

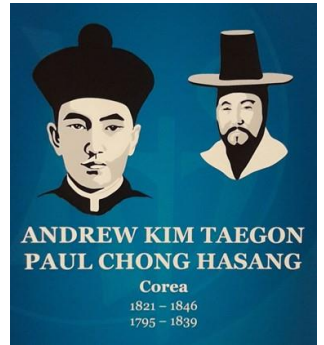


Diocese of Westminster

AGENCY FOR EVANGELISATION
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

‘Learn From Me’

Reflecting on the Lives of Saints
and Blesseds of Catechesis



“I pray that you walk in faith”

Sts Andrew Kim Taegon & Paul Chong Hasang

Feast: 16th September (Roman Martyrology)

celebrated 20th September

“model of faith and evangelisation” (Pope Francis, August 2021)

Opening Prayer

O God, who have been pleased to increase your adopted children in all the world, and who made the blood of the Martyrs Saint Andrew Kim Tae-gön and his companions a most fruitful seed of Christians, grant that we may be defended by their help and profit always from their example. 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.

(Collect, Mass of the Day)



Scripture Reflection: Luke 8:16-18

Jesus said to the crowds:

‘No one lights a lamp to cover it with a bowl or to put it under a bed. No, he puts it on a lamp-stand so that people may see the light when they come in. For nothing is hidden but it will be made clear, nothing secret but it will be known and brought to light. So take care how you hear; for anyone who has will be given

more; from anyone who has not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away.'

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

Historical Background: The Church in Korea

- For centuries, Korea was closed to all outside influences, and all contact with foreigners was forbidden.
- No missionaries went there. Nevertheless, a number of laymen sought to find out all that they could about the outside world, through the annual embassy to Peking. Some books about Christianity fell into their hands, and they were converted. Because of the secrecy involved, it is impossible to date the origin of Christianity in Korea with any precision
- Christianity possibly began in early 17th Century
- 'Founded' by lay people through obtaining Christian literature in China
- First known baptism, 1784, of Ni-Seoung-Houn (Peter), Beijing
- 1791: first martyrs, Paul Youn and James Kouen, who refused to offer sacrifice on the death of their relatives.
- For most of this period the church in Korea had no priests and was an entirely lay phenomenon
- 1794: first priest to visit Korea from China, community of 4000 founded
- 1801: same priest executed, followed by 2 other priests from China
- 1836: Establishment of Prefecture Apostolic of Korea by Leo XII; and a new missionary phase began French missionary priest sent from the Paris Foreign Mission Society, beheaded in 1839. Many others followed.
- 1845: Andrew Kim Taegon, secretly trained in Macao, entered Korea, executed in 1846, together with the lay apostle Paul Chong Hasang and many others
- 1866: further persecution

"The Korean Church is unique because it was founded entirely by laypeople. This fledgling Church, so young and yet so strong in faith, withstood wave after wave of fierce persecution. Thus, in less than a century, it could boast of 10,000 martyrs. The death of these many martyrs became the leaven of the Church and led to today's splendid flowering of the Church in Korea. Even today their undying spirit sustains the Christians of the Church of Silence in the north of this tragically divided land."

Pope John Paul II at the canonization of the Korean Martyrs, May 6, 1984.

Biography

Born: 21 August 1821, Solmoi, Chungcheong-do, South Korea

Died: tortured and beheaded on 16 September 1846 at Saenamteo, Seoul, Korea

Venerated: 9 May 1925 by Pope Pius XI (decree of martyrdom)

Beatified: 5 July 1925 by Pope Pius XI

Canonized: 6 May 1984 by Pope John Paul II



Family

Born of *yangban*¹, Kim's parents were converts. Father was subsequently martyred for practising Christianity, a prohibited activity in heavily Confucian Korea.

Study

Baptized at age 15, Kim studied at a seminary in the Portuguese colony of Macau. He also spent time in study at Lolomboy, Bocaue, Bulacan, Philippines, where today he is also venerated.

Priesthood and Mission

Ordained a deacon in 1844 in China.

January, 1845: Travel into Korea and meeting catechists. Sick for about a month

Recovered, led the French missionaries by sea, and left Chemulpo for Shanghai in a small wooden boat.

Ordained a priest in Shanghai by the French bishop Jean-Joseph-Jean-Baptiste Ferréol. He then returned to Korea to preach and evangelize, going to his hometown

Arrested on the island on June 5th, 1846 and was sent to the central prison in Seoul. The King and some of his ministers did not want to execute him because of his great personality and his immense knowledge of western studies and foreign languages. However he was sentenced to be beheaded on Sept 15th 1846 as a ringleader of a heretical school and as a betrayer of his country.

Letter from Prison

Dear brethren!... Meditate on the fact that from eternity God created all things in heaven and earth and let men, whom He made in His own image, be in charge of the world.

"There are many miserable and sad things in the world. If we were born once in this difficult and miserable world and didn't know the Master, who had created us, our lives wouldn't be worth living but would be useless. ... My friends! Keep in mind that Our Lord Jesus has come to this world, suffered countless torments, and founded and fostered His Church through pain and suffering. Since the Catholic Church was introduced into Korea 50 or 60 years ago, our people have suffered many severe persecutions and many Catholics, including myself, have been put in prison. How agonizing it is for us to suffer as one body and how humanly sad it is for us to part! However as the Holy Bible says that Our Lord even

¹ highly educated civil servants and military officers—aristocrats, 'Scholarly officials'.. They were largely government administrators and bureaucrats who oversaw medieval and early modern Korea's traditional agrarian bureaucracy until the end of the dynasty in 1897. In a broader sense, an office holder's family and descendants, as well as country families who claimed such descent, were socially accepted as *yangban*.

takes care of the hair on our heads, aren't these persecutions according to His providence?

