

December 13, 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Light of the World

The news reported the death of four Christian children in Iraq for refusing to denounce their faith and convert to Islam. All four children responded by saying, "No we love Jesus, we have always loved Jesus." They were promptly beheaded by the Islamic militants.

John the Baptist is the prophet of Advent. It was the River Jordan in Bethany that he "came as a witness to testify to the light so that through him all men might believe" (John 1:7). He told his listeners that he was not the light. He came "to testify to the light" (John 1:8).

Jesus is the "real light which gives light to every man" (John 1:9). "Yet, the world did not recognize him" (John 1:10). The martyrdom of those four children in Iraq at the hands of Islamic terrorists also testifies to the light. The children's love and faith in Jesus was so strong that even the threat of death could not overcome the light.

Jesus on Trial

"In the other Gospels, we are told of one great trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin. In John's Gospel, Jesus appears to be on trial from the very beginning. "The Word of God has now been spoken to men, and throughout Jesus' ministry men will seek to put the truth of this Word on trial by seeking witnesses for it. Legal vocabulary like confession, interrogation, testimony, is found throughout John. In a climactic moment, Jesus brings forward a whole series of witnesses to the truth of God's Word: God Himself, the Scriptures, Moses, and John the Baptist. Thus it is fitting that even before Jesus appears, the Gospel opens with a trial and John the Baptist under investigation." (Raymond Brown, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 1, p. 45)

Always on Trial

That is what happened in Iraq. Jesus was on trial. Jesus had four witnesses. They testified to the light and were promptly murdered. All throughout the world the faith of Christians is challenged because Jesus is on trial. We need to be better witnesses of our faith and give testimony of our love before a hostile world.

December 13th, the Feast of St. Lucy

The glorious virgin and martyr St. Lucy, is one of the brightest ornaments of the church of Sicily. She was denounced as a Christian during the reign of Diocletian. After suffering cruel torment, St. Lucy finally died of her wounds in prison in A.D. 304. Her name means light. She testified to the true light.