

Saturday, February 6, 2021

Saturday of the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Saint Paul Mjiki and Companions, Martyrs

On February 5, 1597, a crucifixion scene of the likes not witnessed probably since the days of the Roman Empire occurred in Nagasaki, Japan. Twenty-six men who professed their faith in Jesus Christ were executed by order of the Japanese emperor Hideyoshi. It would be a little over 348 years later that the heart of the Catholic district of Nagasaki known as Urakami – the result of the blood of these martyrs who truly planted seeds of faith there – would be the site of what one Japanese Catholic called the “holocaust” (*hansai* in Japanese) with detonation of the second atomic bomb that ended World War II. The Servant of God Takashi Nagai spoke these words: “Here was the one pure lamb that had to be sacrificed as *hansai* on His altar...so that many millions of lives might be saved... Let us be *thankful* that Nagasaki was chosen for the whole burnt sacrifice! Let us be thankful that through this sacrifice, peace was granted to the world and religious freedom to Japan.”

These words in today’s reading from the letter to the Hebrews has been fulfilled through these martyrs: “Through Jesus, let us offer God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind.” The martyrs came to share the most important item they possessed: their faith in Jesus Christ.

St. Paul Miki and Companions, pray for us!

God Love You!

*Fr. Jim Starasovich*

