

Templars and the Cross

Anyone familiar with Christianity knows that the symbol of the cross was used in a variety of ways and even prior to the time of Crusades there were stories about crosses showing up on garments. There could have been nothing more suitable for Crusading armies than implementing crosses as a visual distinction. Abbot Guibert in his History of Jerusalem states that Pope Urban II instituted this sign both as a sign of military distinction and a symbol that would help Christian knights fight better for God's cause. The Abbot clarifies that the pope ordered the figure of the cross out of any material sewn onto tunics and cloaks of the members of the expedition.

During the Crusades there was neither color nor design required of the Crusaders. If any of the original nine members of the Knights Templar Order came to Palestine during the first crusade they would have worn crosses on their garments, but there is nothing to be said about how exactly those crosses looked.

In 1128 Pope Honorius II granted the Knights Templar the right to use white cloaks for distinction as a symbol of innocence, but without any crosses. It was Eugene III (1145-1153) that instituted that the Templars wear red crosses as a sign of martyrdom.

One cross in particular has other meanings related to it. The cross that I speak of is the Maltese Cross.

The Maltese or St. Johns Cross is also known as the Amalfi, Regeneration, Fishtail, Honour, Knights, Campaign and Iron Cross. It sometimes called the Regeneration Cross because it has eight points; *eight* symbolises regeneration for many religious ideas. The eight points of the Maltese cross have several allusions to its meanings. One of the allusions of these eight points that we should be concerned with is that of the Beatitudes. The beatitudes of the Knights Templar interrelate to the eight beatitudes of Christianity proclaimed by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Templar Beatitudes

1. Spiritual joy
2. To live without malice
3. To weep over thy sins
4. To humble thyself to those who injure thee
5. To love justice
6. To be merciful
7. To be sincere and pure of heart
8. To suffer persecution



The Beatitudes

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are they that mourn:
for they shall be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek:
for they shall inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:
for they shall be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful:
for they shall obtain mercy.*

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

*Blessed are the peacemakers:
for they shall be called the children of God.*

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you,
and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake"*

(Matt 5:3-11 KJV).

The Beatitudes reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate purpose of human acts; God calls us to his own beatitude. This vocation is addressed to each individual personally, but also to the Church as a whole, the new people made up of those who have accepted the promise and live from it in faith - CCC 1719.

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