

Prayers for 19th September 2021 Jan Teale

Do you wear a cross on a chain – or is it a crucifix? To be absolutely correct, I believe that a cross with a figure of Christ on it is, strictly speaking, a crucifix whereas a cross on its own, without the figure, is simply a cross. I believe that the crucifix is revered by Catholics – in fact, most Roman Catholic churches have many such crucifixes in them.

Whilst I am not sure how important that distinction is, I do know that 14th September is important because it is Holy Cross Day. The cross on which our Lord was crucified has become the universal symbol for Christianity, replacing the fish symbol of the early church (more of that next week).

In the fourth century, once the whole persecution of Christians was over, pilgrims began to travel to Jerusalem to visit and pray at places associated with Jesus's life.

Helena, the mother of the emperor of that time, was a Christian and she oversaw the excavations in the city and is said to have uncovered a cross. It was believed to be the cross of Christ. A basilica was built on this site and dedicated on this day in the year 335.

The special collect for today is especially touching, so I would like to suggest that we use it as our prayer. It says:

Almighty God,
who in the passion of your blessed Son
made an instrument of painful death
to be for us the means of life and peace:
grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ
that we may gladly suffer for His sake;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

And we remember and pray for the recently departed and for all those who are ill, whether at home, in a care home or in hospital. We pray for all who may feel sad and lonely, especially those who have lost family and friends recently and for whom life will never be the same again.