

## A piece of the Holy Land in Linz

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*To see the in the text mentioned photos, please have a look to the german version. THX*

The Mariendom ("New Cathedral") in Linz is the largest church in Austria and is less than 100 years old. The cathedral preserves some things that are directly related to the Holy Land. This begins with the laying of the foundation stone of the cathedral. A stone from the Holy Land was used for it.

First of all, the huge windows should be mentioned here, two of which in the nave have the "Jerusalem pilgrimages" in the years 1900 and 1910 as their theme. In the following article "From the Danube Beach to the Holy Land" Prof. Ingo Mörth will report in detail about the two popular pilgrimages, their origins, their process and some special features.

Here is a little introduction to the first window: as I said. In the middle section we see a pilgrim procession against the backdrop of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock: behind the cross bearer, the Bishop of Linz Franz Maria Doppelbauer appears in the middle of a group of three. Doppelbauer was the initiator of these pilgrimages; he visited the holy places as early as 1893. Participants of the pilgrimage follow with a "Pilgrim Madonna": it is exactly the Pilgrim Madonna: which is today installed in the transept of the cathedral and to whose veneration the numerous burning candles give eloquent testimony (see picture on page 15). The picture on page 18 shows that it was a singular event: a group unknown to us, probably German, enters the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with a figure of the Madonna. Already here it becomes clear how detailed the holy places are depicted in this church window, but also how precisely people can be identified. Like postcards and probably inspired by them, some holy places appear in the lower part of the window: at the top the well-known view of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, below the view of the port city of Jaffa. One might think that the view of Jaffa was chosen because this panorama was the first view of the Holy Land for the arriving pilgrims. But that wasn't the case: the ships docked in Haifa, more northerly, one reason being the difficult conditions. which characterizes the sea off Jaffa: it is very windy there and the so-called "Andromeda Rocks" make going ashore very difficult. Life-threatening maneuvers often had to be carried out in order to get to land. We then see a shore leave by boat in the next window. But Jaffa is also the biblical Joppa. mentioned several times in the book of Acts.

Let's now come to the small section in the window at the bottom right: we see a relatively unknown view of Bethany. today called "Al-Eizariya" in Arabic. If you listen closely, you can still hear the name "Lazarus" here, a corruption of the name "Lazarion", the place of Lazarus, which the pilgrim Aetheria already reports about. Of course we also know Bethany well through Martha and Maria. Actually, this place, Bethany, is very close to Jerusalem, almost at the height of the Mount of Olives - but due to the wall built brutally by Israel, this place, which was relatively prosperous just a few years ago, has become impoverished: as a visitor, you first have to take the highway towards Jericho and then turn off and drive for more than four kilometers through a very unclean area, before finally seeing today's shrine in a bend to the right of the main road, as can be seen in the window section further down. The current church cannot yet be seen; it was only built by Barluzzi more than half a century later. But the remains of a Benedictine abbey are clearly visible, the remains of the tower in the window section (above) still towering over the site today. It is a (regrettable) irony of history that because of the Wall, it is mainly German-speaking pilgrim groups that are now "forgetting" this biblical place because of the somewhat complicated and time-

consuming journey: in earlier times this was by no means the case. In the two pictures on the left we see two very similar representations of the place: one of course is the representation of the window of the Linz Cathedral and on the right we see the almost identical panorama of the place in a picture by the Leipzig photographer Bruno Hentsch around 1900. Reference should also be made to the photo in the next article, which shows us a group of mounted pilgrims on the way to Bethany.

Now let's move on to the next large window: in the middle part the pilgrims' disembarkation in Haifa is depicted, with the Carmel Mountains rising in the background. The heads of the pilgrims look like portraits and in fact they are partly that: on the right you can see a rower in oriental costume - he is a shipping entrepreneur from Gmunden! We see a motif underneath again, which seems unknown to us: the complex of the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth. Here too, the church we know today was built much later (architect 1960-1969 Giovanni Muzio).

In the bottom row you will meet us in the left field is the Austrian hospice in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem. The upper floor is still missing in this representation, but that does not diminish the harmonious impression. It is very nice that the next depiction pays tribute to the Sea of Galilee in a double field: after all, this is where the "evangelical triangle" lies - a framework as large as it is in terms of time and content for Jesus' public work. On the right is another familiar view: the Dormition Abbey on Mount Zion. The consecration of this church also dates back to 1910, but the windows of the nave were only created later, from 1913 to 1920 by the "Tirolean stained glass artist".

The memory of the diocesan pilgrimages has been preserved in these huge glass paintings: you can easily imagine them, that it was very interesting for the pilgrims involved, to review their pilgrimage again (like later in a photo album). The people depicted contribute to this, as do the depictions of the holy places, which are positioned at a height that is visible to the viewer.

Finally, the cathedral's nativity scene should be mentioned, which is installed in the lower church. This is a very unusual piece: 59 wooden figures in extreme reality are placed in different scenes. Everything is crowned by a halo for which 50 angels have already been carved. The artist of this extraordinary nativity scene is the Munich sculptor Sebastian Osterrieder, who worked on it for almost four years. He chose the "oriental nativity scene" type because he, too, visited the Holy Land in 1910 and came back inspired by the landscape and circumstances. In recent years, this nativity scene has not only been restored, but in a very demanding project each figure was photographed more than 100 times. That's not all: the results can also be admired in virtual form on the Internet; it's worth taking a look at the website: [www.krippendom.at](http://www.krippendom.at). You get as close to the characters as you couldn't get by just looking at them.

#### Recommended literature

Margarethe Böhm: The stained glass windows in the Cathedral of the Conception of Mary in Linz, art publisher Peda

Mariendom Linz, THE BEST ART PUBLISHER. catfish

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