



MISSION WEST

A newsletter for friends of the Dominican Friars, Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus

SPECIAL EDITION

A DOMINICAN BISHOP

Thank you for supporting Bishop Christian as he becomes the first Dominican in the West since 1850 to be ordained to the Episcopacy

- ✦ Your Investment: Four More Dominicans Ordained
- ✦ Pope Pius' Inspiring Words to Joseph Alemany, O.P.
- ✦ What Happens When a Dominican Becomes a Bishop?

THE QUOTABLE DOMINICAN

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

1901-1925

Feast Day: July 4

Pier Giorgio took Fra Girolamo Savonarola, O.P., as his patron when he received the scapular of a Dominican Tertiary on May 28, 1922. He died three years later when he contracted polio while caring for the sick in Turin.

“Of yourself, you will do nothing, but if you have God as the center of all your action, then you will reach the goal.” —Pier Giorgio Frassati



DID YOU KNOW?

According to canon law, when a Dominican friar is ordained a bishop, he remains a member of the Order and bound by his religious vows, although not by obligations which he judges

incompatible with his new situation.

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He can wear the habit of the Order in those situations where more formal episcopal dress is not required. He can use

and administer personal possessions, although in accordance with religious poverty, they are not his property. Even if in this case [Auxiliary Bishop] Christian will be working under the authority of [an] Archbishop, he is subject in religious obedience only to the Pope. When he retires, he can return to a priory of the Order.

Source: Fr. Benjamin Earl, O.P., Canon Lawyer & Procurator General of the Order of Preachers, Rome

Cover Photo: Auxiliary Bishop Robert Christian, O.P., was ordained June 5, 2018. He is the first Dominican bishop in the West since Joseph Alemany, O.P., was made a bishop in 1850. Your prayers and generosity help us prepare Dominicans for service at every level of the Church.

Our sincere gratitude is extended to all those who helped make this edition of the newsletter possible.

Photo Credits: Debra Greenblat/Catholic San Francisco, John Christian, Lorelei Low, Dennis Callahan/Catholic San Francisco

from the vicar provincial for advancement

One of the first Dominicans in the West was a little-known Martyr to Charity



Dear Friend of St. Dominic,

This year marks a very special year for the Western Dominican Province because, for the first time in 168 years, we have a bishop drawn from our ranks! After 42 years of priestly service, we celebrate the episcopal ordination of Bishop Robert Christian, O.P., the first Dominican to be made a bishop in the West since our founder, Fr. Joseph Alemany, O.P., was made a bishop in 1850. However, an often-overlooked Dominican was sent before Alemany to pave the way for the Dominicans' westward expansion: Fr. Peter Augustine Anderson, O.P.

A young, holy man of service, Fr. Peter was a zealous missionary filled with compassion for souls. He ultimately gave his life for this cause, leading many to call him a "Martyr to Charity."

Fr. Peter was born to Protestant parents in 1812. His father died young after they moved to Ohio, and Peter was left to support the family. Under the guidance and inspiration of the Dominicans, his entire family was received into the Church. Almost immediately thereafter, Peter entered the Dominican Order, and was ordained in 1840. His love for missionary work inspired him to ask Alemany (his provincial at the time) to send him west, a request Alemany immediately granted.

After arriving in San Francisco in July of 1850, Fr. Peter was taken aback by San Francisco's resiliency following the fires, and its rapid growth, saying in a journal entry that, "San Francisco, in my humble opinion, in twenty years time, will rival New York in commercial importance."

Fr. Peter ultimately settled in Sacramento, where he built St. Rose of Lima Church, which still stands today. After traveling to preach in the surrounding areas, he returned to Sacramento in October to care for those who were suffering from the recent cholera outbreak. He worked tirelessly to care for the sick, so much so that he contracted typhoid fever and died on November 27, 1850, just nine days before Alemany would arrive. The people he served deeply mourned him, noting his faithfulness and devotedly regarding him as a "Martyr to Charity". He is buried in St. Dominic's Cemetery in Benicia, CA.

Without you, and the faithful men and women who came before us, we Dominicans would not be able to build up the Church in the West. May we all embrace the missionary spirit of Fr. Peter as we preach Truth in the 21st century!

In Christ and St. Dominic,

Very Rev. Fr. James Junípero Moore, O.P.
Vicar Provincial for Advancement

P.S. We will have ten young men joining our Novitiate this August. This is the largest class of Novices to our province in 16 years and means we will now have 35 men in formation. Thank you for helping us continue our vocations growth and forming great Dominican preachers of Truth!

