

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As many of you know, our Auxiliary Bishop, Bishop Robert F. Christian, O.P., has passed away. A native of San Francisco, Bishop Christian was a graduate of St. Vincent de Paul School and St. Ignatius High School. He attended and graduated from the University of Santa Clara then entered the Dominicans of the Western Province. He was ordained a bishop and installed as Auxiliary Bishop to Archbishop Cordileone on June 5, 2018, just over a year ago. I came to know Bishop Christian serving as a member of the Presbyteral Council and Assistant Vocation Director. He was very supportive of me personally and enjoyed his visits to St. Pius. He celebrated our school anniversary last August 24<sup>th</sup> and confirmed our Confirmation candidates this past March. Just before Brother Zach and Brother John completed their Pastoral Year, Bishop Christian and Father Stephen H. Howell, our Vicar General, joined us for dinner. Bishop Christian had accepted my invitation to celebrate our Mass of the Holy Spirit in August. Bishop Christian was thoughtful, gracious and I cannot thank him enough for his encouragement and support as I began my pastorate. I am deeply saddened by the news of his death but ever grateful I was privileged to know him. Please keep the repose of the soul of Bishop Christian in your prayers. Please also pray for Bishop Christian's family and the St. Patrick's Seminary community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many parishioners who joined in contacting their California State Senator and Assembly Member to speak in opposition to Senate Bill 360. This bill was sponsored by California State Senator Jerry Hill and was set to be heard by the California Assembly Public Safety Committee on July 9<sup>th</sup>. Ironically, or perhaps providentially, July 9<sup>th</sup> is the Memorial of St. Augustine Zhao Rong and companions. St. Augustine Zhao Rong and Companions, many of whom were from China, were martyred for the faith. They were canonized on October 1, 2000 by St. Pope John Paul II, in witness to their fidelity to the faith, even unto death.

In response to outcry from constituents who were concerned about a potential legislative assault on fundamental religious liberty, Senator Hill on July 8<sup>th</sup> withdrew for consideration his bill. Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone wrote, "Thank you for the outpouring of support among our 90 parishes for keeping in law the protection of the confidentiality of the confessional. As Americans and Catholics, you spoke up for religious freedom not just for Catholics, but for all people of faith who are protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution." It is cause for concern when efforts are made to take away fundamental rights embedded in our Constitution. Religious freedom is a sacred right in our country, and any effort to abridge or change that right is an assault on the very identity of what it means to be an American. As this most recent legislative initiative demonstrates, we as citizens must be ever watchful and vigilant in protecting our rights. We have so many blessings as Americans; let us always cherish and be grateful for the freedoms we enjoy. May we practice true justice - serving one another, protecting those who are most vulnerable and fragile in our society, ensuring that we indeed are a nation of liberty for all!

Fr. Tom