
Ven. Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan

Feast Day: September 16

Born:

17 April 1928
Huê, French
Indochina

Died:

16 September 2002
(aged 74)
Rome, Italy

Catholic Social Teaching principles:

- **Life and dignity of the human person**
- **Solidarity**
- **Option for the poor and vulnerable**



Image above and bio below from the [Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan Foundation](#)

- 1928: born on April 17 in Vietnam.
- 1967: Pope Paul VI appointed him Bishop of Nha Trang, taking the motto "Gaudium et Spes"
- 1975: April 23, Pope Paul VI named him Archbishop of Saigon
- 1975-1988: August 15, he was detained and taken to North Vietnam where he was imprisoned for more than 13 years, nine of which were spent in solitary confinement at Vinh Quang (Vinh Phu) prison, then in the prison run by the Hanoi Police. During his years of imprisonment he wrote 'The Road of Hope', the Spiritual Testimony to all the Catholic Vietnamese in Vietnam and abroad.
- 1991: he was allowed to travel to Rome but was not allowed to return.
- 1998: Pope John Paul II named him President of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, and tasked him with preparing the Compendium of The Social Doctrine of the Church.
- 2000: he received a special invitation from Pope John Paul II to preach the Lenten Retreat to the Curia. After the retreat, the Holy Father gave him a chalice, Cardinal Thuan said: "24 years ago I said Mass with three drops of wine and one drop of water in the palm of my hand, I never would have thought that today the Holy Father would give me a gilt chalice. Our Lord is great indeed and so is his love".
- 2002: September 16, God called Cardinal Thuan home after a battle with cancer.

Pray:

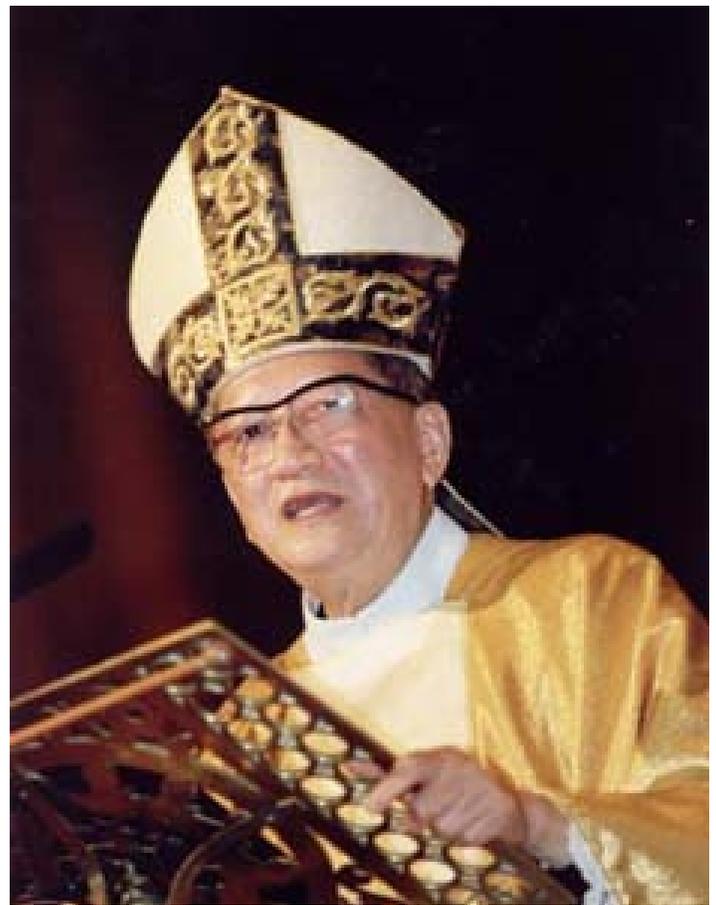
In his 2007 encyclical, Spe Salvi, Benedict XVI referred to Ven. Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan's "Prayers of Hope", saying: "During thirteen years in jail, in a situation of seemingly utter hopelessness, the fact that he could listen and speak to God became for him an increasing power of hope, which enabled him, after his release, to become for people all over the world a witness to hope—to that great hope which does not wane even in the nights of solitude."

With this in mind, open your Bible and prayerfully read Psalm 22. How might this Psalm bring you hope in times of suffering or seeming hopelessness?

Learn: The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

Ever since Pope Leo XIII in 1891 shocked the wealthy with his call for a just wage and the right of workers to unionize, the Catholic Church has taught that the way societies organize is also a moral matter. Through landmark encyclicals issued by popes since Rerum Novarum, the Church has built up a wide-ranging body of teaching on justice, equality, and human rights.

That doctrine has been distilled in a single compendium compiled by the Vatican's Council for Justice and Peace. It is designed to stand alongside the Catechism of the Catholic Church as an authoritative summary of the Church's teaching on what makes for human flourishing.



Photos from the Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan foundation provided by the late Cardinal's youngest sister, Ms. Elizabeth Thu Hong Nguyen.

Act:

In 2001, Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan wrote the introduction to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace's "Contribution to World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance." Among other points, he notes that "Christians in particular have the responsibility to offer a teaching that stresses the dignity of every human being and the unity of the human race. If war or other terrible circumstances make others the enemy, the first and most radical Christian commandment is to love that enemy and to respond to evil with good." Who are the children in your life? How can you ensure that you are teaching them about the unity of the human race? How are you teaching them to love their enemy? Try reading them the picture book, "Everyone Belongs" from the USCCB.

