

Today we look to the One who was crucified for a message about life.

There is no action in the crucifixion of Jesus intended to satisfy the wrath of God: Jesus died not because of the wrath of God, but because of the wrath of humanity, and yet he loves us to the end. *Jesus says, "I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10b).*

The death of our Lord and savior is not an act of justice, but an act of cosmic injustice. The world cannot hold so much love in one person without reacting violently, and violence shakes the foundation of the world. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1:1).*

Violence is our go-to for what we don't understand and what we fear. We cannot grasp how Jesus can so vehemently reject violence when it could have saved him. *Jesus says, I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (John 13:34).*

The death of Jesus on the cross is not a substitution for our sinfulness that makes us acceptable to God. God rejects violence of every kind and meets it instead with love, mercy and forgiveness. The death of Jesus is a judgement of the systems we put in place to control the world for our own purposes, rather than accepting God's vision for creation. *Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6a).*

The death of Jesus on the cross doesn't change God's heart to make God love us, but it begs us to change ours. Our life's work is to love others in the way that God loves us, loves us even though we reject God. *Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35).*

God did not kill Jesus, but the violence we turn to in order to rule the world to our advantage and our all-too-familiar corrupt religious practices killed the Son of God. God rejects violence and instead sends Jesus to show us a way out of the darkness. *Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 14:6).*

There is no legal transaction taking place on the cross, but the revelation of a God who loves the world so perfectly that God absorbs our violence and responds instead with forgiveness and the promise of everlasting community. *Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:14-15).*

The violence of the crucifixion of the Son of God is not the point of the Easter message.

All violence is an abomination in God's eyes, and there is no justification possible. *Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).* We have to go to the resurrection to see God's justice and response to violence. May we have the courage to carry so much love into the world.

Amen.