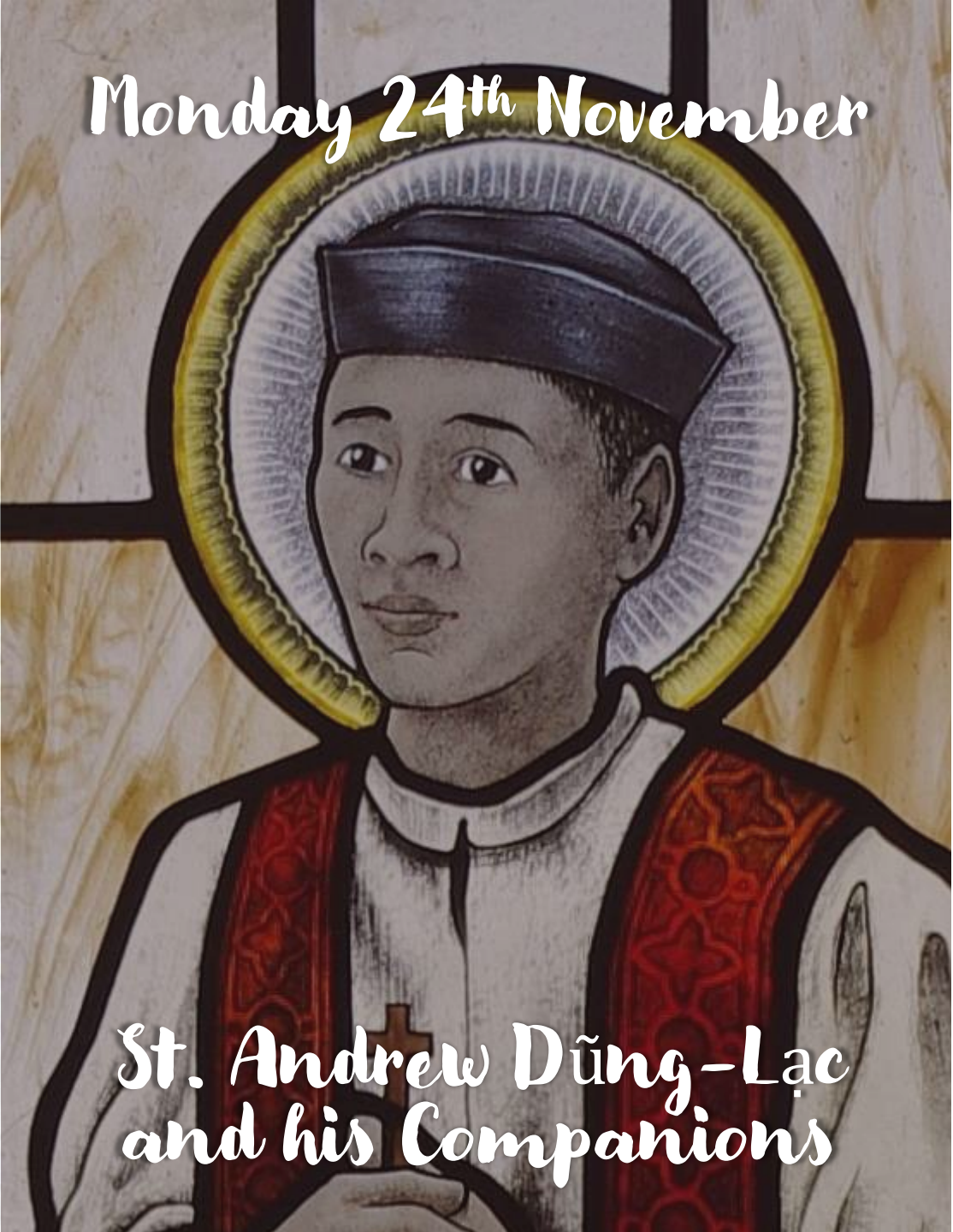


Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 24TH NOVEMBER



Monday 24th November

Andrew Dung-Lac, a Catholic convert ordained to the priesthood, 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. Let us continue to pray for people across the world who continue to be persecuted for their religious beliefs.

Our Father...

St. Andrew Dũng-Lạc
and his Companions

Tuesday 25th November



St. Catherine of Alexandria

The young saint was born around 287 in Alexandria, Egypt. At that time, Alexandria was one of the finest cities in the world, and a centre of learning and culture as well as faith.

Christian tradition states she was of noble birth, possibly a princess. As a member of the nobility, she was also educated and was an avid scholar. Around the age of fourteen, she experienced a moving vision of Mary and the infant Jesus, and she decided to become a Christian. She was very intelligent and gifted. When the emperor Maxentius began persecuting Christians, Catherine visited him to denounce his cruelty.

