



**April 12**

**Servant of God Theodoric Loet**

**Good day, good people! May the Lord give you peace.**

Our company today brings us into the turmoil of the Protestant Reformation. During this combative period of history the mentality of "us vs them" reared a most ugly face. Both Catholic and Protestants referred to each other as heretics, meaning those who no longer shared the expected understanding of the Christian religion. Large territories of Europe were carved up as people divided up over which religion was more true to an understanding of the bible. People saw one another in extremes, believers and nonbelievers, good and bad, orthodox and heretic, victims and offenders, and the worst of it, those who should live and those who should die. The vitriol and hate could not be more intense.

Theodoric Loet has the title, martyr. He was dragged into the heat of this conflict when a mob decided he was no longer part of "them." The horrendous tortures to which he was subjected are too heinous to describe or list. For his story, it would be gruesome to describe the tortuous incidents. Both the warring factions of Catholic and Protestants had completely dehumanized the people they once considered their brother and sister bound together in faith.

How is it that Theodoric did not lose hope? What gave him the strength and courage to face his persecutors in silence? Why did he not try to defend himself the slanderous accusations of his compatriots? The only credible answer is that martyrs possess a God given ability to cling tenaciously to hope no matter what the ordeal. Hope is a conviction that God will ultimately win. Hope the belief that the "universe is bent towards Justice." Hope lifts us up when everything and everyone seems to weigh us down. Hope reminds us that even at the hour of our death when our eyes close, they immediately open to find ourselves in the arms of God. No wonder the Christian symbol for hope is an anchor!

Let us pray.

Lord, I believe in the sun even when it is not shining;

I believe in love even when I cannot feel it;

I believe in God even when God is silent. Amen.

— An inscription on the wall of a cellar in Cologne where a number of Jews hid themselves for the entire duration of the war.