

Today is the Memorial of St. Lucy, a virgin martyr from the early fourth century. Like most early martyrs, what we know is that she is from the island of Sicily and was martyred in the year 304 AD. By the middle ages many pious and romantic legends arose.

She is purported to have given her dowry to the poor, angering her pagan fiancé who then turned her over to the authorities for torture and execution.

Her name, Lucy or Lucia, is from the Latin word meaning “light,” and most likely because of this she is the patroness of blind people and those with eye diseases. In fact, my Catholic ophthalmologist has a small statue of St. Lucy.

One of the pious legends is that part of her torture was to have her eyes removed. Another legend is that her eyes miraculously grew back. Still, a third pious legend is that she took out her own eyes to make herself less attractive.

Statues of St. Lucy show her holding a tray with two eyeballs resting on the tray.

She is revered throughout Europe, especially in her native Sicily, as well as eastern Europe, and Sweden.

If you’ve ever seen a photograph of what looks like a young girl wearing an advent wreath with white candles on her head ... that’s one of the traditional celebrations of this day.

A Swedish tradition is to bake *Pepparkakor* - which are spice cookies - on this day. As a treat, I baked some this morning ... with the appropriate adjustments for my dietary needs. After Mass, if you like, you can have one - gluten-free, grain-free, and sugar-free; with only 4g of carbohydrates. I can’t guarantee how they taste, but they do smell good.

Nonetheless, as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us ask St. Lucy for her intercession to open the eyes of our hearts to the beauty of God’s grace in the world. May we be enlightened by Jesus Christ ... the Light of the World ... today, and always.