

THE MEANING OF THE CA&H CELTIC CROSS

When new Voyagers receive their Community Cross they are asked to 'wear, carry or display it thoughtfully'. These crosses speak to modern people. Like Jesus' signs and parables, our cross overflows with meaning. Every reader can be enriched by meditating on it. (1) Think of five symbols mentioned in the last book of the Bible – the Book of Revelation.

The two cross beams.

A historical fact: Jesus was crucified on a wooden cross. An eternal truth: 'Christ died for our sins'; 'Take up your cross and follow me'; 'die to sin' (Romans 6:11).



The Circle

A historical fact: the circle symbolised the sun. Those who worshipped the sun transferred their worship to the True Sun (Saint Patrick) but they did not belittle the created sun or the practice of praying sun-wise. Nor do we (Psalm 19). Practise circling prayer. A psychological and spiritual reality: In psychology the circle is a universal primal symbol of wholeness, completeness. Jesus did not die just to give certain believers a passport to heaven, his total self-giving transforms every aspect of our lives, and of the cosmos. 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive ... everything is put under him...' (1 Corinthians 15:22, 27). Our inner lives are a continent parts of which have still to be evangelised. The areas of society that are alienated from good and God are to be transformed, not neglected. What are these parts, these areas?

Roots

The base of the cross is the broadest part. It is grounded – rooted in the soil of creation and sanctity.

We are called to be earthy and earthed Christians, to be real, practical, and to find God in our work and in the earth which is our home. The top of the cross connects us with heaven, thin places, mystical prayer. We make time to be alone with God, to become aware of the saints and angels and to chant and sing with them - to experience 'heaven in the ordinary'.

Relationships

The arms of the Cross stretch out to all. The Divine Christ stretches out his arms in compassion eternally – that is why the human Christ could do it for that one day. We, too, stretch out our arms with forgiveness from the heart towards all. This provides us with a way of praying. Try Cross-shaped praying. Stand with your arms stretched out. Allow Christ's empathy to fill you. You can vary this. I like to imagine that as I do this I reflect the Trinity. The Father is my body; the Saviour is my right arm; the Spirit is my left arm and as I stand I embrace the world with the Triune love.

Rhythm

One side balances the other. There is symmetry in the Cross. We seek a balance, a rhythm between input and output; work and prayer; suffering and celebration, withdrawal and outreach. We do not forget the four spaces in the Cross. In a sense they are nothing. In a sense, the rest would be nothing without them. Keep a space for solitude and a space for fun, a space for exercise and a space for that pursuit that is unique to you and enables you to be uniquely yourself.

Surely there can be nothing more? Ah! Yes! There is the A and the H. The A stands for Aidan of the gentle heart and backbone of steel who won the English-speaking people to the ways of Christ; the man whose name means Flame and who calls us to pass on the flame to every land and every generation. The H stands for Hilda, woman of wisdom, spiritual mother, fosterer of callings who unlocks the song in the heart of the poor, whose counsel is sought by people beyond her own land. Both are pioneers of faith communities which model Heaven on Earth. Together they stand for male and female, equal but different, soul friends who serve the common good.

Such riches. So much to ponder. A forty days, reflecting on one aspect each day, could not be better spent.