

The Cross in St. Mary's Church

The Cross is the most important Christian Symbol. It marks the death of Jesus on Good Friday, which leads to his Resurrection on Easter Day.

The Cross is a paradox (look up the word paradox in a dictionary), a symbol of suffering and defeat, yet at the same time the symbol of triumph, Resurrection and new life.

Since the Cross is the main Christian Symbol, there are lots of them in St. Mary's Church. They are there not only to decorate the Church, but to focus the hearts and minds of Christian believers of the sacrifice Jesus made on the Cross for our salvation.



This first picture shows the main Cross in Church. It is called the 'Rood.' Rood is an ancient English word referring to the True Cross or Holy Rood. In Churches, the Rood traditionally hangs over the

entrance to the 'Chancel or Quire' area. Basically it marks out this space as a holy space.

The Altar Cross

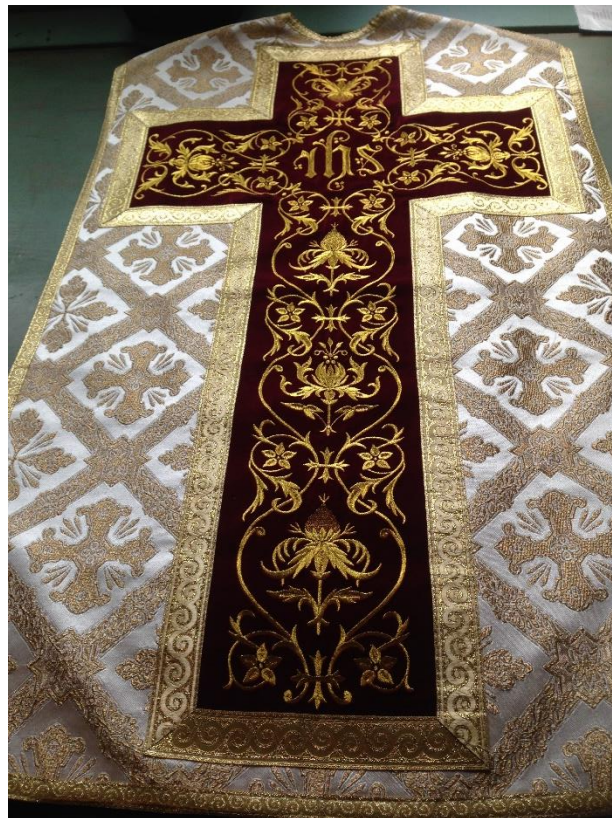


On the Altar there is a Cross right in front of where Fr. James says Mass. This is to remind the priest that the Mass unites all Christians with the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross of Calvary.



Here is a picture of Mass at the High Altar, and you can see the special silver Cross on top of the Tabernacle where the Blessed Sacrament is kept. It is there for the same reason as the Cross is on the smaller Altar.

Most of the Robes you see Fr. James wear for Mass will have a Cross on them somewhere. Here is a picture of a Chasuble that he wears for Mass and there is a big Cross on the back of it



You might notice there are some letters in the middle of the Cross on the Chasuble. The letters are HIS (or it can be IHC). This is a short version of the Greek word for Jesus. It is in Greek as the early New Testament was written in Greek

Crosses round the walls of the Church



If you look round the walls of the Church you will see a total of 14 Crosses each with a picture underneath them. These are called the Stations of the Cross. These images depict the story of the day Jesus was Crucified. During Lent and Holy Week, Christians at St. Mary's Church walk round the 14 Stations of the Cross saying special prayers.

If you think about it, the Cross represents and tells a very sad story, but its not all bad. Christians believe that the Cross leads to New Life in Jesus, a new life that ultimately will bring us to heaven.

To celebrate this new life a big Candle called the Paschal Candle burns in Church, the flame representing Jesus rising from the dead.



Whatever way you look at it, at some stage of life you will always encounter the Cross. Often, life has a way of leading us there. It is the price of our reconciliation and God's ultimate act of mercy.