

Why Do Catholics use Crucifixes?

Around campus and in the classrooms, there are crucifixes hanging on the walls. Why is this such a popular representation of Jesus of Nazareth? In part it is because this representation of the suffering and death of Jesus points to much of the good news that he came to proclaim. On the cross is a body - it is a reminder of the fact that the eternal Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. That body is nailed to the cross, which in part answers the question of where God is when things seem so hard – He does not run away, He enters into it with us. As well it is the representation of how far Jesus is willing to go out of love for all people. It is a reminder of the manner of how Jesus went about winning His victory over sin and death – by entering into death itself.

The Crucifix can then serve as a wonderful reminder of the depth of God's love and the efforts that He is willing to go to in removing the barriers to living in fullness of life with God – two of the main barriers being sin and death. Also speaking to this reality is the motto of the Congregation of Holy Cross: *Ave Crux Spes Unica* – Hail the Cross, Our Only Hope.