



Vietnamese Apostolate of Brooklyn Diocese
Our Lady of Mount Camel R.C. Church
St. Andrew Dung Lac Community

www.mountcarmelastoria.org
<http://www.megaalliance.com/sites/cdadl/>

A BRIEF HISTORY

This year, 2012, Andrew Dung Lac Community celebrates the 25th anniversary of its founding. From the beginning through the formation and strengthening phases, the parishioners of Andrew Dung Lac Community have experienced a variety of ups and downs, always striving to “keep the faith and live the Christian vocation” under the guidance of the Church and the priests.

THE FIRST CONCEPT (The Beginning Phase)

The Holy Spirit have inspired and led the Vietnamese people through the historical event of 1975 from being ruled to autonomy, from misery to happiness, from slavery to freedom.

After the historical event of 1975, when South Vietnam fell into the hands of the Communists, the first wave of refugees began. People from South Vietnam used all kinds of means, by sea and by land, to migrate to the free countries to seek a life of Freedom, Democracy and Happiness.

In the spirit of searching for freedom, people also search for religious freedom, an arduous and difficult task. In the Diocese of Brooklyn, NY, there were only 4 or 5 Vietnamese Catholic families, who were struggling with their livelihood and were craving for a community to join and attend Mass as taught by their forefathers, now that they have left their homeland and settled in a foreign country.

Father Luke Du Anh Pham was like a burning touch to light the darkness, like a ferryman to bring seafarers to shore. With many months of hard works, driving each family to Mass on Sunday mornings with his old car, he cared for them like a father caring for his own children.

THE FORMATION PHASE

In 1987, at the Church of Saint Aloysius, Ridgewood, Queens, NY, the Vietnamese Catholic Community was officially established with the name of Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community. What a gift God has given the community, a deep yearning fulfilled, and a hope for the future began.

Let us be reminded why Father Luke Du Anh Pham chose Saint Andrew Dung Lac as the patron saint for the community. According to some witnesses who were closed to Father Luke, he chose Saint Andrew Dung Lac because he loved his homeland, and he loved the Church in Vietnam. Saint Andrew Dung Lac was a Vietnamese priest who now heads the list of the 117 Vietnamese Martyrs canonized by Pope John Paul II on June 19, 1988. Saint Andrew Dung Lac was the example that Father Luke strived to emulate; and he wanted the celebration of the Patron Saint to be an occasion for remembrance and study, remembering and imitating the examples of Catholic ancestors, even in the most dire circumstances of Vietnamese Catholics whose country is now under the authoritarian regime of Communism.

Throughout the twelve years as the Coordinator to the community, Father Luke Du Anh Pham was always a shining example of Christian faith to all people. He always sacrificed to bring the Vietnamese parishioners together, in a spirit of unity that Jesus always expects from His people: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18: 20). The gathering together united in prayer is certainly the highest gift that God wants from His people. Since then, under His guidance, the Vietnamese community gradually grew stronger, despite the still small number of parishioners comparing to other ethnic communities.

From gathering only a few small families to be the “core”, Father Luke Du Anh Pham gradually attracted many Vietnamese Catholic families living all over the territory of the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens, NY. The young people of the early community, under the guidance of Father Luke, brought vitality to the community, especially in terms of preserving ethnic and cultural traditions. It was thanks to this strength that Father Luke Du Anh Pham succeeded in petitioning Bishop Thomas Daily and Father Marino (at that time had not yet received the title of Monsignor) to recognize the Vietnamese Catholic Community as an Apostolate, like the Apostolates of other ethnicities. The title Apostolate symbolizes a “legal” status and the exclusive representation right of the Andrew Dung Lac Community in the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens.

One small detail worth noting is that God has called a young leader of the Andrew Dung Lac Vietnamese Catholic Community to be His apostle: Steve Kha Manh Nguyen entered the Congregation of the Divine Word and was ordained a priest, currently teaching at the Congregation’s seminary in Iowa, USA.

It saddened the members of the community to realize that it was God’s will to allow Father Luke just enough time on earth for a life of 70 years. God wanted to take His loyal son to the heavenly joy after 70 years of ups and downs, hardships and sacrifices on earth. On a vacation trip with his family in California, Father Luke fell critically ill and passed away on November 13, 1999. He left behind many missing and mourning among the parishioners of the community, who were like lost sheep without a shepherd.

The passing of Father Luke also ended the presence of Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community at Saint Aloysius Church, Ridgewood, Queens, NY, because there was no Vietnamese priest to replace Father Luke in this parish.

THE PERIOD OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

In December 1999, with the help of Monsignor Marino – Director of Catholic Migration Office, Bishop Thomas V. Daily, Bishop of Brooklyn, appointed Father Joseph Truong Xuan Vu as Coordinator of the Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community while remaining parochial vicar of Saint Anselm Parish, Brooklyn. Father Vu was assisted by a great benefactor: Father Joseph Tan Tri Pham. Father Joseph Tan Tri Pham graciously introduced the community to Father Frank Lynch, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church at the time, who welcomed the Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community into the life of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish at 23-25 Newtown Ave, Astoria, NY, led by Father Joseph Truong Xuan Vu in terms of liturgy and pastoral activities.

