

In the beginning was the Word...

An Advent & Christmas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



Truth

Wednesday 13th December 2023 (St Lucy)



St Lucy by Niccolò di Segna (c. 1340) (tempera and gold leaf on panel) Acquired by Henry Walters with the Massarenti Collection, 1902. The Walters Art Collection, Baltimore, MD.

Scripture: John 1:9–14

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

To reflect:

December 8th is the Feast Day of St Lucy. The tradition of St Lucy (originally from Sicily) is that she gave away her goods to the poor and the man she was betrothed to was angry and betrayed her to the authorities. This was in the early fourth century in the context of Roman authorities trying to re-establish worship of gods they approved of. Lucy was martyred in 304, her Latin name means light and her feast day falls in at the darkest time of the year. St Lucy is often depicted with a dagger (how she died) and a lamp – linking to Light. So St Lucy has become associated with the true Light of the world, the Light coming to redeem the world, to lighten the nations and let all behold Truth incarnate.

Today, you're invited to reflect on these ideas of light and truth, the truth sent from above as we seek the Light of the World, Jesus, this Advent. You may wish to reflect on the words of the suggested first two pieces of music.

To pray

St. Lucy, illuminate the darkness of these long nights
and help us to look forward in joy-filled hope
to the coming of the radiant morning star,
the sun of justice that never sets,
the true light of the world, Jesus Christ. Amen.

To listen

This is the Truth Sent from Above by Ralph Vaughan Williams, one version is by the Choir of New College, Oxford.

<https://open.spotify.com/track/1PqGjpOrdzk9uTij5VRABC?si=9dc62c8190fb4ea0>

Phos Hilarian (O Gracious Light) by Liturgical Folk

<https://open.spotify.com/track/6t3BHJpjkF3HT8YeOO47ch?si=0d28b0a267eb428c>

This is the setting of an ancient (late 2nd/early 3rd Century) Christian Hymn, it is sometimes known as the 'lamp lighting hymn'. One translation is:

*O Light gladsome of the holy glory of the Immortal Father,
the Heavenly, the Holy, the Blessed, O Jesus Christ,
having come upon the setting of the sun, having seen the light of the evening,
we praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: God.
Worthy it is at all times to praise Thee in joyful voices,
O Son of God, Giver of Life, for which the world glorifies Thee.*

Sankta Lucia (trad. Neapolitan) one version is by Stella Chamber Choir (on the Album Christmas in Sweden)

<https://open.spotify.com/track/68JHQul9BJoRgsQL24uQUQ?si=8bd919d06aa74178>

...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.