In this difficult time, to be victorious, we must be steadfast using all of our strength and capabilities like brave soldiers fully armed in the battlefield. After we die, please, take care of the bereaved families. ... We will soon go out to the battlefield. Be steadfast, and let us meet in Heaven. ... God will soon send you a much better pastor than I. So do not grieve but practice greater charity and serve the Lord so that we may meet again in God's eternal mansion"

Persecution

During the Joseon Dynasty, Christianity was suppressed and many Christians were persecuted and executed. Catholics had to practise their faith covertly. Kim was one of several thousand Christians who were executed during this time. In 1846, at the age of 25, he was tortured and beheaded near Seoul on the Han River. His last words were:

This is my last hour of life, listen to me attentively: if I have held communication with foreigners, it has been for my religion and my God. It is for Him that I die. My immortal life is on the point of beginning. Become Christians if you wish to be happy after death, because God has eternal chastisements in store for those who have refused to know Him.

Saint Paul Chong Hasang



Second son of Chung, Yak Jong, a martyr who was killed during the Shin-Yu Persecution (1801).

From 1816, crossed the China borders nine times, in his mission for the Beijing Bishop to send priests to Korea.

Many attempts failed, he directly pleaded the case to Pope Gregory X.

September 9th, 1831, the Pope proclaimed the legitimacy of the Korean Catholic Diocese to the World.

Main achievements:

- Leader of the early Korean Catholic Church during persecution
- Contributed greatly to the development of the Korean Catholic Church.
- Earmarked to be a seminary student of Bishop Imbert to become a priest.
- Wrote the *Sang-Je-Sang-Su* declaring the position of the Korean Catholic Church:
 - Catholic faith is good for the nation, not a threat
 - well written Catholic doctrine explaining why the Korean government should not persecute Catholics.
- Martyrdom at the age of 45 in 1839, became the testimony of his faith, became the pinnacle of the Korean Catholic faith.

For reflection:

We marvel at the fact that the Korean Church was strictly a lay Church for a dozen years after its birth. How did the people survive without the Eucharist? It is no belittling of this and other sacraments to realize that there must be a living faith before there can be a truly beneficial celebration of the Eucharist. The sacraments are signs of God's initiative and response to faith already present. The sacraments increase grace and faith, but only if there is something ready to be increased.

Taken from franciscanmedia.org, Saint of the Day

What does this say to us today as initiation/sacramental preparation catechists ?

Closing Prayer

Loving Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the blessings you are bestowing upon the Catholic Church in Korea, a church begun without the help of missionaries.

Help us to imitate the spirit of the martyrs and strive with renewed enthusiasm for the faith so that the Gospel permeate our lives, as well as the life of the Church and of the society.

Gather us into a community of the culture of life, of charity and of peace, accompanying our poor neighbours, who suffer and are neglected, and sharing the light of faith.

Bring about peace on the Korean peninsula through reconciliation and unity of the people by the power of the Gospel message.

Thus, may we dedicate ourselves to the evangelization of Asia and let your light and glory shine forth on all the world.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mary, Immaculately Conceived, and St Joseph, who are patrons of the Church in Korea, Pray for us.

All the martyr saints of Korea, Pray for us.

Prayer in preparation for Pope Francis' visit, 2014

'Take Away' : Going Deeper

Pope's message 2021: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-08/pope-francis-message-korea-andrew-kim-first-priest-birth.html>

Korean Martyrs Videos https://youtu.be/fA_siAoOHXI

<https://youtu.be/G0vfXECspek> (Spanish)

Papal Visit 2014 - <https://youtu.be/xQsCiIKZwB8>

Martyrs of Korea - <https://catholicsaints.info/martyrs-of-korea/>

Catholic Bishops Conference of Korea

<https://cbck.or.kr/en/CatholicChurchInKorea/103-Korean-Martyr-Saints/1>

Homily at canonisation Mass:

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19840506_martiri-coreani.html

Vatican exhibition <https://youtu.be/80nuV6RwZww>

Catholic Church in Korea <https://youtu.be/DJ9WDzp1DD0>

- <https://youtu.be/5Ds18nZ1e2E>

Biographical Video : <https://youtu.be/G0vfXECspek> (in Spanish; can be auto-translated)

Acknowledgements

Biographical notes:

<https://catholicsaints.info/> ; <https://catholic.org/saints>

Images used:

St Andrew Kim, Public domain, Philip K on Flickr

St Paul Hasang, Wikipedia

Canonisation Artwork, 1984



Was it not necessary that the Messiah should
suffer these things and enter into his glory?
Luke 24:26



St Pope John Paul on the occasion
of the Canonisation
of the Korean Martyrs (1984)

"The death of the martyrs is similar to the death of Christ on the Cross
because like His, theirs has become the beginning of new life.
This new life was manifested not only in themselves - in those who
underwent death for Christ - but it was also extended to others.
It became the leaven of the Church as the living community of disciples
and witnesses to Jesus Christ. "The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians":
this phrase from the first centuries of Christianity is confirmed before our eyes."