



Most Rev Anthony Randazzo
Bishop of Broken Bay

Message for BBNeighbourhoods
24 November 2020

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Today, in our liturgical calendar, we remember St. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions. In 1988, Pope John Paul II canonised 117 martyrs who had died for the faith at various times in Vietnam. It is a rather remarkable group of the faithful. Of the 117 people, 96 were Vietnamese, 11 were Spaniards, and 10 were French. Apart from the variety of nationalities, this group of martyrs comprised eight bishops, 50 priests, and 59 of Christ's lay faithful. There was also one seminarian.

I am constantly reminded by this commemoration that testimony to the faith is part and parcel to the Christian vocation. The ultimate testimony is to shed one's blood. In John's Gospel, Jesus lays out the pattern for discipleship, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." (John 15:12-14) Saint Andrew Dung-Lac and the Vietnamese martyrs are a marvellous example of putting the words of Jesus into action.

Throughout our community of the Church, there are many Catholics, from Vietnam, and from other nations around the world where the freedom of Religion is under threat. Many individuals and families have suffered and have living memory of those sufferings, and yet they continue to make a vital contribution to the mission of the Church in our local community. Suffering is always a challenge, and yet these martyrs encourage us not to be engulfed by the burden of pain or hopelessness. Their example of faith is the encouragement that I believe we need in uncertain times.

This week, I would like to offer a word of gratitude to the many people in our community of the Church, who, despite their suffering offer us encouragement and hope. Martyrdom can be lived in so many ways, through many little deaths in life. Ultimately our faith helps make sense of them, and with a sense of hope in Jesus, each one of us can be inspired to offer our lives in testimony to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We take inspiration from Saint Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions, my brothers and sisters, so that we may never lose hope.

Blessings on your week,

+Anthony