

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Meditations – Two Rows by the Sea

Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. – Matthew 10:28, 32, 33



In February 2015 the Islamic State (ISIL) murdered 20 Egyptian Coptic migrant workers in Libya and one refugee from Africa who it had captured in the preceding weeks. Just before February 15th the 21 men were taken to a beach and beheaded. The Copts could be heard praying to Jesus on the jihadi propaganda video that was made of their deaths. The African refugee was not a Christian, and so was given another chance to accept the invitation to Islam; he reportedly replied “Their God is my God”.

Christians in Egypt were outraged, and the Egyptian government responded with air strikes against ISIL positions in Libya. The [Bible Society of Egypt](#) responded in a different way: it published a tract with a poetic tribute to these 21 martyrs called **Two Rows by the Sea**. One and a half million copies were printed and distributed throughout Egypt. This tract also contains Biblical quotes for reflection and meditation. The English version of the tract may be found on the web site of the Bible Society of Egypt [here](#); if that site is unavailable a back up can be found [here](#). If you do print copies – or even if you do not – [please consider making a donation](#) to the Bible Society of Egypt.

Here is the poem:

Two Rows by the Sea

Two rows of men walked the shore of the sea
On a day when the world's tears would run free

One a row of assassins who thought they did right
The other of innocents, true sons of the light

One holding knives in hands held high
The other with hands empty, defenseless and tied

One row of slits to conceal glaring-dead eyes
The other with living eyes raised to the skies

One row stood steady, pall-bearers of death
The other knelt steady, welcoming heaven's breath

One now spewed wretched contemptible threats
The other spread God-given peace and rest

A Question...

Who fears the other?

The row in orange, watching paradise open?
Or the row in black, evil and broken?



Icon of the 21 Martyrs of Libya – courtesy Antoun “Tony” Rezk

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<http://todaysmartyrs.org/index.php/meditations/>

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