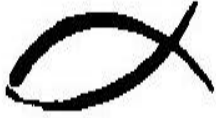


Educational Material – Symbols

The Fish



The fish is one of the oldest symbols for Christian faith. The initial letters of the Greek word for fish: ICHTHYS, maybe read as the initial letters of the words in the following sentence, one of the world's oldest creeds:

Jesus (I) Christ (CH), Son (Y) of God (TH), Saviour (S). To the first Christians, the fish was a secret sign, signifying the Way.

The Cross



Jesus was assassinated in a, for the time, common way: crucifixion. For a Christian the cross not only represents that Christ died for us, in our place. Just as important is that the story not ends there. The cross is a sign of victory, as Jesus rose again from the dead - the cross is empty! "Where, O death is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55). The Cathedral is built in the shape of a cross.

Trifolium



Symbolism around certain numbers is quite common. The holy number of three is central to Christianity and frequent in the cathedral as flowers with three leaves: trifolium. This represents the Holy Trinity: God as the Father - Creator, God as the Son - Liberator, and God as the Spirit - Giver of Life. The kings who came with gifts to the newborn infant i Bethlehem were three. Christ rose from the grave on the third day.

Candle



Jesus said: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (Gospel according to St. John 8:12). One candle - even how small - is stronger than darkness.

XP



The Greek letters for Christus Rex or Christ the King. However, Christ is not like the kings you know from history books or fairy tales. He takes sides with the weak and perished (S:t Luke 7:7-14) He comes without weapons, armies or aspirations for political power (S:t John 18:28-38). As followers of Christ, we are not only the servants of him, but also his friends (S:t John 15:11-17).

S:t Mary - queen of heavens

Our Lady's Chapel is in the East end of the cathedral, named after S:t Mary, mother of Christ. If you look in the vault of the chapel you can see the blue sky covered with stars. Mary is called queen of heavens as she gave birth to the Son of God, Christ Jesus.

East-West

Most churches are built with the altar in the East and the entrance in the West. East is representing the sunrise and also the Second coming of Christ. Another name for Christ is also Sun of righteousness and the Light of the world. The paradise was thought to be somewhere in the East. West is the opposite, the old life that you leave behind when entering the new life in the church.

The towers



Look at the Window of the Son (above the Southern gate). Mary, mother of Christ, and S:t John stand by the cross at Calgary as Christ dies (Mary in blue and white robe, John in a brown robe). The towers represent among other things these two who stayed by the cross even when Jesus died and all others went away to hide. Every time we see the towers in the Uppsala skyline they remember us that we should also, as Mary and John, stay by the faith, even if times get difficult.

The rooster



The disciple Peter disowned Jesus. When the rooster crowed three times he remembered Jesus having foreseen this. Peter wept and mourned bitterly. (Gospel according to S:t Matthew 26:69-75).

The dove



The public ministry of Christ starts with his baptism in the river Jordan, by John the Baptist (see the Window of the Son in the cathedral, above the Southern gate). In the gospel according to S:t Luke 3:1-22 we read how the holy Spirit comes down over Jesus in the shape of a dove, and that the voice of God was heard from heaven. In the cathedral you find the dove, in the centre of the Window of the Spirit (above the Northern gate).

(Note: Bible quotations in English are according to NIV New International Version)