Dominican Robert Christian, O.P., made Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco

Your support prepares Dominicans for service
throughout the Church

History was made on June 5th when the Most Rev. Robert Christian, O.P., was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco by Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone.

Bishop Christian has been a Dominican priest for 42 years and is a native of San Francisco. He is the first Dominican in the West to be made a bishop since Joseph Alemany, O.P., in 1850.

The Mass of Episcopal Ordination was attended by over 300 priests and deacons, more than 20 bishops and over 100 Dominicans from around the world. Joining Archbishop Cordileone on the altar were Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe, and Bishop Michael Barber, S.J., of Oakland. Also present were Cardinal Roger M. Mahony and the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre.



Bishop Christian is seen processing in for his ordination. Nearly 425 priests, deacons, Dominicans and bishops attended the ceremony.

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(Left) Bishop Christian holds the Apostolic Letter from the Holy Father. This letter testifies to the world his worthiness to serve as Bishop.

(Opposite) At one point during the ordination ceremony, the Book of the Gospels is held over the head of Bishop Christian. This reminds him and all present that the faithful preaching of the Word of God is the foremost duty of the bishop.



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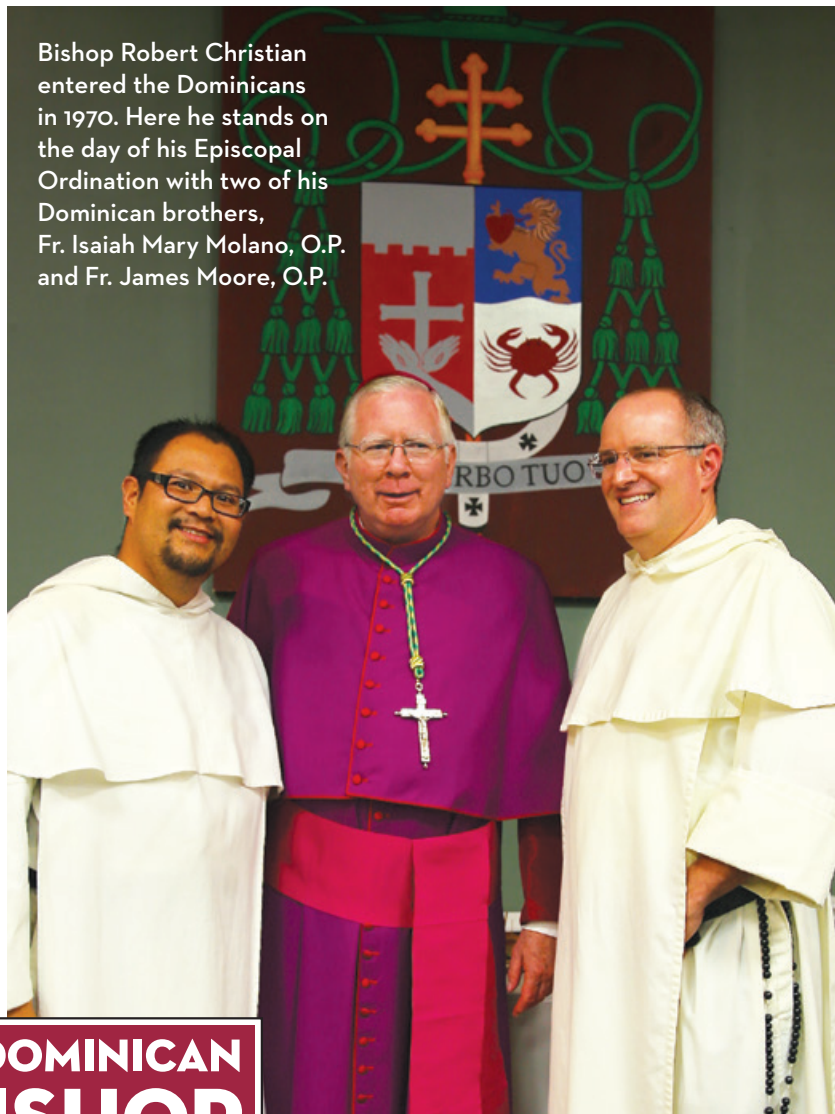


“I am ultimately someone who was given a sacramental character by Christ, enabling me to join a college that keeps the Church in right doctrine, preaches that doctrine handed down from the apostles even when it seems to engender indifference or hostility, and which promotes the pursuit of happiness by promoting the pursuit of holiness.”

— Auxiliary Bishop Robert Christian, O.P.



Bishop Robert Christian entered the Dominicans in 1970. Here he stands on the day of his Episcopal Ordination with two of his Dominican brothers, Fr. Isaiah Mary Molano, O.P. and Fr. James Moore, O.P.



