

# HOSTING THE PILGRIMAGE CROSS

CATHOLIC YOUTH AND  
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY  
*Diocese of Wilmington*





# Pilgrimage Cross

## Frequently Asked Questions

On Easter Sunday, 1984, Pope John Paul II presented a simple wooden cross to the youth of the world.

On the cross is this inscription: "My dear young people; At the conclusion of the Holy Year, I entrust to you the very sign of this jubilee year: the "Cross of Christ!" Carry it throughout the world as a symbol of Christ's love for humanity and announce to everyone that only in the death and resurrection of Christ can we find salvation and redemption."

Since that day, thousands of young people around the world have heeded the challenge of the late pontiff and have carried the cross around the globe. What started in Rome (1984) has spread to World Youth Day celebrations in Argentina (1987), Spain (1989), Poland (1991), the United States (1993), the Philippines (1995), France (1997), returning to Rome for the jubilee year (2000), then on to Canada (2002), Germany (2005) and Australia (2008).

The Pilgrimage Cross, a replica of the original World Youth Day Cross, was constructed by members of the Youth Leadership Team and carried by the team at the opening liturgy of the One Spirit, One Church conference on March 1, 2009, where Bishop Malooly blessed the cross for its use in our communities.

Since then, nearly every parish and school (though not all) have hosted the Pilgrimage Cross and thousands of young people have prayed before it, carried it, and been inspired by what it represents: our salvation.

Thank you for being a part of this great tradition in our diocese.

**Thank you for hosting the Pilgrimage Cross.** We hope and pray that doing so will be a great experience for you and your young people.

Please use the information included to help make the most of your days with this important sacramental.

### **What are some suggested uses for the cross?**

Parishes and schools are encouraged to have young people carry the cross into community liturgies as a witness to our responsibility to share this symbol of Christ's love (see inset). You may also wish to have the cross present during retreats as a part of prayer space, to use it as part of a prepared prayer service, or to be creative and think of your own ways to utilize the cross in your ministry. Remember that it is a diocesan cross, so in time, thousands of young people will have carried it, prayed before it, and been inspired by it.

### **How is the cross transported?**

The cross is 10 feet high and 6 feet wide. The cross beam comes off with a few turns of the bolts included. It should be transported by SUV, minivan, or truck. The base of the cross weighs approximately thirty pounds and is necessary to stand the cross upright. Please note that the cross is not weather proof, so it should not be transported in inclement weather in an open vehicle. In most cases, putting the seats down in a large vehicle and angling the cross is sufficient. Remember that even though it comes apart, the cross is still a blessed sacramental and must be treated with care and respect.

### **If we request the cross, who brings it to us?**

No one. Those making the request are responsible for picking up and returning the cross. As more parishes and schools sign up to use the cross, you may find that you are picking it up from another parish and making arrangements to meet another parish leader to hand the cross over to them. Groups are encouraged to connect with other groups to enable the cross to be "handed over" from one group of young people to another.

### **How long can we keep the cross?**

Normally, no more than one week. It depends, however, on who needs it next - and where. If there is a week between the time you use it and another parish needs it, we would encourage you to keep the cross at your location and then have your young people "hand it over" to the young people

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from the next parish. Because this is the beginning of a new a tradition in our diocese, flexibility among leaders is a must.

**What comes with the cross?**

When you bring the cross to your parish or school, you received the cross, the base, the cloth covering for the base (a colored cloth that reflects the current liturgical season), and a book of intentions to which the young people are encouraged to add their own prayers.

More resources are available online at [www.cdowcym.org](http://www.cdowcym.org).

**Can we write on the cross or tape things to it?**

Absolutely not. To be sure the cross is able to be used for years, nothing should be written on it, etched into it, or attached to it. You could, however, drape a cloth over it, or even drape paper prayer chains around it as part of your prayer service. We appreciate your assistance in taking good care of the cross while it is in your possession.

**What is the difference between the Pastoral Cross and the Pilgrimage Cross?**

The Pastoral Cross is requested by parishes and schools on the occasion of the death of a young person or an adult who ministered with young people (a teacher or coach, for instance). The Pilgrimage Cross travels the diocese for use in general prayer services or liturgical celebrations.

