



Holy Spirit
Catholic Community



The Great Cross

As Lent begins, we will see many signs that indicate change. A change will take place in the environment. The Alleluia will be replaced with a Lenten Acclamation. Ashes will be placed on our foreheads in the sign of a cross. One of the most important and basic symbols of Christianity will be very prominent: The Cross. The Cross signifies the saving act of Christ and all its power; it stands not only for the redemptive act of Jesus but for the strength to bear the trials of life by following Christ. The crucifix, a Cross with an image of Christ on it, was not used in the early centuries while crucifixion was still customary. After that, triumphal crosses became popular, showing the glory won by Christ on the Cross, depicting Him in robes, without nails, with a royal crown. After the Reformation, crucifixes of the suffering or dead Christ appeared. Recent liturgical revival somewhat favors Christ glorified and ruling from the Cross.

Current guidelines require a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified upon it, to be on or near the altar. Our Great Cross is made of an ancient reclaimed beam. The Processional Crucifix is positioned upon it during liturgies. The open circle, seen above the head of Christ, indicates that Jesus' mission was to pass through the cross to reach resurrection. On the arms of the Great Cross are two nail spikes. On Good Friday, we will venerate the Wood of the Cross with a kiss. During the Easter season, rays of gold will extend dimensionally out from the open center, encompassing the body of Christ. So this Lent, let us look upon the cross as a sign of renewal, a sign that reflects a change of heart in us!