Rejoicing in the new mission as Coordinator, inheriting the merits that his spiritual father – the late Father Luke – left behind, Father Joseph Truong Xuan Vu was of one mind and one heart with the whole community, increasingly cultivating and forming it in the Vietnamese culture and religious tradition. Vietnamese Mass was celebrated every Sunday at 3pm, with the collaboration of different committees, such as, the Christian Mothers, the lectors, liturgical dancers, the choir. The catechists consisted of parents concerned about nurturing the faith in the younger members of the community. In addition, the community also organized joyful and vibrant concerts on different occasions: celebrating the

community's patron saint, solemnity of Christ the King, Christmas, Easter, Vietnamese New Year, picnics and pilgrimages. Instilled with the spirit of love and enthusiasm, Father Joseph Truong Xuan Vu gave and continued to give his all, a man with a shepherd's heart who dedicated his life for his sheep, and who was greatly missed when he was given a new assignment. At the same time, Father Frank Lynch retired and Monsignor Paul Sanchez replaced him as the pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

In 2001, Father Joseph Tan Tri Pham, in the capacity as the parochial vicar of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, was appointed by the bishop to be the Coordinator of the Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community. The community continued to live and work with joy and happiness, filled with God's grace, the Blessed Virgin Mary's protection, Saint Joseph's companionship, and the Mother Church's loving care for her children.

One important event for the community, the Christmas midnight Mass in Vietnamese organized for Vietnamese in New York City brought a special meaning. Christmas is a night for everyone, a night of love, a night of sharing that everyone desires. After the Mass, everyone had the chance to sit together and chatted, as if re-living the spirit of the Holy Family of old which was a perfect example. This was the pride and honor of the Vietnamese people on a foreign land.

After 7 years of mentoring and guiding the flock in the right direction of the Church and improving their Christian spiritual life, Father Joseph Tan Tri Pham brought the community joy, peace, and harmony with other ethnic Catholic communities in the Diocese. Rewarding his devotion and sacrifices, the bishop gave Father Joseph Tan Tri Pham some time to rest and renew both spiritually and physically, so he may be more eager to continue in the new missions that the Church would entrust to him.

In June 2008, the Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community once again joyfully welcomed a new Coordinator; Father Peter Hoa Trung Nguyen's mission has been to develop and promote the community further in this third millennium, as parishioners deal with many challenges in the practice of faith and charity in today's society, when people are increasingly weakened in faith and morality declines.

Since then, the new Coordinator has not been afraid of hard work, spending time and effort to care for the community, trying his best to continue the work of his predecessors. Father Peter zealously does his apostolic work, building fraternity, connecting all people of God in the Saint Andrew Dung Lac Vietnamese Catholic Community into "a strong spiritual family in the Church."

As faith and mutual trust are deepened, the parishioners of Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community actively participate in different events, such as, on Sunday, November 22, 2009, in celebrating the Patron feast of the Community, the Coordinator, Father Peter Hoa Trung Nguyen, solemnly placed a statue of Our Lady of La-Vang in Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, in the presence of Monsignor Ronald T. Marino – Director of the Catholic Migration Office; Monsignor Paul Sanchez – Episcopal Vicar for Queens; Monsignor Sean G. Ogle – Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel; two former Coordinators of Andrew Dung Lac Community – Father Joseph Tan Tri Pham and Father Joseph Truong Xuan Vu, Diocese of Brooklyn; Father Ignatius Thu Xuan Vu – Pastor of Saint George and Saint Francis Church, Jeffersonville, Archdiocese of New York; and Father John the Baptist Doai Kim Dang, CM. This was an important turning point marking the dedication of the Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community to Our Lady of La-Vang and choosing her as the community's protector and spiritual companion.

In addition, Father Peter also organized other events for the community, such as, free medical check-ups, pilgrimage with the Diocese to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC, and catechism classes for First Communion and Confirmation children. On the first Sunday of every month, there is Eucharist

Benediction before mass, at 2pm. During the Marian months of May and October, there is Marian procession after Mass and praying the rosary with the families of the community. Those activities are held frequently and regularly to inspire faith and hope in God and to unite everyone in a spirit of love.

CONCLUSION

In the past 25 years, through many events of sadness and joy in the community, we give thanks for God's infinite mercy, for the loving hands of Our Lady of La-Vang that have preserved and guided our Community to overcome all challenges in peace and faith in God.

The Community of Saint Andrew Dung Lac sincerely thanks our Coordinators:

Father Luke Du Anh Pham: 1987-1999 (RIP November 13, 1999)

Father Joseph Truong Xuan Vu: 1999-2001

Father Joseph Tan Tri Pham: 2001-2008

Father Peter Hoa Trung Nguyen: 2008-

The Community Presidents who assisted the Coordinators:

Mr. Chien Dinh Vu

Mr. Minh Van Vo (RIP)

Mr. Ban Xuan Dang

Mr. Khuong Huu Luu

Mr. Tu Vu

The Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community also sincerely thanks all the benefactors near and far for helping, sharing and journeying with us through all the events of sadness and joy. May God bless you abundantly.

The Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community especially remembers Father Luke Du Anh Pham, our beloved and respected father who sacrificed his whole pastoral life dedicated to the service of God and souls, always loving and caring for the flock, even to the time of his passing from this world. We will forever be grateful for his love. Now, in heaven, please continue to pray for us that we always live a life worthy of the children of God, always love one another in mutual charity, never to betray your love. We also pray for a former president of the community who passed away shortly after Father Luke, Mr. Emmanuel Minh Van Vo.

May God keep us always united, as He has commanded: "Ut Unum Sint – May they be one."

Solemnity of Corpus Christi, June 10, 2012

Diocese of Brooklyn, New York

Coordinator of Saint Andrew Dung Lac Community



Rev. Peter Hoa Trung Nguyen