

TAU CROSS

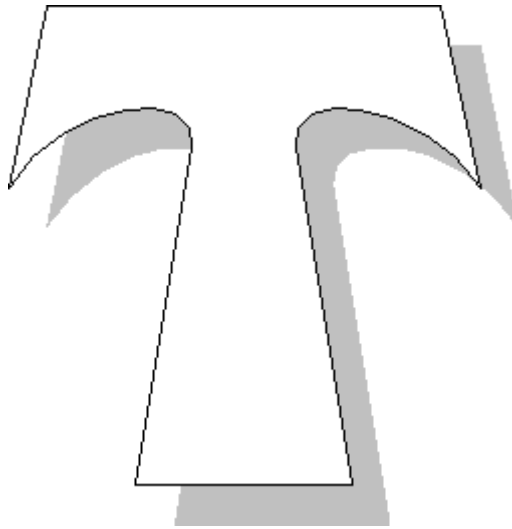
The Habit of the Secular Franciscan Order

The letter "T" is a biblical sign of salvation and prefigured the sign of the cross by means of which Jesus saved us.

The Prophet Ezekiel speaks of it in Chapter 9 of his book, where he narrates a vision. Seven angels descended upon the city of Jerusalem with the commission received from the Lord to punish with death all evildoers. Another angel had received the instruction to sign with a "T" the foreheads of the just. These later were to be saved from death.

This vision condemned to eternal punishment, while the just, signed with the letter "T", are predestined to eternal salvation. After his conversion, St. Francis used to ask anxiously, "Shall I be saved?" By means of an angel he was assured that he would certainly remain always faithful to the Lord, thus he was one predestined.

Celano writes that one day Brother Pacifico, "King of Verses", saw a "T" marvelously traced on the forehead of St. Francis. That is the reason we think he chose as his coat of arms the letter "T". He drew it in the churches to remind all Christians that they have been signed with the sign of salvation (the cross) and that the Lord wished them to be saved, but he wished also to remind them that only those will be saved who live as good Christians.



Resources found at:

Franciscan Sanctuary of Fonte Colombo in Rieti, Italy where a "T" that Francis drew is still venerated in the Chapel of Our Lady.