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. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

"Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it"

Fr. Salomon BADATANA Mccj
(Wau, South Sudan)

Today, we hear Jesus telling the people: "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk 9:23). And these are the very words of our Lord Jesus Christ who did not hesitate to tell us what it entails to be a Christian. Nevertheless, we Christians never seem to understand his words. Thus, we often hear people complaining about how things are hard in their life. And one of the common complaints is "if the Lord is with me why then am I suffering this way?"

Being Christian, we often think that everything is supposed to move smoothly for us because our God is the all-powerful God. All this is because we are used to hearing preachers who preach to us the Gospel of prosperity. During the Angelus Address of September 13, 2015, Pope Francis said: "To undertake the discipleship of Jesus means to take your cross —we all have it— to accompany Him on His path, an uncomfortable path that is not of success or of passing glory, but that which takes us to the true freedom, freedom from selfishness and from sin."

Thus, today, Jesus invites us once more to purify our motivations as we choose to follow him. Never did he promise us that it shall be too well for us if we choose Him. We ought to be ready to take up our daily cross and follow him even if it means to lose our life; "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Lk 9,24). This is the ultimate witnessing St. Andrew Kim Taegon, St. Paul Chong, and companions, whose memorial we celebrate today, have borne for Christ so as to share in his eternal banquet.