

The Significance of the Cross

The cross is probably the best-known religious symbol in the world. It is featured in buildings and books, and made into jewelry, art, and sculptures.

If asked what the cross symbolizes, many people would reply that it is related to the Christian faith and specifically to the death of Jesus Christ, which is the reason for its distinct importance, particularly during the Easter season.

God used a cross to demonstrate his love for us by sending his Son to die on it for our sins. The Bible says in 1 John 3:16, "We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us."

Yes, the cross is the symbolic reminder of an event in history. Do you know, however, that the cross—or what it symbolizes—can be made meaningful and personal to you? Putting your faith in Christ and his death on the cross is a life-changing experience.

The Bible expresses it this way: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for

me" (Galatians 2:20).

The apostle Paul, who wrote those words, trusted Christ as his Savior. He saw vividly what Jesus' death on the cross accomplished for him and in him. He gladly identified with Christ who now lived in him. To anyone who trusts Christ as Savior, the cross of Christ means forgiveness of sins, peace with God, and eternal life.

"We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us."

We are able to accept that because of God's great love for us. John 3:16 tells us: "This is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." As you go through life, each cross you see can remind you of God's love for you and the eternal

riches he so freely gives.

Have you taken the step of trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior and making the cross not merely a symbol but a reality in your life?

[Jim Kraus]



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Not the Odd One Out Here

Feral, injured, neglected, geriatric, and otherwise hard-to-place cats now have a fair shot at getting adopted. That's because the Odd Cat Sanctuary in Salem, Massachusetts, is dedicated to taking in cats that may not be given a chance, ensuring all these felines find forever homes. Founded in 2015, this nonprofit sanctuary lovingly refers to their cats with challenges as "odd."

Case in point is Maya. Born with a chromosomal abnormality which left her with a flattened snout and vision issues, Maya was initially dumped behind a Chinese restaurant before being captured and taken to a kill shelter. When the sanctuary staff discovered Maya's fate, they rescued her, placed her in a foster home, and went to work finding her a home.

The effort paid off. Maya is now adopted into a family that pampers her. Playtime is slower than for a normal cat because of Maya's vision issues, and she sneezes a lot due to her misshapen nose. But that makes her more endearing to her owners. "She might be a little different, but that's another reason why we love her." Maya's success story has made her an unofficial face of the Odd Cat Sanctuary to draw attention to these cats who need homes.

For anyone considering a pet, be sure to check out animal rescue groups, shelters, and sanctuaries in your area, who provide love and care to abandoned animals.



NAME & ADDRESS:

HAVE A GOOD DAY AND A SPLENDID *forever!*



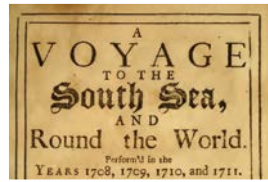
A MESSAGE OF CHEER AND GOOD NEWS. *Pass it along!*

Bookish Buccaneers

He was one of the most intimidating-looking pirates during the eighteenth century aboard his flagship, the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, as it prowled the Caribbean and the Atlantic.

Blackbeard, whose real name was Edward Teach, actually preferred frightening his victims rather than using violence to get their treasures. And when Blackbeard and his crew weren't looting and plundering? They may have read "voyage narratives"—true accounts of maritime expeditions.

Recently, conservators found 16 fragments of Edward Cooke's book *A Voyage to the South Sea, and Round the World, Perform'd in the Years 1708, 1709, 1710, and 1711* crammed inside a cannon on Blackbeard's flagship, which had run aground off North Carolina's coast. Since discovering the submerged wreckage in 1996, the state has been carefully collecting artifacts, and the surviving 300-year-old paper is a rare find indeed.



Something Doesn't Belong Here

In early February, farmer Bruce Grubb, 24, of Aberdeenshire, Scotland, headed to his barn to check on his pregnant cows when he spotted something sinister lying in the shadows. Alarmed and fearing for both his cows and his own safety, Grubb immediately called police.

Armed police arrived to verify the allegations of a tiger and ward off the wild animal. During the 45-minute standoff, the officers reported the animal appeared well fed.

When Grubb finally got into his truck for a closer view of the beast, he discovered it was actually a large *stuffed* tiger. "I had absolutely no doubt it was real," Grubb



The plush predator didn't put up a fight.

says. "I was worried it was going to eat all my cows."

Inspector George Cordiner summed up the incident. "We appreciate that it was a false call made with genuine good intent."

Now That's an Old Joke

The ancient Romans were world conquerors and . . . practical jokers? Yes, according to Dr. Richard Hobbs at the British Museum, who examined a silver wine bowl discovered in Vinkovci, Croatia, in 2012. The bowl, adorned with a small statue of the Greek figure Tantalus, contained a hidden tube leading to a hole in the bottom of the bowl. Hobbs and his archaeological team believe the Tantalus bowl is the earliest

example of a physical implement created for a practical joke, at least for the Romans.

When a liquid was poured into the bowl and reached a certain level, it was diverted down the tube, out the hole, and spilled onto the lap of the unsuspecting imbiber. The bowl dates back to the 4th century. Hobbs surmises it could have been owned by one of two Roman co-emperors—Valentinian I or his brother Valens—who were both born in Vinkovci.

Sharks in Hot Water

When scientists sent a robotic camera into the acidic and 800-degree waters of Kavachi, an active underwater volcano near the Solomon Islands, they expected to find lots of lava to study. What they didn't expect to find were sharks. Hammerhead and silky sharks were swimming inside the volcano as if the waters were as temperate as the rest of the ocean.

The stunning footage prompted the question: What other extreme environmental conditions can these animals adapt to? And what if the volcano erupts? What happens then?

Perhaps the cheesy syfy *Sharknado* thrillers are more real than most people thought.



Just for laughs



"Isn't this kind of like cheating?"



"At least you could look at me while you're texting me."

It is not the outlook that counts, but the uplook.

A wise man makes his own decisions; a fool follows public opinion.

Don't just entertain new ideas—put them to work.

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