

The Maltese Cross



The eight points of the Maltese Cross illustrate the eight obligations of the knight: honesty, faith, repentance, humility, justice, mercy, benevolence and resilience. The creed offered by the Maltese Cross would be the ultimate goal towards which every fighter in Christendom should strive. Be that as it may, this Christian symbol is no longer limited today to the island of Malta: countries all over the world use it as a decoration to represent courage and honor.

In the New Testament, the Eight Beatitudes is the name for the opening verses of the “Sermon on the Mount,” considered to be the heart of Jesus’ teachings. Jesus began each Beatitude with the words “Blessed are ...” which in Latin is written *beati sunt*. That’s why we call them the Beatitudes, because they’re a list of *beati*.

The points of the Maltese cross are also emblematic of these Eight (8) Beatitudes:

- * Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- * Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- * Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- * Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- * Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- * Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- * Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
- * Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Although the use of the Maltese cross was popularized in the 16th century by the Order of the Knights Hospitaller, it actually dates back to the early 11th century. Its roots are actually found in the crosses of the Knights Templar, itself derived from the flag of the Republic of Amalfi (a merchant state located on the southwest coast of Italy). From its creation, this cross was therefore associated with Christian warriors and knights.

The origin of the Maltese cross can be attributed to a group of monks who served in a hospice built to help travelers who came to visit the Holy Land. Over time, these monks also began helping the Knights of the and providing armed escorts to people traveling through non-Christian territories.

Yours in Knightly Courtesy,
Sir Knight Charles Ball
St George Commandery No. 2