

# Church Banners

A Banner is a "Sign or Symbol": something to rally round or represent a particular cause. They have been used from very ancient times for religious purposes and, in the thirteenth century, a banner was considered to be one of the necessary 'ornaments' of every Parish Church. Many parish churches still have a banner bearing the figure of their patron saint; they may also have a banner representing their local branch of the Mother's Union.

Banners were always carried either before or in the midst of the group that they would represent and they are still carried today in procession, on great festivals, but in many churches they have become a static form of unnecessary decoration that can so easily destroy the architectural integrity of a building.



Modern banners, that are very often hung from the arcade or even projecting from the columns of the arcade, are often very badly designed and executed using poor quality fabrics, the lettering is usually too big and not very easy to read, and little thought is unusually given to the method of hanging.

Banners can look good, but only if a lot of thought is given to the design, particularly the lettering. The finished product should be an integrated whole. Banners could be used for particular themes throughout the Christian year, but no one banner should become a particular feature of the Church and its furnishings.

Whatever the design of a banner, be it traditional or modern, it should be artistically worthy to dwell in an architectural space and be able to be used as part of the theatre of the Church. Fabrics and textures should be able to dwell with existing soft furnishings but not necessarily in the Sanctuary: for example, the Mothers' Union banner may be better sited near the font with a bare stone wall as a backcloth.

Parishes are strongly recommended to submit designs for banners to the Parish Architect and the DAC at an early stage to ensure that all the above criteria are met.

Most banners are intended as a temporary work arising out of a thinking/learning process. In such cases where the use is not expected to extend beyond three months, no Faculty is required.

**Anything over three months may be regarded as a permanent feature  
and a Faculty should be obtained.**