Rather than order her execution, Maxentius summoned fifty orators and philosophers to debate her. However, Catherine was moved by the power of the Holy Spirit and spoke eloquently in defence of her faith. Her words were so moving that several converted to Christianity and were immediately executed. Unable to defeat her rhetorically or to intimidate her into giving up her belief, the emperor ordered her to be tortured and imprisoned.

Prayer to St. Catherine

Gracious and loving God, we give you thanks for the tradition and example of Saint Catherine of Alexandria.

Give us grace to pursue her love of purity, to strive for her strength and courage, to adhere to her abhorrence of the world's temptations and sinful desires, and to follow her faithfulness. Empower us to break the wheel of worldly suffering and allow your wisdom to radiate through our lives, so that your glory may shine ever more brightly. Bring those who seek your presence to share in the ministry and worship of this parish, and help us to welcome those who come in your name.

All this we pray through Jesus Christ, our servant leader, who is one with you and the Holy Spirit.

Amen



Unlike other popes who served the Church during its early days, historians know some facts about the early years of Siricius. He was born and raised in Rome to an unknown mother and a father named Tiburtius. Feeling compelled to work for the Church, he joined at a young age. During the papacy of Pope Liberius that lasted from 352 to 366, Siricius began working his way through the hierarchy. He first served as a lector and later became a deacon. When Damasus became pope in 366, Ursinus and a group of his followers claimed that he was the rightful heir to the papal throne. Following the death of the pope, he believed that he was next in line but was surprised when bishops unanimously selected Siricius as the next pope.

Ursinus fought the ruling for more than a year but only served as an antipope. Jerome was a man living in Rome at the same time who believed that he would become the next pope. Though he and Siricius were close friends, Jerome denounced him after his election and fled the city after telling him that they could no longer be friends. During his time as the pope, Siricius looked for ways to honor Pope Saint Paul. He eventually settled on building a new church and placing it directly over his tomb. He arrived in person to dedicate the building and added his name to one of the pillars.

Though historians do not know his cause of death, many believe it was a combination of old age and natural causes as he was likely in his mid-60s. The Church then had him buried in the Basilica of St. Peter.

Though a fire in 1823 did serious damage to the structure, visitors can still see his name on a pillar.

Eternal Rest...



Thursday 27th November
St Laverius

Son of Achille, Laverius was raised in a pagan family. He served as a soldier in the imperial Roman army. Laverius was a convert to Christianity and he began preaching in the streets of Teggiano, Italy. By order of the prefect Agrippa, Laverius was arrested, tortured, put on display for public abuse and ridicule, and ordered to make sacrifice to pagan gods; he refused. He was then thrown to wild animals in the amphitheatre, but instead of attacking him, they knelt in front of him. Laverius was thrown back into this cell, but an angel freed him during the night and ordered him to travel to Grumentum (modern Grumento Nova, Italy). He arrived on 15 August 312 and began immediately to preach and to baptize converts. Agrippa sent soldiers after him. Laverius was captured, flogged, and when he would not stop preaching Christ even while being beaten, he was executed. Martyr.

Eternal Rest...

Friday 28th November St Catherine Labouré



St. Catherine Labouré was born on May 2, 1806, in a quaint village in Burgundy, France. She was the ninth of eleven children. At the age of nine, her mother died, and in her sorrow, St. Catherine turned to the only other mother she knew. Standing on her tiptoes to see the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in her home, St. Catherine tearfully said, "Now, dear Blessed Mother, you will be my mother."

At the age of 23, she joined the Daughters of Charity, a religious order of Sisters that St. Vincent de Paul founded. It was here that our Blessed Mother appeared to St. Catherine in 1830 and told her to have the Miraculous Medal made. During the next 46 years, St. Catherine was aware of the countless miracles God was working through the Medal, yet she chose to remain anonymous. After his much-publicized conversion to Catholicism—which was sparked by the Miraculous Medal—Alphonse Ratisbonne asked if he could meet the Sister who had seen our Blessed Mother. Nobody knew which sister it was. That was the way St. Catherine preferred it. She wanted nothing more than to humbly perform her daily duties and devote herself to the care of the sick and elderly (due to the great care she gave them, she is called the patroness of seniors).

Right before her death, St. Catherine told her superior that she was the Sister of the Miraculous Medal; up until that point, the only person she spoke to about the apparitions was her confessor. On December 31, 1876, St. Catherine left this earth for heaven, and after her passing, her superior broke the silence about the Sister who had seen and touched the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Her body was exhumed 57 years later. Miraculously, it was in perfect condition. Even death respected the Sister whose hands rested on the knees of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was declared a saint because of the heroic virtues she lived while doing her commonplace duties. A "Saint of Ordinary People," St. Catherine holds the secret of sanctity for us all. St. Catherine was canonized by Pope Pius XII on July 27, 1947.

Eternal Rest...