

Today's Martyrs – Sophie Scholl

...and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. - Matthew 10:18-20



Munich, Germany, February 22, 1943. Three young friends were hustled into a courtroom by the secret police. They had been arrested days before for circulating anti-Nazi leaflets. The room was packed with Nazis.

Two were young men, medical students and German Army medics. One, Christoph Probst, was married with three children. The other was Hans Scholl, a brilliant former Hitler Youth. The third was his sister Sophie, a dedicated nursing student who loved children, conversation, swimming, and music. They were not ideologues or revolutionaries. They were just friends who were revolted by German war crimes and inspired by German clergy and academics who shared their revulsion. They were Christians, or soon would be.

The trial began with examinations of the prisoners. The judge, Roland Freisler, belittled Christoph Probst and in turn Hans Scholl; he then called Sophie Scholl to the stand and berated her.

She stared back at Freisler, and spoke against the murder of the Jews, adding "Shall we be forever cast out from all humanity?" Freisler, who was one of the 15 men present at the January 1942 Wannsee Conference - where the German bureaucracy delineated the roles and responsibilities for the murder of millions - replied "A master race doesn't care". Sophie cast about for words:

Your master race really wants peace. It wants human dignity to be respected again. It wants God...compassion...empathy...

The angels must have sung, though no one heard.

Freisler, for once at a near loss for words, quickly shut down the examination. During the final statements Sophie did not plead for leniency. She prophesied that Freisler would "soon be standing where we stand now", though that would not come to be: he would die almost exactly two years later in an American air raid on his Berlin courtroom, before the end of the war could ensure his arrest.

The angels must have sung, though no one heard.

The three friends were found guilty and sentenced to death. They were hustled back to prison, where they were shocked by the revelation that they were to be denied the customary time for an appeal, per order of the highest authority in Berlin. The executions would be only hours away. They prayed and were visited by clergy.

Hans and Sophie met their parents. Her mother Magdalena said "Now I will never see my little girl come through our door again". Sophie answered "We will meet again soon. In eternity". A few minutes later a newly baptized Christoph Probst said nearly the same to the Scholl siblings.

The angels must have sung.

Sophie was brought before the prosecutor, who announced that 'justice' was to take its course. She calmly stared him down with an odd small smile on her lips and a look in her eyes that might have been a knowing pity. The black curtain parted behind her, she was lain on the table, the blade fell.

The angels sang, and she must have heard, and then her brother, and then their friend Christoph.

Why do we live?

Simply, we live to live. To seize the day. To spend each moment in mindfulness of the others around us and of our inner souls. To do what God would want done, in the ordinary and the extraordinary. To enjoy creation. To endure suffering. To love. To follow Jesus Christ.

To inspire songs for all eternity.

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For more information please visit our web site at: <https://todaysmartyrs.org/>

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