

Crosses in the sky a coincidence?

With Easter around the corner, Good Friday is one of the most important days in the Christian calendar. Did you know the cross is the most recognized religious symbol in the world? As simple as it may appear, what it stands for is both deep and mysterious. Evangelist Billy Graham, who preached for more than 70 years; always centralized his messages on the cross and basically says that "God has locked up the secrets of the Universe in the cross." That sounds so mind boggling to the average layman like me, yet for those of us who believe in the creation story, is it a coincidence that there are cross constellations in the sky?

In the Northern Hemisphere we have the constellation of Cygnus (AKA the swan). The top is the stars of Deneb, middle Sadr, bottom Alberio and Gienah/5 Cyg at each end. Our counterpart in the Southern Hemisphere called the Crux contains Gacrux at the top, Acrux at the bottom and Mimosa/5 Cru at each end. Whatever conclusion you draw from



Neel Roberts
Sky's the Limit

these celestial displays, one thing's for sure — they are not going away or changing! **Sky watch for the next month:**

The thin Crescent Moon is in the northwest-west just above the horizon after night fall until 9 p.m. on April 15. If you look close enough, that's Mercury just under the moon, so you only have a hour window to catch this before they disappear for the evening.

Venus and Mercury will be close in the northwest-west, just above the horizon, on April 1 after nightfall for about an hour. If you miss it this day, no worries, you can catch it the next week.

Northern Cross-Cygnus can be seen after nightfall in the northeast-east all month long but is a better sight for the summer harvest.

April 22 is not one of the strongest of the annual

meteor showers, but you can catch up to 10 meteors per hour between April 16 and April 26, during the Lyrid Meteor Shower. The best location is just above Cygnus in the northeast-east.

Also, check out www.whatsuptonight.net, www.astronomy.com, www.space.com and www.nasa.gov. They have much more detailed information and great stuff for kids — all for free!

Public events for the next month:

Come join us for an evening of stargazing and Blackfoot skies storytelling during the Siksika Skies Night at Blackfoot Crossing at the Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, 100 kilometres east of Calgary on Highway 1, seven kilometres south on Highway 842. The event takes place April 10 from 7-11 p.m. Indoor activities begin at 7 p.m., with sky viewing starting at 9 p.m. with Saturn viewing. The indoor program goes ahead even if skies are cloudy. All are welcome and free. Check out <http://astronomycalgary.com/events/info/188> or [\[blackfootcrossing.ca/whatsnew.html\]\(http://blackfootcrossing.ca/whatsnew.html\) or call Shane Breaker at \(403\)734-4417.](http://www.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

A public open house is being held at the Rothney Astrophysical Observatory, near Priddis, featuring tours of the research telescopes, talks about astronomy and space research, and night sky viewing with telescopes on the outside plaza. The event takes place April 24 from 8-11 p.m. All are welcome and \$20 per car. Check out <http://astronomycalgary.com/events/info/44> or call Jennifer Howse at (403)931-2366.

Happy Easter and keep exploring!

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada — the country's leading astronomy club. It was founded in 1849 with more than 4,000 members and 29 centres across Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at 403-485-2683, Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com. The members meet once a month in various places in southern Alberta and you can check them out at www.calgary.rasc.ca