



The Celtic Cross

The Celtic cross, a religious symbol seen all over Ireland, is basically a regular Christian cross with a circle surrounding the point where the lines of the cross meet in the center. It is almost always decorated intricately with typical Celtic patterns; spirals, knot work, foliage, keys, Biblical tales and animals

In Ireland, it is a popular legend that the Celtic Catholic cross was introduced by Saint Patrick or possibly Saint Declan. The most famous Celtic Crosses in Ireland are the Cross of Kells, County Meath the cross at Monasterboice, County Louth and the Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnoise.

The Celtic Revival of the mid-19th century led to an increased use and creation of Celtic crosses in Ireland. In 1853 casts of several historical high crosses were exhibited to interested crowds at the Dublin Industrial Exhibition. In 1857, Henry O'Neill published *Illustrations of the Most Interesting of the Sculptured Crosses of Ancient Ireland*. These two events stimulated interest in the Christian and non-Christian Celtic crosses as a symbol for a renewed sense of heritage within Ireland. Since its revival in the 1850s, the Celtic cross has been used extensively as grave markers.