

THE CROSS VERSUS THE CRUCIFIX

- **What is the difference between the cross versus the crucifix?**
- **Why do Roman Catholics, High Church Anglicans, High Church Lutherans and Orthodox promote the crucifix?**

The Crucifix, a Cross-with a Corpus, is the symbol used by the Roman Catholic, High Anglicans and High Lutheran Churches, in contrast with some Protestant denominations, which use only a bare cross.

Since the Roman Missal of Pius V in 1570, the use of a crucifix as an Altar Cross has been mandatory for the Roman Catholic mass.

Prayer in front of a Crucifix is a devotion, especially when worshipping in a Church or as a private devotion in a Chapel. The person may sit, stand, or kneel in front of the crucifix, sometimes looking at it in contemplation, or merely be present in front of it with head bowed or eyes closed.

Having said that, it should be remembered that Jesus Christ obtained our salvation by dying on the Cross. The cross by itself is simply a symbol of crucifixion. Yes, the cross is a simple Christian symbol, but we should always remember who was upon the Cross. Whose body was broken and pierced and shed His blood, water and died there for us.

If Jesus is not on the Cross any more, why have a Cross at all? "We proclaim Christ crucified!" [1 Cor. 1:23] An empty cross is empty, exactly that; it is not complete. It is like any other crosses on which criminal were executed in times gone by.

The cross did not of itself redeem us. Scripture tells us that the person, Jesus Christ redeemed us on the cross. This act of our redemption was intensely personal on the part of the Redeemer and on the part of the redeemed. The crucifix conveys this in a way that the cross alone simply does not. We do not dare to ignore what He endured the pain and suffering for us. We do not dare to tidy up His passion. We worship Him in precisely the unsightly, bloody appearance of His self-gift.

I believe that he who displays the cross, the instrument used by the Romans as a method of painful execution in which the condemned person is tied and nailed to a large wooden cross and left to hang until death, such a person worships a wooden idol. He who displays the crucifix, a cross with the Body of Christ, worships our Redeemer, He who is represented on the Crucifix, He who has suffered a painful death for our sins.

However, I leave it to the intellect of the believer.

God Bless you,

Cecil K. Dewars