

Everyone has their pet peeves. Before we impose our personal dislikes, agendas, and contempt as pious doctrine, let's take the opportunity to consider the facts. The cross has been a recognized symbol of the Christian faith for quite some time. So, how can incorporating a universal symbol of Christianity be considered taking Christ out of Christmas? The true meaning of Christmas becomes lost to the over-commercialization of this Christian holiday. So, let's not perpetuate this by missing the ACTUAL meaning of the use of *X-mas*. I used to be annoyed by this "disrespectful" abbreviation until I became educated to the facts:

1. The cross symbolizes the Christian faith and the sacrifice that Christ made for us.
2. Many accepted variations of the Christian cross exist. Everyone is familiar with the standard crucifix (a non-equilateral cross with a long vertical post and shorter cross-member offset toward the top). Other crosses, such as the Maltese Cross, Greek Cross, St. Patrick's Cross, St. Andrews Cross, St. Bridgid's Cross and the nine cross-crossett's on the Episcopal Seal – all designed to display reverence to Christ and Christianity – are comprised of equilateral members some forming a "plus symbol" and other forming an "X". Crosses such as the Celtic cross, Papal cross, Presbyterian and Eastern Orthodox are other variations of the standard crucifix that symbolize Christ and Christianity...Different doesn't mean wrong, does it?



3. The saltire cross is an equilateral cross that forms an "X". The most widely recognized saltire is the St. Andrew's cross. This Christian cross is widely used in Celtic nations on flags and family/heraldic coats-of-arms. The national Flag of Scotland, flag of Northern Ireland and St Patrick's saltire (Ireland) are all adorned with this esteemed symbol. Thus being a Christian from a family of Scottish and Irish heritage, my perception of the use of the saltire "X" cross in *X-mas* as disrespectful, has changed. The origin of the "X" comes from the Greek letter *Chi* which is the first letter of the Greek word *Χριστός*, translated as "Christ". The Greek name for "fish" is Ichthus, or in Greek characters *ΙΧΘΥC*. This formed an acrostic, each letter standing for a word:

"Jesus Christ God Son Savior" -- an early Christian confession of faith – used extensively for Christians to identify themselves to other Christians by scribing these letters or the symbol of a fish in the sand. This was a cryptic method of communication amongst Christians in defiance of those who would persecute and put Christians to death for confessing their faith in Jesus Christ.

Ἰησους
JESUS

Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua which means "The Lord saves" .

Matthew 1:20-21

Χριστος
CHRIST

Christ is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Messiah. Jesus was the Christ, or the Messiah, promised to Israel and to the world.

Matthew 16:13-20

Θεος
GOD

Jesus is God

John 1:1-4

Υιος
SON

Jesus is also the Son of God

John 1:32-34

Σωτηρ
SAVIOR

Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world

Romans 10:9-10

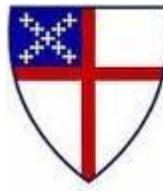


BEATUS ANDREAS APOSTOLUS SIT PRO NOBIS EFFICAX INTERCESSOR

St. Andrew



Communion Chalice



Episcopal



Fitzgerald



Northern Ireland



Davis



Order of St. Patrick



Chi-Rho (early symbol of Christianity)



St Bridgid's Cross (Irish) used to protect homes from fire



National Flag of Scotland – Cross of St. Andrew (saltire)

In the spirit of this season, shouldn't we focus on the ties that bind and spread good will rather than trying to incite ill will? I hope that this bit of historical and theological fact was enlightening. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays (evolved from Happy Holy days) to all, no matter which path to God you take.