September 20th: Memorial of Saints Andrew Kim Tae-gŏn, Priest, and Paul Chŏng Ha-sang, and Companions, Martyrs

Gospel text (*Lk* 9:23-26): Jesus said to all, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."

Saints Andrew Kim Tae-g?n, Priest, and Paul Ch?ng Ha-sang, and Companions, Martyrs (XIX century)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Saint John Paul II)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, more than two centuries ago, the Church was born in Korea. The first Korean who became a Christian, Yi Sunghun, dates from 1784. Thus, a faithful layman began the first Korean Christian community. The Christian faith grew as a result of a reflection on the traditional Confucianism in Korea, and was shaped through contact with the Church that already existed in China and, particularly, in Beijing. However, the first Korean Christians encountered resistance from traditional religiosity, which became the cause of the martyrdom of many of them.

The persecutions began soon and lasted over a hundred years in different places and with varying intensity, (particularly bloody in 1801, 1839, 1846 and 1866). It is estimated that there were around 10,000 martyrs, of which the martyrdom of one hundred and three people is known and documented, which have been inscribed at the same time in the catalog of saints. At the top of the list is Andrew Kim Taegon, the first Korean priest, then Paul Chong, then the others come, qualified with the common denomination of "companions", all of them - priests and laics - with name and surname.

- "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church": the Church in Korea is currently one of the most fertile regions in terms of vocations to Christianity (100,000 conversions per year).