



**THE GRAND COMMANDERY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
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IN HOC SIGNO VINCES!

In this sign, or by this sign conquer. As Masonic Knights Templar the phrase In Hoc Signo Vinces is our watchword, a motto that keeps us aware of the power, the grace and the efficacy of the Cross of God, or more accurately the Cross of Christ.

As Christians the cross of Christ, the tree on which He was raised above the two thieves, speaks of His supremacy, His absolute value as God in Man in its symbolic placement in the center between the other two and standing taller than those on either side of His cross.

In Christianity, throughout the world and the centuries since His epic saga took place, Christ's Cross is generally symbolized by a Passion cross, something like the crosses we wear on our dress blouses in our constituent commanderies.

Our various crosses, the red Passion Cross, the Red Cross formee Patee worn on Grand Commandery officer uniforms, the White Maltese Hospitaller Cross worn by all of us, the double barred cross of Lorraine or patriarchal cross used on our banner staves, and the triple barred Cross of Salem signifying the Grand Encampment all have both religious and military significance.

But as you've noticed most of the crosses, we use in Templary are equal armed. Crosses have been used in cosmological symbolism for millennia. They stand for the four seasons, four winds, or four elements (Earth, Wind, Fire & Water) When adding the 5th element Spirit, the design most used is the Pentagram, the 5-pointed star, the Star of Solomon. The equilateral cross symbolizes balance, male and female, and rather than the God in Man symbology of the Passion Cross it speaks to the roles of mankind in God's world, or to the greater purposes of men in our world. The Divine Fire indelibly writing its messages in our hearts and carrying out God's purposes in the affairs of men.

Although the wearing of the cross exposes our vanities and eccentricities to the world, it also shows forth what pride we have in our humility, and how humble we are in our pride.

But why this sign, this symbol and these words - our motto, In Hoc Signo Vinces?

Certainly, we are all familiar with the legend of Constantine, the Roman Emperor, who on his death bed converted to Christianity, and who earlier had held the Council at Nicaea wherein the Canon of the Christian Bible was decided, and who made Christianity the official religion of Rome and its citizens throughout the Roman world. According to the legend, Constantine was marching with his army and looking up at the Sun, he saw an apparition of a Cross above it, and the words "In this, Conquer". He didn't know what to make of it, but the following night he had a dream in which Christ told him that he should use the sign of the cross against his enemies. Later Constantine employed the Labarum, a military standard or banner with the Chi-Ro embroidered upon it in his wars against Licinius. The accounts of Eusebius and Lactantius have been connected to the Battle of Milvian Bridge (312 AD). Consequently, a legend came to pass that Constantine had seen the Chi-Ro sign in the sky on the evening before the battle took place.

Another account, provided by Albert Pike speaks of Hungus, a 9th century King of Picts having a vision of St. Andrew who in promising him victory the night before a battle, told him he should raise a banner with a diagonal or St. Andrew cross above his host. This symbol later became the emblem of the Knights of St. Andrew, who legend has it was initially formed of the excommunicated Knights Templar who helped Robert the Bruce overcome the forces of Edward the II at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314.



As Masonic Knights Templar, we aren't just saying that we use the cross and all our crosses simply to show that we are Christians although they do that as well, and we're all aware that our Christianity varies in nature, type and degree as it does throughout the world. But isn't just religious, although it is religious in nature. We are also following the example of a Templar King, King Alfonso Henriques and the Templar Kingdom of Portugal. Praying the night before he led the Knights Templar against an Almoravid Moorish stronghold in Portugal he saw the motto "IN HOC SIGNO VINCES" emblazoned as bright as day in the evening sky. Full of faith because he saw the sign, the next day King Alfonso Henrique led the Knights Templar in his command to win the Battle of Ourique in July of 1139. The symbol appears to have been used by other Templars too. On Newport Beach, Rhode Island a large stone was unearthed that had the motto and a Templar Cross on it. This may have been from an expedition of Templars to the New World, where we have several instances of evidence that Scottish and Portuguese Templars made camp in what later became Northeastern USA and Southeastern Canada. Our uses of the Cross Pattee and the Passion Cross are, along with the motto a continuance of Templar tradition and though the enemies we face as Masonic Knights Templar are generally societally entrenched sociological patterns, ignorance and arrogance in high places and our own demons rather than non-Christian armies, we've benefited from making it our own. It is a constant reminder of the Divine Fire that emanates from Truth and is carried out in the actions of those who cherish it. We can see the Chi-Ro - Andrews Cross shape echoed in the shape of the equilateral Templar Cross and the Divine Fire in the "Lightning flashes" of the Passion Cross worn by our Eminent Commanders.