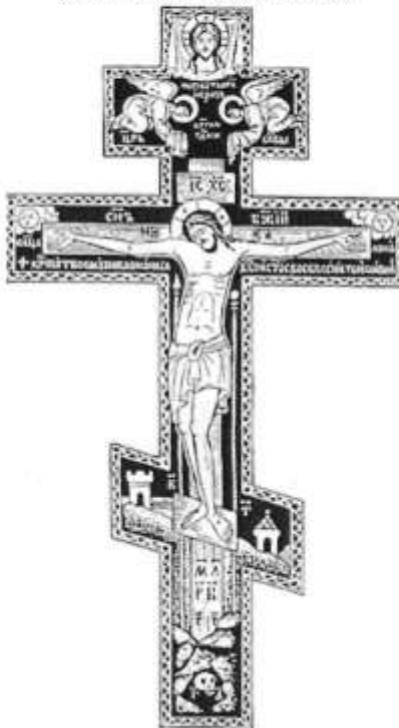


## EXPLANATION OF A TRADITIONAL RUSSIAN ORTHODOX EIGHT ANGLE CROSS

(Also known as the Three-bar Cross)



The symbolism of the "complete" cross (much of which is contained in the Old Rite Russian prosphora seal and on metal and wooden icon) is quite complex.



### The Top Bar The Explanation:

Through the Cross came our Salvation. WE are constantly reminded that Christ died for us when we see the Image of the Cross (depicting the crucified Lord), and we are reminded that He rose from the dead when we

behold the **Image of Christ "Not made by hands"** (Slavonic- **Нерукотворному образ**) on the towel (depicting the Lord risen from the dead)

Worshiping the crucified Lord are two flying angels, with the inscription between them: "**Angels of the Lord**" (in Slavonic) "**Ангели Господни**". In some depictions of the Cross the Angels are bearing an image of the Holy Trinity, but traditions vary by allowing this; usually the Angels are simply holding towels, indicating their position as messengers who serve the Lord and who wait on Him.

The top bar of the Cross is the title-board which Pilate ordered to be hung in a mockery over Christ's head. On this board is inscribed: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jew's" in Hebrew, Greek and Latin (abbreviated to the Greek initials 'INBI', placed below the knees of angels "**King of Glory**" (Slavonic) "**Царь славы**". On the title-board is inscribed the initials 'IC XC', being the first and last letters of Christ's name in Greek (Greek: Iisous Khristos; Old Rite Slavonic: Исус Христос). In addition, just above Christ's arms we see the inscription: 'NIKA', which in Greek means "He is victorious" over death and sin. [Note that proper and traditional Old Rite Russian Orthodox the Savior does not wear a crown of thorns, nor is he portrayed alive on the Cross, nor in any aspect of suffering, but in a state of humble and peaceful repose, with inclined head. Also note that his feet are nailed with two nails.]



#### The Middle Bar The Explanation:

The middle bar is that on which the Lord's hands were nailed. On either top corner we see the depiction of the **sun** (left; in Slavonic **солнце**) and the **moon** (right; in Slavonic **луна**), for "*The sun shall be turned into darkness and, and the moon into blood*" (Joel 3:4) "**Солнце превратится во тьму, и луна — в кровь**". The inscription: "**Son of God**" (Slavonic: **Сын Божий**) is placed on both sides of Christ's head, and below His arms we read the inscription: "**Before Your Cross we bow down, O Master, and Your holy Resurrection, we glorify**". In (Slavonic: "**Кресту Твоему поклоняемся, Владыко, и святое Воскресение Твое славим**"). The halo of Christ is inscribed with three Greek letters '**ω ω**' meaning "The Being" or "He Who Is", to remind us that Christ is the same God Who identified Himself with those words to Moses in the Old Law.

Behind the body of Christ, on either side, are **lance** (which pierced Him) and **sponge** (which was soaked with gall or vinegar and offered to Him to drink) on a pole made of reed or cane. The lance (on the left: is marked "**К**" in Slavonic; standing for "**копие**", while the sponge (on the right) is marked "**Т**", standing for "**трость**" (which means: reed or cane). On the body of Christ is depicted blood and water flowing for from His side.



### The Bottom Bar The Explanation:

The slanted bottom bar is the footrest. There is some question of whether it was actually on the Cross of Christ, but it is acknowledged to be a necessary attribute of the Cross, worthy of veneration and prophetically alluded to in the words "Exalt the Lord our God and worship the footstool of His feet". (Psalm. 98:5).

In prayers for the Ninth Hour, the Church likens the Cross to a type of balance of righteousness: "Between two thieves Your Cross did prove to be a balance of righteousness: wherefore one of them was dragged down to hades by the weight of his blasphemy whereas the other was lightened of his transgressions unto the comprehension of theology. O Christ God, glory to You."

The city of Jerusalem is depicted in the background, for Christ was crucified outside the city walls. By the foot of the Cross are the letters: "Г Г" standing for 'Mount Golgotha' (in Slavonic: **Гора Голгофы**); this hill outside the city gates upon which Christ was crucified. Below the feet of Christ are four Slavonic letters with abbreviation marks: "М.Л.Р.Б." (in Slavonic: **Место лобное рай бысть**), meaning "**The place of skull where Adam was**". Hidden in a cave under the earth is '**the skull of Adam**' (for by pious tradition it is said that Christ was crucified at precisely the same place where Adam was buried), identified with the letter: "Г А" (in Slavonic: **глава Адама**). We are thus reminded that Adam our forefather lost Paradise through the tree from which he wrongly partook; Christ is the new Adam, bringing us Salvation and Paradise through the tree of the Cross.





## Devotional teacher Theodora explains meaning of orthodox cross

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8VD8-xwW6U>

At the entrance to Holy Trinity Private School, the students bow before the sacred cross and pray:



Bowing before the Cross (3 times) with Prayers  
(upon entering sacred place / religious school)

Боже, милостив, буди мне грешному (поклон)  
"O God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Создавыи мя, Господи, и помилуй мя (поклон)  
"Thou has created me, O Lord, have mercy on me."

Без числа согреших, Господи, помилуй и прости мя грешнаго (поклон)  
"Countless times have I sinned, O Lord, forgive me."



Another variation is the monastic *Calvary Cross*, in which the cross is situated atop the hill of [Calvary](#), its slopes symbolized by steps. To the viewer's left is the [Holy Lance](#), with which Jesus was wounded in his side, and to the right, the pole topped by a hyssop sponge with which he was given vinegar. Under Calvary are [Adam's skull and bones](#); the right-arm bone is usually above the left one, and believers fold their arms across their chests in this way. Around the cross are abbreviations in [Church Slavonic](#): ЦРЬ СЛВЫ — «Царь Славы», Lord of Glory; ІС ХС - Исус Христос, Jesus Christ; СНЪ БЖІЙ — «Сын Божий» Son of God; НИКА - Victor; К - копье, spear; Т - трость, pole (with a sponge); М Л Р Б — «место лобное рай бысть» "place of execution is paradise", Г Г — «гора Голгофа» "mount Golgotha" (Calvary), Г А — «глава Адамова» "Adam's head". [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian\\_Orthodox\\_cross](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Orthodox_cross)



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian\\_Orthodox\\_cross#/media/File:Orth\\_Kreuz.gif](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Orthodox_cross#/media/File:Orth_Kreuz.gif)

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