

1 Sometimes on cars we see a badge of a simple outline of a fish:



2 It is a symbol that was used as a secret sign when Christians were persecuted in the time of the Roman Empire. Greek was one of the languages spoken throughout the Roman Empire, and the Greek word for FISH

is pronounced “ik-thus”. The 5 letters of the Greek word can stand for the first letters of 5 other words:

*“Jesus Christ, God’s Son (and our) Saviour”.*

3	I	I	esous	- Jesus
	CH	<b>CH</b>	ristos	- Christ
	TH	<b>TH</b>	eous	- God’s
	U	<b>U</b>	ios	- Son
	S	<b>S</b>	oter	- Saviour

4 Today, the outline of a fish seen on the back of cars means nothing to those who are not Christian, but is a sign of recognition and encouragement to other Christians.

5 *Let us pray:*

**God our Father,  
we could never “prove”  
or “justify” ourselves to you.  
Instead, your love for us  
is without limit or condition.  
It is Good News  
that your love is free  
and can never be “earned”  
by any human achievement.  
Jesus your Son was a perfect sign  
of the wealth of your love.  
We ask for the power of your Spirit  
in our lives  
that we, in turn,  
may be credible signs of your love  
to the people  
we will meet today. Amen.**



 **ΙΧΘΥΣ** *The five Greek letters in the word for FISH are named: iota, chi (pronounced “k-eye”), theta, upsilon, sigma. The capital form of the Greek letters is used here.*

 *The symbol of the fish is found in Christian art from the 2nd Century A.D. as a sign of Christ and the newly-baptised.*

 *An early Christian writer, Tertullian (c.160-220A.D.) wrote:*

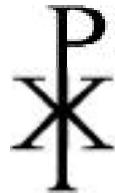
“Our sacrament of water (baptism) is blessed because it washes away the sin of our previous blindness. We are set free and received into everlasting life. But we, **LITTLE FISHES**, after the example of our **ICHTHUS**, are born in water. Unless we live in that water we will die.”

 *This secret sign of the fish is used in the film ‘Quo Vadis’ as a slave draws the sign in spilt wine for another Christian to recognise.*

 **X = chi**

**P = rho**

*are the first two letters in Greek of the word “CHRIST”. These two letters are sometimes overlapped and used as another Christian sign which can be seen in some churches and on candles, banners and the clothes a priest wears in church. The sign simply means “Christ”.*



 *See also 1 August, including the prayer.*

 *Jesus to the rescue (referring to the “seven signs” in John’s gospel); Oh the word of my Lord (“I called to you to be my sign”); The seed is Christ’s (“his the fish”)*

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in  
*'Praying Each Day of the Year'*,  
a 3-volume book  
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine  
to research this topic further.

This material is part of  
the prayer and education website  
of the De La Salle Brothers  
in Great Britain:

[www.prayingeachday.org](http://www.prayingeachday.org)