



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 16, 2013

## St. Louis Cardinals Nix Christian Symbols Etched Into Pitcher's Mound

The general manager of major league baseball's St. Louis Cardinals has ordered the grounds crew at Busch Stadium, the team's ballpark, to stop etching a cross and the number "6" — which very much resembled the Christian "fish" symbol — into the pitcher's mound, after a fan complained about what he insisted was a nod to Christianity.



Over the past several weeks, apparently beginning in May, a grounds crew member had been etching the figures into the pitcher's mound as a tribute to the Cardinals most legendary player, [Stan "The Man" Musial](#), a devout Christian, who died in January at the age of 92.

But when a fan wrote to a local paper to complain about the symbols, Cardinals general manager John Mozeliak quickly stopped the practice, explaining to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: "It's just not club policy to be putting religious symbols on the playing field or throughout the ballpark."

The complainer turned out to be former St. Louis resident and long-distance Cardinals fan Michael Vines, who happened to spy the Christian symbols on the mound while watching a televised game, and promptly wrote a letter to the [St. Louis Riverfront Times](#) to vent. Vines complained that it was out of line for the team 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 argued that the "team and stadium may be privately owned, but they are civic institutions. 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."

Mozeliak told the *Post-Dispatch* that "once we learned of it, I did contact the grounds crew and just asked that they don't... I didn't ask for the reason behind it. I just asked for it to stop."

The decision prompted a firestorm of comments from fans and local residents. At least one fan agreed with Vines, writing that "a baseball field is not a place to advertise one's religious or personal opinions. It's a place where people of all shapes and sizes can come and enjoy a sport. Busch Stadium is not a bastion of Christian thought; it's a baseball field that [is] paid for by our taxes. Get it off the mound. I'm a Cardinals fan, but not a Christian. I don't want to root for a team that has some religious connotation."

Others expressed their disgust at the team's decision to cave in to secular pressure. One fan observed, "These corporate guys are so gutless, they'll accept any tyranny as long as they keep getting their dollars — complete with 'In God We Trust' written on them. How about Mr. Mozeliak refuse to take this



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money with God written on it if he's so sensitive?"

One Cardinals fan wrote that "as a Christian, I loved that someone could express themselves and not worry about necessarily being politically correct."

Even the ACLU of Eastern Missouri weighed in, saying that the Cardinals, "as a private organization ... enjoy the constitutionally protected freedom to choose to display a symbol of religious faith on their private property, or to choose not to."

The [Christian News Network](#) noted that in spite of the contrived controversy, "the St. Louis Cardinals just observed their 23rd annual '[Christian Day at the Ballpark](#)' [July 7].... The event featured Willie Robertson of the A&E television show [Duck Dynasty](#), who shared his testimony in a special post-game program, along with several Cardinals players."



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