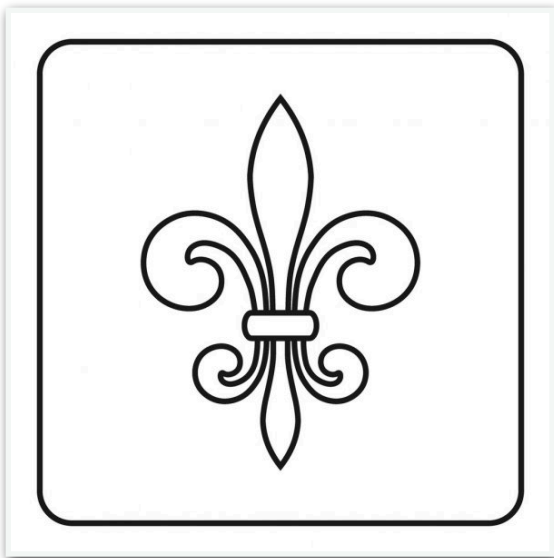
6. Crossed Keys: In Christian art, crossed keys, sometimes known as the Keys of Heaven, are a pair of keys that overlap and interlock, creating an "X." The keys are used as ecclesiastical heraldry, papal coats of arms, and symbolic images in holy places. What Is the Meaning of the Crossed Keys? The crossed keys represent the metaphorical keys that Jesus promised to St. Peter, empowering him to take binding actions in leading the institution of the Catholic Church. In short, they are a symbol of the

Pope's authority. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus says to Peter: I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on Earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth shall be loosed in heaven. St. Peter was the first pope, and those who succeed him share in the power Jesus gave him.



7. The Sacred Heart: In Catholic art, the Sacred Heart is usually depicted as a flaming heart. It is also usually shining with divine light, pierced (presumably from a lance), encircled by a crown of thorns, surmounted by a cross, and bleeding. Sometimes it is shown in the bosom of Jesus Christ. The wound, thorns, and blood represent Jesus' crucifixion, and the flames represent the transformative power of divine love. What Is the Meaning of the Sacred Heart? The Sacred Heart represents Jesus' physical heart and represents divine love. It is a devotional of Catholics everywhere and encapsulates the message of Jesus' long-suffering love and passion towards humanity.

On its own, the heart is a symbol of love. But the Sacred Heart, pierced and wrapped in thorns, shows the depth of Jesus' love. It indicates that he was prepared to suffer and die for all people, and that his love is eternal.



8. Fleur-de-Lis The fleur-de-lis is a stylized lily composed of three petals bound together at their base. The lily has been used in many places throughout history, serving formerly as the emblem depicted on the royal arms of France (a historically Catholic nation), and has always represented divinity. What Is the Meaning of the Fleur-de-Lis? In one interpretation, the flower is a symbol of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. The whiteness and beauty of the lily is symbolic of the purity of Mary Immaculate. In another interpretation, the lily depicts the Holy Trinity, which consists of the Father (God), the son (Jesus Christ), and the holy spirit—or one God in three divine persons. The band which hold the three pedals together represents Mary, since it was she who bore the child of God.



9. The dove is a white bird often depicted in the Catholic Church as flying gracefully before a shining aura of light. Sometimes, the dove is carrying an olive branch in its beak. What Is the Meaning of the Dove? The dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. When Christ was baptized by John the Baptist, a dove descended on him, according Matthew 3:16 and Mark 1:10. The dove is sometimes depicted with an olive branch in its mouth as a symbol of peace. It also symbolizes God's grace. Do you remember when, in Noah's story, he sent out a dove to search for dry land after the rain stopped? It returned carrying an olive branch from the Mount of Olives, which was a sign and symbol of God's forgiveness.



10. The Cross: The most famous and widespread Christian symbol is the cross. It is found wherever there is a Christian presence. In Roman times, the cross was an instrument of torture and public humiliation, and criminals were put to death on crosses. What Is the Meaning of the Cross? For Christians, the cross has become a symbol not only of Jesus' death, but also of his resurrection. While the cross has been around long before the advent of Christianity, the Easter story (that is, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ) has made the cross one of the most recognized icons in the world. The cross

symbolizes sacrifice, suffering, repentance, solidarity, and exclusion. These are only a few ways to interpret the cross. Every Catholic applies their own significance to this perennial symbol.