

Caring for Your Silver Cross

Our crosses are quality silver but tarnishing does happen over time for several reasons. Listed below are some of the most common reasons, as well as helpful information on how to help prevent future tarnishing. Please pass this information on to whomever you think would benefit from it.

Silver tarnishes (from gold to brown and then to black) due to oxidation. This occurs when it comes into contact with the open air, humidity, and pollutants in the air for extended periods of time. The most common elements which tarnish silver are foods (like onions, eggs, mayonnaise, salad dressing, salty foods, and others). Other agents that cause tarnish are salt, smoking, sunshine, wool, felt, rubber bands, latex gloves, carpet padding, sulfur in the air, hairspray, perfume, oily residue from our hands and fingers, and exposure to the ocean's salty air and/or water.

Wear your cross as much as possible to prevent tarnishing ~ but when you're not wearing it, store your cross with a paper anti-tarnish strip in your jewelry box or in an air-tight container such as a zip lock bag. When taking your cross off (or at the end of each day), wipe it with a soft cloth to remove residue build-up from the day. You may need to occasionally wash it in warm water with a phosphate-free detergent, then dry with a soft cloth (preferably a silver polishing cloth).

How to clean:

- If there is no tarnish on your silver, use a phosphate-free detergent to clean it after use. Silver that is worn, then gently washed and dried immediately, will seldom require tarnish removal.
- Tarnish is most easily removed when it is first noticed (usually a yellowish-brownish tint). It becomes increasingly difficult to remove as it eventually turns to black. Frequent light cleanings (washing the object with a phosphate-free detergent, then drying with a soft cloth) is better than waiting until the tarnish gets so difficult to remove that more abrasive polishes would be needed.
- Always use a clean, soft cotton cloth when polishing or drying. Rub in a straight, back-and-forth manner so as to maintain a uniform appearance. Avoid rubbing in a circular motion.

Information About Our Rhodium-plated Bronze Crosses

Why rhodium plating?

Rhodium plating is usually done to prevent scratching or tarnishing and thus preserve the underlying metal for a long time. Rhodium is used because it is more durable than other precious metals and usually does not provoke allergies. And since it is a very reflective and shiny metal (and more valuable than platinum and gold – which is why you won't see jewelry made from pure rhodium), it is used to plate silver, white gold, platinum, bronze, and sometimes copper. Rhodium is a precious metal, a hard durable member of the platinum family.

Does rhodium tarnish?

No. In fact, as it is resistant to corrosion it is often plated on sterling silver to help it resist tarnish. You may see some mottled shading on the back of your cross. This occurs occasionally during the finishing process and will not affect the integrity of your cross.

How long will the plating last before it wears off?

If the rhodium plating finish wears, and how fast it wears, depends on how your cross is worn and how you take care of it. Wearing it for significant periods of time as you will be doing, it is bound to wear eventually. A reputable jeweler can replat it, restoring its finish and its gleaming appearance.

How can I clean it?

- Keeping your cross clean is simple. Use a mild detergent and a little warm water, then rinse well and pat dry. Avoid excessive rubbing.
- While handling your rhodium plated cross, do *not* use any chemicals or abrasives.
- Do *not* use toothpaste or a toothbrush. The toothbrush may have toothpaste residue in it, and new bristles may scratch the plating.
- Do *NOT* use any abrasives, sonic cleaners, chemical cleaners, or jewelry dips. Polishing cloths which are specially produced to work with silver or gold jewelry may be used but avoid excessive rubbing. You can usually find these polishing cloths at the jewelry counter at Target or Walmart.