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| **Prayer service in honour of Brother Joche Albert Ly** |
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Many were led to ‘re-education’ centres after 1949.  **Choose a hymn of praise to God**  **A. Life of Brother Joche Albert Ly**  He was born on 8 February 1910 from a Christian family. At his baptism he was given the name of Andrew. He entered our juniorate of Beijing in 1921. He made his first vows in 1931 and his perpetual profession in 1935. From 1940 to 1944, he studied at the Catholic University of Fu Jen. He excelled in Chinese literature but he liked to teach Science. During his free times, he studied French and English till he mastered both languages.  He was teaching at Che Foo when the red army conquered the city. He was forced to spend several months studying Marxism at the improvised university of Lai Yang.  From the end of 1946, a long odyssey began for our Brother. In March 1946, he was expelled from our Che Foo College. He fled to Tsing-tao, then moved south to Shanghai where he taught till the middle of 1947. From there he moved to Shang-tung (The Chinese Tibet) to open the Ming Teh Secondary School at Tsing-tao. But in February 1949, he returned to Shanghai, then travelled to Chung-king, and moved again to Si-chang, where he was assigned as the superior.  The red army entered the city in 1950. Brother Joche tried to help his school to survive but he was sent to prison. Not seeing the sense of the little white host, the local communists allowed a priest to bring him communion. Brother had told the Christian community that he would be specially united to them during the morning angelus.  On 21 April, as a bell was ringing for the morning angelus, he was shot with twenty-four other Christians. A large crowd attended the execution and an official photographer took the picture of each martyr.  **After a moment of silence… prayer of thanksgiving**  **Chorus :** All the earth proclaim the Lord. Sing your praise to God  1. Lord, we give you thanks for your Church made up of people of all languages and of all cultures. We give you special thanks for all the faithful who serve and glorify you in the great nation of China. Chorus  2. Lord, we give you thanks for all those who announced your Son to the youth of the world, for all those who did so with enthusiasm and perseverance. Chorus  3. Lord, we give you thanks for every time human fraternity blossomed in  detention camps, in prisons or in force labour camps. Chorus  4. Lord, we give you thanks for those who befriend the unlucky ones, the sick, the drug addicts and the poor. Chorus  5. Lord, we give you thanks for helping us to live as Brothers, to understand each other and to forgive each other. Chorus  **B. The person**  Brother Joche Albert distinguished himself by his brilliant intelligence. He possessed a talent for public speaking and for his knowledge of Chinese literature. His pupils listened to him attentively. He was also a hard worker, able to stay at his desk for hours without raising his head. As he was a little obese, his confrères called him ‘the little Buddha’. He wrote the lessons he gave specially his religion courses.  Every time he went to visit his family he tried to come back with youngsters for the juniorate. He used to visit his village and the surrounding ones with kilos of medals of the Virgin. He was interested in the catechumens and he presented a good group of young ones to baptism every year.  Above all he had a talent for dialectic and to demolish fallacies. As he had a fiery character, his repartees were sometimes pointed. His friends told him that he would have to suffer a long purgatory to atone for all his cutting remarks! He willingly acknowledged his weakness and easily asked for forgiveness. Even in the re-education camp, he succeeded to destroy all the Marxist notions. He even dared to tell his brain washers that they were mere ignorant! Do you know the camps’ methods? One had to write his autobiography, then to re-write it, on and on and to finally confess publicly to have betrayed the country and to have collaborated with the nationals. The camp’ masters tried to make him join the nationalist Church (separated from Rome) but to no avail.  **Moment of silence – then Psalm 102 followed by echoes of this psalm**  Bless the Lord , O my soul;  and all my being, bless his holy name.  Bless the Lord, O my soul,  and forget not all his benefits;  For he pardons all your iniquities,  he heals all your ills.  He redeems your life from destruction,  he crowns you with kindness and compassion.  Merciful and gracious is the Lord,  slow to anger and abounding in kindness.  Not according to our sins does he deal with us,  nor does he requite us according to our crimes.  For as the heavens are high above the earth  so surpassing is his kindness toward towards us.  As far as the east is from the west,  so far has he put our transgressions from us.  As a father has compassion on his children,  so the Lord has compassion on us,  For he knows how we are formed;  he remembers that we are  dust  **3. A few Testimonies**  a) «As a religious person he showed an average regularity and piety. He was a  good religious, but not excellent, neither the best one in his group. But during the last years of his life and with the contact with Marxism a great maturity was observed in this brother. He had become another person altogether.»  b) All the brothers agree that Brother Joche was of sound character. At times, he was a little bit impetuous in his eagerness to side with truth. «When he became passionate he spoke with conviction and force, he expressed himself clearly and there was vigour in his dialectic!» (Brother Filippe Wu, his most intimate friend)  c) «Physically, he looked strong, tall with fine features. His demeanour was grave  without severity. Until the end of his career, a halo of nobility, of serenity and grace enhanced his person. He endeared himself with the others by his knowledge and his tact. He had a sort of magnetic influence on the young ones who loved and respected him. Thanks to him, many found the way to truth and to baptism.» (Father Hu)  d) When he heard the news of Brother Joche’s martyrdom, Father Tarcis Kackeiser expressed his admiration, «You told me that Brother Albert Ly is a martyr. I am not surprised. He was a magnificent man. I have such beautiful memories of him.» «Brother Albert had the soul of an apostle. His zeal gushed forth from the bottom of his soul. One could always perceive his caring heart for his neighbour’s salvation. To explain the catechism delighted him and he excelled in this task. His apostolic work in the school was a light even for the strangers.»  **Hymn to the Martyrs, Vespers Or let yourselves be inspired by a hymn of your choice.**  Power and glory  of the Spirit: Happy the true martyrs! Their flesh moulded by God In Him will surge.  Like the grains that are ground To become our bread Their bodies join themselves  to the broken Body That offers itself through our hands.  Their blood blended with the Saviour’s blood That washes up our sins They are the love of the same heart That loved us so much.  In Your martyrs, You are sacrificed, But You are the One we glorify; For your Church through them greets The Spirit’s power.  **Moment of silence**  **Intercession prayers with a refrain of your choice**  1. Lord, our Father, we pray for your Church, that in the whole world it may reveal that you are love and that your Son is the carrier of your love in our midst.  2. Lord, our Father, we pray you for those whom you will call to witness to you through martyrdom and for the people for whom they witness to you.  3. Lord, our Father, send your Spirit to our Chinese confrères, the Marist Family in that province, the youth who have the chance to know you and all the witnesses of your Son among the Chinese people.  4. Lord, our Father, we pray you for the great nation of China. Bless those who govern it. May China become a source of peace, justice and wisdom among all the world nations.  5. Lord, our Father, help us to understand that we are all your children, all brothers of the Son whom you gave us. May we, like Him become artisans of peace, tolerance and dialogue. Help us to welcome the emigrants.  **Conclusion:**  We may conclude with the singing of the Salve Regina, a hymn that Brother Joche Albert and the other Chinese martyrs must have sung every day. This marial hymn reminds us of the unity of our family. | |