



**A sermon for the Cathedral Eucharist at Wells  
Cathedral, preached on Sunday 14 September 2025  
by the Reverend Edward Day, Cathedral Curate.**

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## **Radical Rebranding**

In 2021, the Cornish Fish Producers Organisation made the decision to rename their catch as the Cornish King crab. Why did they do this, you might ask? They decided to rebrand their catch because the previous name was apparently so unappetizing that sales were particularly poor. If I'm honest, they might have had a point. I wonder how many of you would choose the Cornish King crab over the spider crab. Personally, I'm not terribly tempted to eat crab, and I'd rather run away from the plate than even see what a spider crab looks like. So, on the surface of it, the decision to rebrand from spider to Cornish King seems pretty clever.

How well do you cope with a rebrand? You might still be upset and in denial that in the world of confectionery, Marathon made way for Snickers. Opal Fruits became Starbursts. Raider changed to Twix. Or you could, like me, be far too young to know these previous names at all. Thank you to the internet and my middle-aged colleagues. The idea of a rebranding might make you think of some of the disastrous attempts companies have made in the past.

Controversial rebrands that we've now either completely forgotten or wish we couldn't remember. For example, the time that the Royal Mail spent £2 million attempting to change its name from Royal Mail to Consignia. As we can see, it didn't work. Or we could think of Coco Pops briefly rebranding as Choco Krispies. That is truly disgusting and makes it sound like a rip-off of its own brand. Or, if we've not yet abandoned it, we might be complaining that Twitter has become X. There are some very unsuccessful rebranding attempts out there.

In a slightly weird way, I admit, today on the Feast of the Holy Cross we are celebrating one of the most successful rebrands in human history. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ radically rebranded the cross from a symbol of death and condemnation into a banner for love and salvation. Christ disarmed the horror of the cross and transformed it into a lasting image of hope.

In the very early days of Christianity, when still meeting in secret, the Ichthys was often used as an identifier. That is a simple drawing of a fish. I'm very glad the early disciples didn't choose a spider crab. Other forms of cryptic initials

and symbols were also used. As Christianity became increasingly more confident, we settled upon the cross as our common and universal banner. All Christians united together under the symbol of the cross.

It is quite peculiar, however, that we have the cross as our image. For the cross is an instrument of torture. It is a tool used to humiliate, to cause suffering, and is a barbaric form of execution. It is a spectacle of pain. It is a way to kill criminals. Agonising, stained with blood, exploitative, and shameful. It symbolises condemnation. And so why do we so happily unite under the banner of the cross?

We see hope in the cross because, through His loving sacrifice, Christ radically rebranded its image from an instrument of condemnation into a sign of God's infinite love for each and every one of us. Through Christ's victory for our sake, the cross shows us that we are loved. The cross shows us that we are saved. The cross shows us that even in the face of pain, suffering, and persecution, we can still dare to hope. Christ's love dilutes the hatred of the cross and transforms it into the wondrous victory tree.

The cross has become for us a visible sign of how much our God loves us. It is the manifest evidence of the powerful words that we have heard in our reading from the Gospel according to St John. If you are going to commit to memory any verses from the Scriptures, you must surely etch the words from our Gospel into your heart because they are the most perfect summary of the Good News of Jesus Christ. As we read, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him'.

You all are loved. Christianity is not about condemnation. It is about love and salvation. The image of the cross is a statement of love universally offered to all people. Christ did not come to condemn. God loves His creation as He has made it. He made you all in His Image and wants you to flourish as your authentic self. God's love is never limited by human-made prejudices and divisions. God's love is equal and desires equality. There are no qualifications or limits based on sex, ethnicity, social status, sexuality, or gender identity. All people are lovingly invited to gaze upon the cross and see the hope of salvation that is universal.

In His loving actions of sacrifice upon the cross, Christ sets for us an inspirational example. Seeing the example of Christ, how can we not be compelled to imitate His love in our own lives? His humility, His compassion, His willingness to suffer for His friends, His selflessness. As we heard in our first reading from Philippians, 'though he was in the form of God, [He] did not

regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross’.

The twelfth-century French scholar Peter Abelard wrote of the salvific importance of Christ’s moral example. He reasoned that Jesus’s sacrifice upon the cross was a powerful display and demonstration of God’s love. Christ sets us such an inspirational example; the story of His life has the ability to alter our hearts and minds to turn and follow God as a result.

The perfect sacrifice of Christ upon the cross radically rebrands and alters our perspective of the cross. No more is death, darkness, oppression, and hatred supreme. Instead, we look to the light. Christ’s light of unending love, acceptance, understanding, hospitality, and sacrifice.

Each time you look at a cross, know that you, too, have the power to change the world. Like Christ, we can reclaim instruments and words of hate by overwhelming them with our love. Like Christ, we can dare to hope when all seems lost. Like Christ, we build a world motivated by compassion and fairness.

In the cross, we see a radical and transformative rebranding. Let us never forget the love of our God, nor forget the sacrifice that Christ was willing to make on our behalf. And let us never lose hope that love will always win.

Edward Day, Cathedral Curate

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