

AN EXPLANATION OF THE UKRAINIAN THREE-BAR CROSS

Top Bar: the title-board which Pilate hung on the Cross; One the Inset drawing of the Cross, with the letters IC XC, the Greek initials of Jesus Christ. On the top bar, under the knees of the angels, we read, instead of Pilate's "Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews" the Christian inscription, "King of Glory"

Second Bar: the bar on which the Lord's hands were nailed. On either top corner we see the depiction of the sun and moon, for "the sun hid its light and the moon turned to blood" (Joel)

The inscription under the arms of Christ: Before Thy Cross we bow down, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify.

Behind the body of Christ, on either side are a lance (which pierced Him). And a sponge on a pole (which was soaked with gall and offered to Christ to drink).

The slanted bottom bar: the foot-rest. In prayers for the 9th hour, the church likens the Cross to a type of balance of righteousness; "Between the two thieves Thy Cross did prove to be a balance of righteousness; wherefore one of them was dragged down to Hades by weight of his blasphemy (the balance points down) whereas the other was lightened of his transgressions unto the comprehension of theology (the balance goes up) O Christ God, glory to Thee.

Below the feet of Christ are 4 Slavonic letters with abbreviation marks above them meaning; The place of the skull where Paradise was.

Missing on this cross, but usually found on others are the letters FF, meaning Mount Golgotha.

Through the Cross came our Salvation; We are constantly reminded that Christ died for us, and that He rose from the dead; The image of the crucified Lord reminds us of the former, the second image of Christ on the towel, depicting the Lord alive, reminds us of the latter. This image is called "Not painted by hands" and is thus inscribed in Slavonic.

Worshipping the Crucified Lord are two flying Angels, with the inscription between them; Angels of the Lord.

The city of Jerusalem is in the background of the slanted bar, for He was crucified outside the city walls.

Hidden in a cave under the earth is the skull of Adam. We are thus reminded that Adam our forefather lost Paradise through the tree from which he wrongly ate; Christ is the new Adam, bringing us salvation and Paradise through the Cross.

NOTE: there is only a skull, not cross bones. The skull and cross bones is a symbol of poison, not of the old Adam. Unfortunately many crosses among us use the cross bones as well.

