

# Kreuz 2017

---

Sunday 19. March 2017 St. Paul Konya

The first day after Ash Wednesday with the gospel concerning the preparations for Easter: “he, who wants to follow me shall carry the cross on his shoulders”.  
What does this mean? It means that we shall accept our life anew and shape it actively.

When our mothers and father in faith developed the foundation of services for the ecclesiastical year they decided that during a 12 day period before Easter to reflect on Jesus as the sufferer “a worm I am, not a human being, a man of pain”.

They covered the crosses, the representation of the Cross. Because until 500 years ago – about the time of the reformation – the crosses were shining signs of victory, glistening with gold and silver, decorated with buds and blossoms at the four ends pointing in all directions. Sometimes with the human figure of Our Lord Jesus Christ dressed with imperial garments, vivid and powerful, beaming eyes, with a crown on the head. Sometimes as a joyful dancer.

This sign of victory and power, the cross, was covered for 12 days. Then on Good Friday it was revealed and worshipped with songs of praise about God’s victory over sin and death, because on Good Friday the victory is reached, God has saved us at the cross. Until today in Greece the believers go to dances and discos after the funeral procession on Good Friday. Redemption is celebrated.

Until today our Armenian brothers and sisters in faith have maintained the cross as a tree of life full of blossoms. Also in Addis Ababa and Ethiopia till our present time the silver crosses – beaming in the African sun – are worshiped at holy mass.

The stories of the passion in the four gospels of Math Marc Luke and John show that the tool of execution – the cross – is transfigured into the place of the glory of the crucified Lord Jesus and a source of life for mankind. The evangelists show that the fight between life and death takes place at the cross, that this fight is the summit of redemption.

The gospels concerning the events on the cross **on one side** report things that all onlookers at Golgotha could see, also the enemies of Jesus.

**On the other** side the four gospels allude secrets that only those readers are able to grasp who are instructed by the Holy Ghost.

What do faithful people see and feel on Golgotha? I notice seven great realities:

1. Especially clearly the evangelist Mathew speaks about the effective power of the event at the cross: God’s holy relict (sanctuary) the Temple is shaken, the curtain of the Temple is torn **from top to bottom** and all creation becomes aware.
2. The soldiers become believers: they admit “truly, this was God’s son”.
3. Jesus at the cross is a sovereign judge. He refuses to accept the commonly offered anesthetic drink. He wants to stay active.

## Kreuz 2017

---

The first judgement of Jesus at the cross teaches us that all humans shall gain the salvation. Jesus' judgment on the cross pardons all those who executed him. In spite of their wrong conduct they are justified by the judge Jesus because in his universal knowledge he does not only judge by facts - as he knows the hearts: "forgive them because they do not know what they are doing".

4. The second judgement at the cross allows the criminal at Jesus' right side to enter into the Paradise, the criminal has confessed his evil deeds and has opened his heart to the Lord, and the Lord tells him; "today you will be with me in heaven".

5. A third judgment at the cross organizes his family matters: his mother's and John's futures: "Mother, see your son! John see your mother!" – our mother!

6. tradidit Spiritum, Jesus breathes and sends the Holy Ghost, tradidit Spiritum.

7. At the end resounds the voluminous call of a sovereign identity: "It is accomplished". The story of creation becomes vivid: "God saw that it was good."

\*\*\*

The city authorities Josef from Arimathea and Nikodemus buried the corpse of Jesus in a rocky gravesite. Thus the word comes true: "if the grain of the wheat is planted into the soil it brings plenty of fruit."

Our mothers and fathers in faith converted the rocky grave into a church. They called it "**Anastasis**" = resurrection.

We are living here in Ikonium Konya the city of the Apostle Paul, amidst the Eastern churches: in the Holy Land of the First Christians. Today it is still referred to as "Anastasis Resurrection Church" by all the faithful of the eastern churches..

But when the West-European crusaders came to Jerusalem they called the place "**Sacrum Sepulcrum = Holy Grave**". It is still referred to as "the Holy Grave" in the languages of the European countries where the crusaders had come from. Thus the cross was turned from a sign of victory and resurrection into a sign of torture.

### End of my sermon

As you all are listening very attentively I dare to introduce another preacher: Pope Leo, Bishop of Rome 1.500 years ago. At his time the large mosaic in San Clemente in Rome was created. Out of Jesus' cross spring up so many branches that all the pictures of our daily life find a place in it. We can do everything because Jesus has redeemed us at the cross. The one who suffers and is fastened by illness to the cross of his bed are enabled to devote his suffering for others and make her/his suffering thus a source of strength for them. We say: "sacrifice one's suffering".

The ancestor of Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome Leo the Great preaches like this on this Sunday of the year 460:

Leo says:

In order to ridicule Jesus` royal honour they made him carry the tool of his death on his shoulders. But they were wrong: the prophet Jesaja already calls the cross “royal power”. “See: a child is born for us, a son is donated to us, his ruling power rests on his shoulders”.

As the Lord loaded the wood of the cross onto himself thus transfiguring it into the sceptre of his power it was a great insult in the eyes of the godless people. However to the faithful it revealed a great mystery. The glorified conqueror over “Satan, the master of hostile powers”, carried the glorious sign of victory on his shoulders which were strengthened with patience as a sign of salvation. It was to become a sign of worship for every empire on earth. **Christ is now raised in his glory and we with him.**

While we contemplate this secret we shall not only think of what the godless imagined. On the contrary we who are enlightened by the Spirit of the Truth shall grasp the shining glory of the cross within us and understand what it means when the Lord speaks about his future suffering **“The hour has come in which the Son of Man will be glorified.”**

Now we need to understand the meaning of the following words spoken by Jesus “now my soul is shaken. And what shall I say? “Father rescue me from that hour. Therefor I came into this hour because of this: Father glorify your son!”

Now we shall understand what the Father called down from heaven: “I have glorified and I will glorify again”.

And we shall understand what Jesus said to those standing around: not because of me this hour has come, but because of you. Now the judgment is enacted over the world, now the prince of this world is exterminated. **When I am raised I shall draw everything towards me.** Everything and everybody - we can accept our lives anew.

Thank you very much for this Sermon, dear bishop Leo!

Since we accept our lives anew we will confess in the credo. The credo was developed in the the basilica of Saint Irene in Constantinople in the Holy Land of the early Christendom. This we confess especially in the word “catholic”. It has not anything to do with being Catholic or Lutheran or Baptism or Moslem. It means that Christ on the cross has redeemed all creation **“kat`holon = for all”**.