

# St. Louis Cardinals Remove Christian Symbol From Pitchers Mound

Busch Stadium in St. Louis is adorned with a few tributes to one of the greatest players in Cardinal history, Stan Musial. Scratch two from that total, courtesy of one disgruntled fan's complaint.

The Cardinals' grounds crew has been ordered by team General Manager John Mozeliak to stop etching two religious symbols—a cross and an ichthus (known as a biblical reference to Jesus)—into the pitching mound at Busch as a tribute to “Stand the Man,” a devout Christian. According to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the grounds crew had been doing that on a regular basis this season to honor the Cardinal great after his death in January.

The *Post-Dispatch* story claimed the fish was actually a “6,” Musial's number, but a closer look at photos reveals a striking similarity to an ichthus.

Cardinal pitcher Adam Wainwright said of the symbols, “They’ve been there every time for me.”

Cardinal fan Michael Vines noticed the symbols while watching a televised game and wrote a letter to the *St. Louis Riverfront Times* complaining about the symbol. He argued that the team was wrong to display “religious iconography on the infield at Busch Stadium, a place of hallowed ground not just for Christians, but for Cardinal fans of all religions, including none at all.”

Vines' letter also said the team had a civic responsibility to ban religious symbols on the field.

"The team and stadium may be privately owned, but they are civic institutions," he said. " "Out of respect to a devoted and diverse fan base who also has some skin in the game, not to mention a diverse group of players, ownership has a responsibility and obligation to prohibit religious symbols of any kind from being placed in the field."

Once Mozeliak got word of Vines' letter, he "asked" that the symbols be removed.

"Once we learned of it," Mozeliak told the *Post-Dispatch*. "I did contact the grounds crew and just asked that they don't. It's just not club policy to be putting religious symbols on the playing field or throughout the ballpark. I didn't ask for the reason behind it. I just asked for it to stop."

The Cardinals' decision to remove the symbols did not come without some backlash. Political radio talk show host Laura Ingraham tweeted, "The #**Cardinals** Gen Mgr shd start referring to his team as just the "Louis Cardinals" then, referring to a team that plays in a city named after a saint.