

“Those who die for the faith attain heaven.”

St Andrew Dung-Lac: Feast, 24th November

Opening Prayer

O God,

you kept the Martyrs Saint Andrew Dũng-Lạc and his companions faithful to the Cross of your Son, even to the shedding of their blood.

May we be your children in name and in truth through spreading your love among our brothers and sisters.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Scripture Reflections 1 Peter 3:14-17

If you have to suffer for being good, you will count it a blessing. There is no need to be afraid or to worry about persecutors. Simply reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Matthew 10:17-20

Jesus said to his apostles:

'Beware of men: they will hand you over to sanhedrins and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake to bear witness before them and the pagans. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how to speak or what to say; what you are to say will be given to you when the time comes; because it is not you who will be speaking; the Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you.

- Is there a word or phrase that stands out or remains with you after reading these passages?

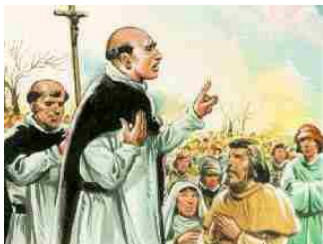
Biography

Historical Context

- C16th, beginning of evangelisation in Vietnam
- 1659: establishment of 2 Vicariates Apostolic
- Current day: c. 6 million Catholics, 10% of population
- C17th, 18th & 19th: (1625 to 1886) 53 decrees of persecution of Christians, resulting in deaths of 130,000 Christians – missionary clergy, local clergy, lay people – bearing witness to the truth of the Gospel. Over the centuries the names of most of them have been lost, but their memory is still alive in the Catholic community.
- Since the beginning of the 20th century 117 of these heroes (those whose sufferings were cruellest and best documented) were beatified, in four groups. They were all canonized together by Pope John Paul II on 19 June 1988.

Biography

- Born, Dung An Trân, about 1795 in a poor and pagan family in Bac-Ninh in North Vietnam.
- Move to Hanoi at the age of 12
- Met a catechist: food, shelter, education in the Christian faith for 3 years
- Baptized in Vinh-Tri with the Christian name Andrew (Andrew Dung).



- Learnt Chinese and Latin, he became a catechist, taught catechism in the country.
- Studied theology,
- Ordained a priest, March 15, 1823.
- Parish priest in Ke-Dâm: Tirelessly preached, often fasted and lived a simple and moral life - a good example for the people, and many were baptized.

- 1835: imprisoned under emperor Minh-Mang's persecutions (Vietnam's emperor Nero).
- Freedom was purchased by donations from members of the congregation he served.
- Changed his name to Lac (Andrew Lac) and moved to another prefecture to continue his work.
- November 10, 1839 : arrested again, this time with Peter Thi, another Vietnamese priest whom he was visiting so that he might go to confession.
- Once again Andrew was liberated, along with Peter Thi, in exchange for money. Their freedom was brief. They were soon re-arrested and taken to Hanoi, where both suffered dreadful torture. Finally they both were beheaded December 21, 1839.
- Beatified in November 24th 1900 by Pope Leo XIII
- Canonized by Pope John Paul II on June 19, 1988.



Andrew Dung-Lac to right



Canonisation illustration, Rome

Significance for Catechists

For reflection: What does the life of St Andrew say to us as catechists?
What can we learn from him?

'Take Away' : Going Deeper

- Short biographical YouTube video clip: <https://youtu.be/HdxUYCdeR0M>
- Look on YouTube for short biographical clips and homilies from various feast day Masses
- Live-streamed Masses on YouTube, 24th November, 2021-
<https://youtu.be/jyajfVriegk>, St John XXIII, Wisconsin

- <https://youtu.be/OPkI4aujims> Holy Spirit Church, San Jose, California,
- A letter of Saint Paul Le-Bao-Tinh to the seminary of Ke Vinh in 1843. "I am not alone: Christ is with me" (*Office of Readings for 24th November; universalis.com*)

Closing Prayer

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God

Lord, teach me how to live a gospel life:
help me always to stand up for the truth,
and never to condone a lie by my inaction.
May I learn to suffer gladly for bearing your name,
so that the world may know that you have sent me,
and that your word is true. Amen.

*David Konstant, 'Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life',
prayer at end of the reflection on the Beatitude*

Acknowledgements

Illustration of St Andrew: from 'Saints of Catechesis' exhibition, II International Catechetical Congress, September 2018, Rome.

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Biographical notes based on information from : [Catholic Culture](#), [Vietnamese Martyrs](#), universalis.com

'Jesus Christ: The Way, The Truth and the Life', David Konstant, Collins, 1981

Illustrations:

St Andrew preaching: '[Saint of the Day](#)' on Catholic Ireland

Emperor Ming Mang [wikicommons](#)

Andrew Dung Lac and Canonisation in Rome as appears on University of Notre Dame's website, '[Pray with Today's Saint](#)'