MORNING MEDITATION

Tuesday, Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

When you do the good thing, the right thing and the wise thing, you find peace and serenity. Do it again and again.

Revelation 14:14-19

John had his vision of the Parousia. In this vision, he saw one like the Son of Man reaping a fully ripe and rich harvest and the angel reaping those destined to be judged. Several symbols are used in this excerpt to describe the Parousia as God's judgment over the whole land rather than a few chosen people. Be confident and be faithful! God will gather in the good and faithful.

Psalm 96

Say among the nations: The Lord is king.
He has made the world firm, not to be moved;
He governs the peoples with equity.

Luke 21:5-11

Jesus had just pointed to a widow and her simple offering as an example and inspiration for all. The widow's simple gift involved great sacrifice. She gave out of her want and not from the surplus. Even as they listened to the call for simplicity, generosity and sacrifice, they could think only about the glory of the temple adorned with expensive stones and ornaments. The pillars of the porches in the temple were made of single blocks of white marble, forty feet high. The most famous among the ornaments was the great vine made of solid gold.

Their comment on the splendor of the temple moved Jesus to prophecy. He told them that these stones and ornaments would not endure. They would all be pulled down and destroyed. To the Jews it was unthinkable that the glory of the temple would be shattered to dust. Jesus called his listeners to be watchful and learn to read the signs of the time.

Do not seek glory in things that do not last. Seek glory in the enduring and the lasting that are of God and from God!

Be alert! Stay awake! Be watchful! Read the sign of the times! Prayerfully listen and discern what God is saying to you now!

Saint of the Day, November 24 - St. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions and 146 other saints are remembered this day.

Anddrew was born Trần An Dũng in 1795 in Vietnam, taking the name Andrew at his baptism (Anrê Dũng) and was ordained a priest on March 15, 1823. During persecution, Andrew Dũng changed his name to Lạc to avoid capture, and thus he is memorialized as Andrew Dũng-Lạc (Anrê Dũng Lạc).

Andrew Dung-Lac was one of 117 people martyred in Vietnam between 1820 and 1862. Members of the companions group gave their lives for Christ in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, and received beatification during four different occasions between 1900 and 1951. All were canonized during the papacy of Saint John Paul II.

Christianity came to Vietnam through the Portuguese. Jesuits opened the first permanent mission at Da Nang in 1615. They ministered to Japanese Catholics who had been driven from Japan. Severe persecutions were launched at least three times in the 19th century. During the six decades after 1820, between 100,000 and 300,000 Catholics were killed or subjected to great hardship. Foreign missionaries martyred in the first wave included priests of the Paris Mission Society, and Spanish Dominican priests and tertiaries.

In 1832, Emperor Minh-Mang banned all foreign missionaries, and tried to make all Vietnamese deny their faith by trampling on a crucifix. Like the priest-holes in Ireland during English persecution, many hiding places were offered in homes of the faithful. Persecution broke out again in 1847, when the emperor suspected foreign missionaries and Vietnamese Christians of sympathizing with a rebellion led by of one of his sons. The last of the martyrs were 17 laypersons, one of them a 9-year-old, executed in 1862. That year a treaty with France guaranteed religious freedom to Catholics, but it did not stop all persecution.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs