

### **Reflection Thursday Week 34 Sy Andrew Dũng-Lạc & the Vietnamese martyrs 2022**

The evangelization of Vietnam began in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by setting up two Apostolic Vicariates in 1659. There are now about 6 million Catholics in Vietnam, 10% of the population. At the beginning, the Faith was watered by the blood of the martyrs of Vietnam – missionary clergy, local clergy and lay Christians. They all shared in the apostolic work and faced death in witness to the Gospel. During the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries 53 decrees, signed by lords and emperors of the country, from 1625 to 1886, launched one persecution of Christians after another, each one more savage than the last. Overall, about 130,000 Christians were killed in these persecutions. The names of most of them have been lost, but their memory lives on in the Catholic community. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century 117 of them were beatified, in four groups and canonized by Pope John Paul II on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1988.

In remembering the martyrs of Vietnam, we are reminded that Christianity in England was also founded on the blood of martyrs. Being indebted to them, we are obliged, hopefully willingly, to live our life of faith with the generosity of spirit and purpose the martyrs have shown us; to show our gratitude and that their sacrifice was worthwhile. They also remind us of Jesus' promise to walk with us through thick and thin. Jesus walks always by our side, a sign of reassurance and hope in the future. The example and commitment of the martyrs also reminds us that the Church of the future depends on the faithfulness with which we live the Gospel today. That we may be true, committed and purposeful in our faith we ask the Vietnamese martyrs to pray for us.