**How can we hear about the ways others are using the cross?**

There are two ways you can hear about what other parish and school communities are doing with the cross. The first is that everyone who uses the cross is encouraged to make a copy of resources they use and insert them into the back of the binder that accompanies the cross. Then, when the cross arrives at your parish, you can check out their resources. Another way to share information is online. All parishes and schools are encouraged to submit their pictures and stories from the cross to CYM for posting. Then other parish leaders can see what you are doing and how they might be inspired to use the cross with their young people.

**Is use of the cross limited to young people?**

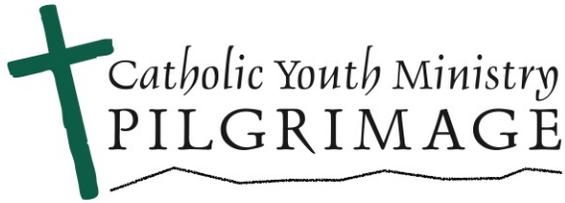
The primary use of the cross is for sixth grade through twelfth grade and young adults. But any group may request use of the cross and depending upon availability, it might be possible for your group or organization to use the cross.

**What if something happens to the cross while we have it?**

The instructions that accompany the cross include an emergency contact number if something happens to the cross. If the cross is damaged by misuse, the responsible group will be charged for repairs. Total replacement value of the cross is estimated at \$500.

**What should we do with the cross?**

Please see the Hosting the Cross Resource Packet to make the most of your experience as you host the Pilgrimage Cross. We have included prayer services, prayers you can copy and hand out, and more.



# Pilgrimage Cross Guidelines for Use

## Handing Over the Cross to the Next Group

As you plan your prayer service, liturgical celebration, or special event where the cross is featured, why not invite some young people from the parish or school where the cross heads next?

Your young people can carry the cross into the celebration, you can hold your event, service, or Mass. Then when it is over, your young people could carry it half way out and the next group could receive the cross. Your young people could stand the cross upright and then literally, hand it over to the other group by bringing down again into their hands.

Such a symbolic gesture is a clear way of indicating that this cross is for all young people, connected to each other in faith.

## Carrying the Cross Carefully

When your young people carry the Pilgrimage Cross, they should do so carefully. Not just because it is a blessed sacramental, but because it is so large. No less than 6-8 people should be assigned to carry the cross at once. It may feel light when several people are carrying it, but it is awkward to carry.

At least two people should carry the base and put it in place before the cross is moved.

The cross should be carried at shoulder height and care should be given to placing hands around the center of the cross, supporting the center and vertical pieces together.

The cross may need to be turned sideways - carefully - when entering doors. When placing it in its stand, one person should guide it while the others place it. Then the shims can be put in place while the cross is straightened.

1. The cross is a blessed sacramental and is to be treated with respect, dignity, and care.
2. The cross must be transported inside a vehicle. An open vehicle (pick up truck) may be used only if it is not raining, snowing, or excessively windy outside. The cross may not be tied to the roof of a vehicle.
3. All pieces of the cross, including both beams, the screws and connecting plates, the base, the base cover, the binder, and the Prayer of Petition Book, must be kept together and be transported together.
4. The host parish or school is responsible for the cross and all its accoutrement and will be responsible for replacing or repairing anything that is lost in transit or while the materials are in their possession.
5. You are responsible for transporting the cross and for connecting with the parish, school, or organization next on the list to make sure the cross is received on time.
6. Instructions for putting the cross together are included. There is only one way to put the cross together. Additional holes may not be made in the wood.
7. No less than eight young people should carry the cross at one time. Care should be given to support the cross beam where it meets the vertical beam.
8. To stand the cross upright, one person should guide it into the stand and the others should carefully stand it upright. The shims are used to keep the cross straight and and tighten the space around the base of the cross.
9. Candles and prayers can be gathered around the base of the cross and paper chains or lightweight fabric may be draped on the cross, but absolutely nothing is permitted to be attached to it (even by tape), etched into it, written on it, nailed to it, or the like. In addition, care should be given not to lean anything heavy up against the cross.
10. Leaders are encouraged to photograph their young people using the cross and to make copies of any original resources you prepare. This will allow others to peruse your materials for inspiration when the cross comes to their parish or school.



## **Pilgrimage Cross Bulletin Announcement**

*To be used in the weeks leading up to the arrival of the cross in your parish.*

The diocesan Pilgrimage Cross will be in our parish next weekend/on the weekend of N.

This cross, a replica of the World Youth Day Cross given to young people by Pope John Paul II in 1984, is traveling throughout the Diocese of Wilmington as a reminder to all, especially young people, of our dependence on the cross for our salvation. This cross was constructed by young people on the diocesan youth leadership team and was blessed by Bishop Malooly at the One Spirit, One Church conference in March 2009. It is used during the annual CYM Pilgrimage on each Palm Saturday.

The cross will continue to travel around the diocese until the next pilgrimage.

May this cross be carried throughout our diocese as a symbol of Christ's love for humanity and as a challenge to us all to stand firm in our conviction, steadfast in our faith, and rooted in the love of Jesus Christ.

*If appropriate, you could also include:*

At the end of liturgy, the young people from our parish will hand the cross over to the young people from N. parish (or they will receive it from...at the beginning of liturgy).

Or

This week when the young people gather (insert day, time, etc.), they will use the cross in their meeting.

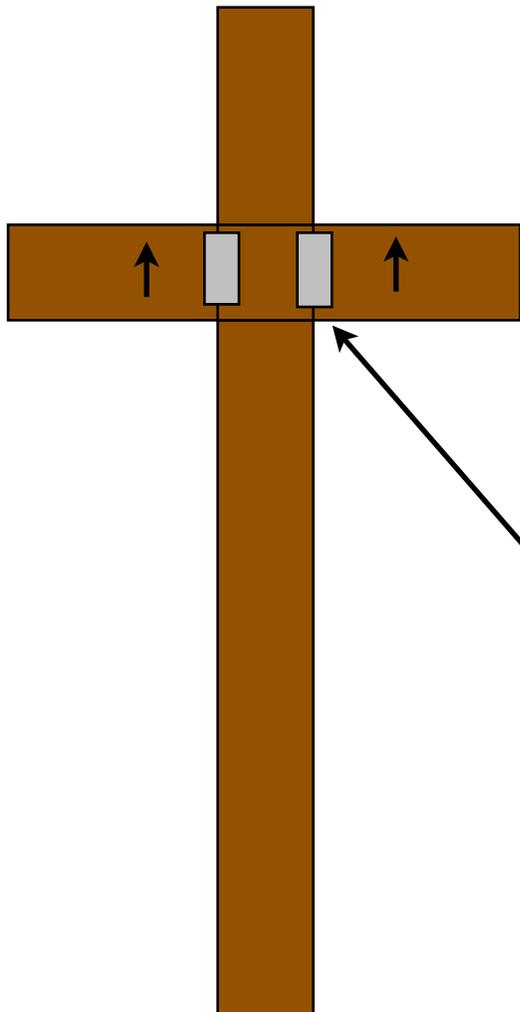


## Putting the Cross Together

The cross will arrive to you in two pieces. You will also receive the base, several cloth coverings (in keeping with the liturgical seasons), the binder with these instructions, and a Prayer of Petition binder.

### Step One

Lay both pieces flat on the ground face down. **The cross must be on a flat surface.** If you are laying the cross on concrete or asphalt, be sure to have a protective sheet or cloth (not the cloth from the base) to protect the cross. Have the nuts and bolts handy.



### Step Two

Place the two pieces together by lining up the slots. Make sure the arrows on the cross beam face the top of the cross.

### Step Three

Be sure to line up the holes as marked and use only the bolts supplied. **Do not drill additional holes or substitute the screws.** The bolts go in the back of the cross. The bolts should only be hand-tightened.

### Step Four

Gather no less than 6-8 young people to lift the cross, keeping it even as they lift. The cross should be carried at shoulder height and be stood upright into the stand supplied as instructed.

### To Disassemble the Cross

Remove the nuts and bolts and lift the two pieces apart. Again, the cross must be laying flat.

Notify CYM if the cross is harmed in any way.

