

The Gateway Arch

In May 1968, city planners formally dedicated the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri. Several years ago, when the groundbreaking ceremony for Life Care Center of Saint Louis was being planned, several of us had the opportunity to go up into the Arch, view the adjacent parts of the city and the mighty Mississippi River, and feel the sway of the structure as the wind blew. It was quite an experience.

The stainless-steel-clad Arch is the tallest monument in the United States, with concrete foundations sunk 60 feet into the ground, reaching into bedrock. Designed to sway up to nine inches each way, the Arch was built to withstand earthquakes and hurricane-force winds.

The Arch is part of the Jefferson Expansion Memorial on the Mississippi riverfront honoring Thomas Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase. The Arch represents the spirit of the pioneers who settled the West. Visitors can ride a unique tram system to the top, where a viewing area holds up to 160 people, and offers vistas as far as 30 miles in any direction on clear days.

For Christians, the most beloved memorial is the cross of Christ. It reaches into heaven and spans the distance from the beginning of time to eternity. Its foundations are sunk into the bedrock of God's love and mercy. It can withstand the fiercest demonic attacks and sway the most hard-hearted sinners. There is room for an infinite number of people to visit the cross, and come away changed forever.

Sometimes the cross is used merely as a cultural icon or a fashion accessory, even worn by those who oppose what it stands for. Familiarity can dull our senses to the power behind the symbol of Christ's agonizing death, which opened the way for us to be accepted by God. We need to visit there daily.

The best view is not found at the top of some earthly monument, but at the foot of the cross, kneeling before the One Who died there, and submitting to His will for our lives.

--Beecher Hunter