

Blessed Andrew of Phu Yen - Protomartyr of Vietnam



Andrew, from Phu Yen (1624–1644), became a martyr for his faith.

Born to a poor mother in the province of Phu Yen, he went on to study with the Jesuits and was baptized when he was sixteen years old. He became a catechist and evangelized with zeal, filled with the love of God and wanting salvation for everyone. In 1644, he was captured by soldiers in the name of the king, who wanted to rid the kingdom of Christianity.

On July 26, 1644, he was decapitated as he cried out, "Jesus!" An inspiration to Vietnamese catechists, he was beatified in Rome by John Paul II on March 5, 2000. "If anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in Heaven" (Mt. 10:32). Andrew of Phu Yen in Viet Nam made these words of the Lord his own with heroic intensity. From the day he received Baptism at the age of sixteen, he strove to develop a deep spiritual life. Amid the difficulties to which all who adhered to the Christian faith were subjected, he lived as a faithful witness to the risen Christ and tirelessly proclaimed the Gospel in the 'Maison Dieu' association of catechists. For love of the Lord he spent all his energy in serving the Church and assisting priests in their mission. He persevered to the point of bloodshed in order to remain faithful to the love of the One to whom he had totally given himself.

In Blessed Andrew's beatification homily, Pope John Paul II preached "The words he repeated as he advanced on the path of martyrdom are the expression of what motivated his whole life: 'Let us return love for love to our God, let us return life for life.'

Today, July 26th, the date of his martyrdom, is Blessed Andrew of Phu Yen's feast day.

Fr. Thomas Rosica, C.S.B.

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C.E.O., Salt and Light Catholic Television Network, Canada