

# St. Thomas Aquinas Crucifix-June Update

Late this week I'll be meeting with the structural engineer to receive his recommendations. In the mean time, I work on drawing. Analyzing takes a bit of time; drawing takes the most time. First, proportions must be correct. Second, expressiveness in icons comes not just from the face but through the hands. Third, stylization changes the image from an actual physical likeness to a spiritual likeness. If I were to break down the work involved in creating an icon, drawing would occupy 70 to 80 per cent of the time. Once the drawing is refined, painting flows much more easily.

The finish carpenter who is constructing the cross is extremely busy due to the building boom. So I have time to create excellent drawings.



This contemporary image of the Mother of God shows how both her face (brows, eyes) and her hands are expressive.



This 15th century image of the St. John expresses sorrow and pondering differently.



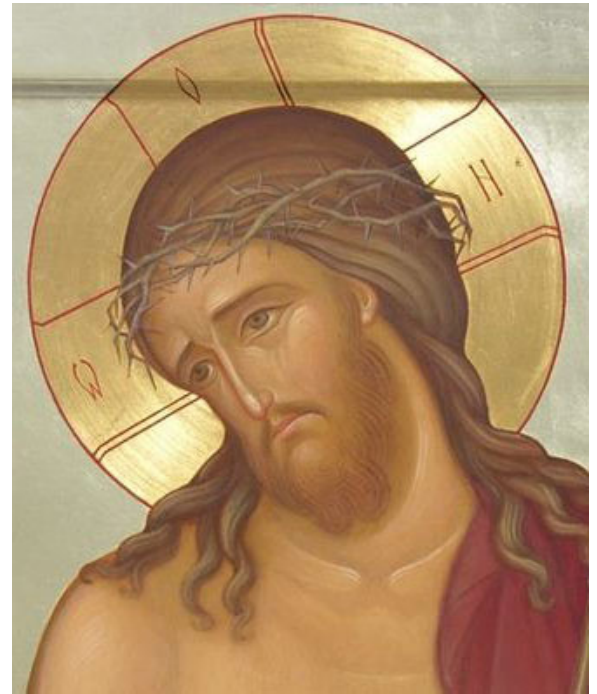
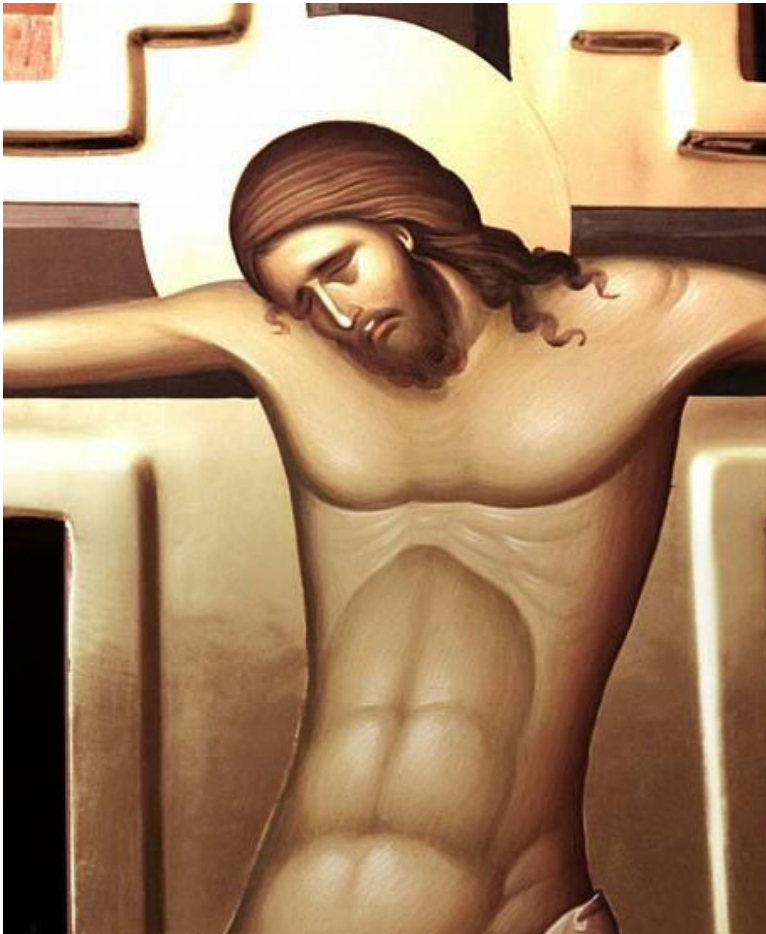
This is the first of anywhere from 25 to 50 drawings of the Mother of God.



The first draft of John the Theologian. Again, many iterations will be tried and discarded. The goal is to have images of Mary and John that are spiritual, that harmonize, and draw the viewer's eye toward Christ

The more figures included in an icon, the more challenging and time-consuming the drawing. I've started with Mary and John. The most important figure comes next.

Now the drawing challenge multiplies exponentially again. The third figure is none other than our Lord, Jesus Christ. In depictions of the Crucifixion, Christ's image is always peaceful and serene, though the reality of what he suffered was anything but that. Icons show the transfigured person, not human suffering.



Certain Crucifixes show Christ with his eyes closed, and others with his eyes open. With closed eyes, Christ is shown in death, as at left. With open eyes, Christ is shown either before death, or transformed. When his eyes are opened, we encounter in his gaze and his grace the saving mystery of his death.

The next icon update will show further progress in drawing.