**Remembrance Service Reflection**- Sr. Gabrielle Jin PBVM *Nov. 14, 2024.*

As we gather here today in this Blessed Sacrament Chapel, we are first reminded that Jesus is truly present with us, as He promised. I guess today we come together with a blend of feelings. We come with gratitude for the lives of those who have gone before us—religious men and women who touched our lives profoundly. They left behind great testimonies of their love for God and their dedication to sharing His love with the world. Yet, alongside this gratitude, there may also be a sense of sadness, even heaviness, as we recognize that many of our beloved brothers and sisters are no longer with us. We may wonder about our own future and the future of religious life as we see our numbers dwindle. Yet, we are drawn together in hope. As we sit here, surrounded by each other’s presence, we witness the enduring truth that God’s call is alive and active among us, for Christ is “the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

In today’s Gospel, Jesus reminds us of what God desires most from us: that we “worship in spirit and in truth.” These words invite us into a deeper way of living—one that calls us to listen closely to the deepest stirrings of our hearts and souls. In a world filled with distractions and false promises, we are called to seek truth in its purest form, found in God alone. As St. Augustine says "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." Ultimately, God is our truth. He is the foundation upon which we build our lives, the light that guides us, and the peace that settles our restless hearts. To know God is to know the deepest truth about ourselves and the world around us. As we seek this intimate relationship with Him, it transforms us from within, shaping our desires, our actions, and our very identity. Thus, we become true worshippers of God, and living truthfully will set us free—free to love and to serve, just as those we remember today have shown us through their lives.

Each of us can probably recall someone whose life made God’s truth real for us and whose witness made us wanting to be like them. For me, that person was my old parish priest Francis Wang. Francis was a man who had lived through unimaginable hardship. He was twice arrested for his faith, and over the course of his life, he spent a total of 25 years in prison under brutal conditions—conditions that would have broken most people. Yet when he was finally released at the age of 75, he emerged with a heart full of love, a spirit of prayer, and an unshakable commitment to serving others.

When Fr. Wang came to our parish at the age of 75, I was just a young, bubbly teenager. He looked at me with eyes that saw a potential calling to religious life, though I resisted thinking about it at the time. I won’t go into detail on that now. Fr. Wang was a man who earned the respect and love of everyone. Our parish soon became a place where joy and love flourished, even amid our struggles. I can honestly say that I wouldn’t be standing here today if it weren’t for his influence. Though he passed away 20 years ago, the memory of Fr. Wang continues to inspire and encourage me on my own vocational journey.

While I was preparing for this reflection, a thought struck me deeply: isn’t it true that our lives, and the entire life of the Church, are built on memory? The very foundation of the Church was laid with a call to remember Jesus—His words, His deeds, and His boundless love. The Gospels were written to preserve these memories, and every time we gather for Mass, we echo that call, saying, “Do this in memory of Me.” We all draw strength, wisdom, and energy from this treasure of memory.

And it’s not just about Jesus; it’s about all those who have walked this path before us—their faith, their witness, their example. Their spirit continues to inspire and shape us today. They remind us that, even with our imperfections, we can live in service to God, worshiping “in spirit and truth.” They reassure us that we are never alone on this journey.

Today, as we honor their memories, may we be inspired by their example and ask for the grace to live faithfully to God’s continuous calling. Let us remember that as we live in spirit and truth, we continue to create a memory of God in today’s world and for generations to come.