

The Message of the Crucifix
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One of the perks of leading worship at Messiah Lutheran Church in Chicago is that week after week I am reminded of our Lord's sacrificial death by the crucifix above our altar.

As I stare at the crucifix, I'm reminded of the sobering fact that I'm responsible for Jesus' agonizing death due to my many sins, and how much I have sinned in thought, word, and deed by what I have done and by what I have left undone.

However, along with reminding me of my many sins, the crucifix also serves to remind me that the very reason Jesus willingly offered up His life to die a bloody death on a cross is that I might be forgiven of all of my sins and have eternal life.

Consequently, I can count myself a member of the fellowship of Saints along with those whom I have the privilege to lead in worship, as together we receive the forgiveness Christ made possible for us on a cross in the Gospel message proclaimed, spoken and sung, in the words of absolution, and in Holy Communion.

The story is told of a little girl who was quite focused on her drawing, and the teacher asked her, "What are you drawing?" The little girl responded, "Oh, I'm making a drawing of God". Her teacher commented, "But nobody on earth really knows what God actually looks like!" Undeterred, the little girl answered back, "They will when I get done!"

Well, if you ever want a depiction of what God looks like and His love for you, I invite you to look to the symbol of the crucifix, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29), and be assured of the profound meaning of the words found in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life".