

Chrismon: A monogram of Christ

The Chrismon Tree is complete only when those who see it, understand its meaning. We offer this explanation of its symbolism so you can appreciate its beauty.

I.N.R.I.- Initial letters for Latin superscription on the cross: *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum*, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.



I.X. MONOGRAM- This symbol for our Lord consists of the initial letters for the Greek words for Jesus Christ arranged as a monogram.



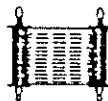
LAMB- The blood of a lamb without blemish was commanded by God to be sprinkled on the doorposts of Hebrew homes in Egypt so his destroying angel might pass over and spare Israel. This was memorialized in the Passover Festival. In the New Testament, the lamb is often used figuratively to symbolize Christ and his sacrifice.



LAMB STANDING WITH THE BANNER OF VICTORY- No longer wounded, but standing with the banner of victory, suggesting the victorious nature of his sacrifice.



SCROLL- The scroll stands for the five Books of Moses, as the first five books of the Old Testament are commonly called. These are known as the Torah and constitute the most sacred Law of the Jews.



STAR OF DAVID- Two interwoven equilateral triangles form a six-pointed star traditionally the shape of David's shield. Sometimes called the "Creator's Star," the six points recall the six days of creation.



STAR, EPIPHANY- The star of Jacob (Numbers 24:17) finds its fulfillment in the "manifestation" of Jesus to the Gentiles (Matthew 2:1-2).



ALPHA and OMEGA - The first and last letter of the alphabet which signify that Jesus is the beginning and the end of all things.



BUTTERFLY - Symbol of the resurrection and eternal life. As the butterfly leaves the pupa and soars upward with a new body, so through Jesus Christ are his followers borne to a new life.



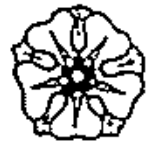
CHI RHO - A monogram of the first two letters, CHI (Χ) and RHO (Ρ), of the Greek word for Christ.



CHI RHO with ALPHA and OMEGA - This symbol for our Lord comes from the catacombs and indicates that he is the beginning, continuation, and end of all things.



CHRISTMAS ROSE - Symbol of the Nativity and of messianic prophecy, a white hardy rose that blooms at Christmas.



CIRCLE - Standing for eternity, because it is without beginning and without end.



CIRCLE and TRIANGLE - Suggests the eternity of the Trinity.



CIRCLE CONTAINING THE CHI RHO WITH THE ALPHA AND OMEGA - Symbol for Christ is within symbol for eternity (circle), and so signifies the eternal existence of our Lord.



CIRCLES, THREE INTERTWINING - These indicate the doctrine of the equality, unity, and co-eternal nature of the three persons of the Trinity.



IESUS MONOGRAM - Formed by using the first two and last letters of the word for Jesus in Greek, with abbreviation sign.



THE IHS - Are the first three letters (iota, eta, sigma) of the Greek spelling of Jesus. The upper form is the more ancient, though the lower is the more common now.



MALTESE CROSS - Consisting of four spearheads with points together. Dates back to the days of the Crusades when the order of the Hospitallers used it for their emblem. Later they made their headquarters on the island of Malta.



PATRIARCHAL CROSS - Has two horizontal arms, the upper one slightly shorter than the lower. The upper represents the inscription over the head of our Lord on the cross.



ST. ANDREW'S CROSS - Tradition says the apostle Andrew died on this form of cross, requesting that he be crucified on a cross unlike that of his Lord.



CLOVER/SHAMROCK- The prominent three leaves make the clover an easily understood symbol of the Trinity. Legend says St. Patrick used the clover to explain the Trinity in his preaching.



BUDDED CROSS- It suggests the young or immature Christian, while the cross fleurée, or flowered cross, denotes by its more fully opened ends the adult Christian.



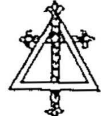
CELTIC CROSS- Or crabs of Iona, dates back to early centuries of the Christian Era. It was said to have been taken from what is now Ireland to the island of Iona by Columba in the sixth century.



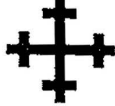
CROSS and CROWN- These symbolize the reward of the faithful in the life after death to those who believe in the crucified Savior.



CROSS and TRIANGLE- A symbol used in church embroidery. Here the cross intertwined with the triangle emphasized that Christ is one in the Holy Trinity.



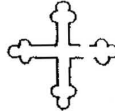
CROSS CROSSLET- Four Latin crosses joined at their bases. Represents Christianity spreading in the four directions and is especially appropriate when the missionary idea is expressed.



CROSS PATTEE- Resembles the Maltese Cross. A beautiful form of the cross used widely for decorative purposes.



CROSS TREFFLÉE- A beautiful form with ends formed as trefoils. It is widely used wherever a decorative style of cross is needed. Also known as Cross Botonnée.



GREEK CROSS- With all arms of equal length.



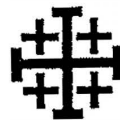
GREEK CROSS and X MONOGRAM- In this symbol for our Lord a Greek cross is superimposed on a X (chi), first letter of the Greek word for Christ.



GREEK CROSS WITH WORDS- Greek cross with abbreviated Greek words for Jesus Christ (abbreviations indicated by horizontal lines) and "nika meaning "conquers": Jesus Christ Conquers."



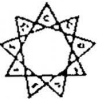
JERUSALEM OR CRUSADERS CROSS- Usually has four small crosses between the arms, the five crosses symbolizing the five wounds of our Lord. Worn by Godfrey de Bouillon, first ruler of Jerusalem after the liberation from the Moslems.



LATIN CROSS- The most commonly used form of cross.



STAR, NINE-POINTED- The nine points of this star stand for the nine fruits of the Spirit as found in Galatians. Usually each point contains the name or initial of the Latin word of the gift it symbolizes.



SUN and IHC- Made up of the Iesugram symbol placed in the circle of eternity and with flames shooting out in every direction. Suggests the "Sun of Righteousness" mentioned in Malachi.



TREFOIL- A symbol of the Trinity.



TRIANGLE, EQUILATERAL- Symbol of the Trinity. The three distinct angles combine to make one complete figure.



THE TRIQUETRA- Early symbol of the Holy Trinity. The three equal arcs express eternity in their continuous form, indivisibility in their interweaving, and their center is a triangle, ancient Trinity symbol.



THE TRIQUETRA and CIRCLE- The Triquetra, denoting the Blessed Trinity, is combined with the circle of eternity producing a figure recalling several spiritual truths.



WHEAT- Heads of wheat symbolize the Bread of Life. With clusters of grapes, appropriate for Holy Tables.



TAU CROSS- So called because of resemblance to the Greek letter T. This is the original form of cross.



CHALICE- A symbol of the blood of Christ and of the sacrament of Holy Communion.



DOVE- The dove expresses innocence and purity. It signifies the Holy Spirit and the presence of God as hovering over the water at creation, and above Jesus at his baptism.



DOVE WITH OLIVE SPRIG- Sometimes used as a symbol for the flood. It denotes peace, forgiveness and anticipation of new life.



FISH- A secret sign used by the early Christians to designate themselves as believers in Jesus. The initial letters of the Greek words for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior," spell the Greek word for fish.



GRAPES- A bunch of grapes signifies the sacrament of the Holy Communion, and is most appropriately found about the Communion table.



HARP- The symbol for music, especially that rendered in praise of God.