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Thank You For Your Prayers

On April 28th, Br. Gregory Augustine Liu, O.P., made his Solemn Profession. This means he has committed himself to the Order of Preachers and the Church until death. Thank you for supporting his ongoing formation as he perseveres to priesthood.



A Bishop Comes Home

(continued from back cover)

John reflected, “the connection to the Dominicans has been a very positive one. I’ve come to know a lot of great Dominicans. They come in all stripes, but at the end of the day, they’re all rock solid. And if you befriend a Dominican, you’ve got a great friend. We all appreciate their preaching and orthodoxy. Many people I know often say ‘Thank God for the Dominicans’.”

And thank God for the Christian family, whose generosity and faithfulness have blessed many.



Bishop Robert Christian and his brothers with Archbishop Cordileone. Like their father, brothers Jim Christian, Tom Christian, Bishop Robert Christian, O.P., and John Christian are graduates of St. Ignatius College Preparatory. (Photo Courtesy Paul Totah/SI Prep)

Seek Souls, Not Gold

For generations, friends like you have made it possible for Dominicans to spread the Gospel in the West

Auxiliary Bishop Robert Christian, O.P., follows in the footsteps of Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O.P., first Archbishop of San Francisco in 1853.

Alemany was born in Vich, Spain and entered the Order of Preachers at a time of persecution. His desire to be a missionary established itself early, but to his surprise he was sent to America instead of the Philippines.

After a fellow Dominican turned down the position of Bishop of Monterey in California, Alemany was chosen. Pope Pius IX spoke to the bishop-elect as soon as he walked into his personal audience: “You must go to California; there is no alternative. Where others are drawn by gold, you must go to carry the cross. God will assist you.”

His love of missionary service took him throughout the Diocese of Monterey,

where his humility endeared him to his flock.

“We are clothed with the same sinful mortality as others,” he told them, “yet, by reason of that station, which, though most unworthy, it has pleased Divine Providence that we should hold in your regard, we feel bound to urge all to adore God in spirit and in truth.”

This humility also helped him recognize his own limitations. For example, he requested that his diocese be split twice, once to form the Archdiocese of San Francisco in 1853 (of which he became the head) and once to form the Diocese of Sacramento in 1860.

Archbishop Alemany retired in 1885 to his native Spain and died April 14, 1888, just one month after Fr. Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, O.P., with whom he co-founded the Western Dominican Province.

This photo of the San Francisco harbor, taken in 1851, is what the area would have looked like to Archbishop Joseph Alemany, O.P. and his companions when they arrived the year prior.



Joseph Alemany, O.P., was the first Archbishop of San Francisco and helped found the Western Dominican Province. He built numerous ecclesial institutions, laying the foundation for generations of preaching throughout the West.

“Where others are drawn by gold, you must go to carry the cross.”

Words of Pope Pius IX to Joseph Alemany, O.P., Archbishop of San Francisco and Co-Founder of the Western Dominican Province

Thank You for Investing in Dominican Priests

Your support has helped four more men follow in the footsteps of St. Dominic

On June 22, the Church gained four more priests of Jesus Christ when Bishop Christian ordained the next generation of Dominicans. Thank you for investing in the formation of Frs. Christopher Wetzel, O.P., Bradley Thomas Elliott, O.P., Thomas Aquinas Pickett, O.P., and Pius Youn, O.P.

Rampant individualism, relativism and a deep spiritual and intellectual poverty plague our society. But thanks to you, we're providing the solution: Preachers of Truth and Charity!

"I hope you realize that you are not simply supporting one organization among many others in the world. You are ensuring in a very real way that the faith has a fighting chance in the most secularized part of the United States. Where there is the most darkness, there is the greatest need of light; your contribution helps our friars become well-honed, well-formed bearers and defenders of the light of Christ."

—Fr. Thomas Aquinas Pickett, O.P.



"I am continually humbled by how blessed I am to have received my Dominican education and formation. This training has enabled me to hand on the fruits of my contemplation to others and bring them closer to Christ. I am deeply in the debt of all of the benefactors who have made this formation possible for me, and I hope they all know the immense fruits of their generosity."

—Fr. Christopher Wetzel, O.P.



“The priest is not his own, he belongs to Christ and the Church; and when a man kneels down to receive the sacrament of orders he brings with him all those who have put him there through their own gifts and contributions. The fact that my Dominican formation was only made possible through the generosity of the people of God makes me realize all the more how my priesthood is meant to be a gift to the Church and a sacrifice for the people of God.”

—Fr. Bradley Thomas Elliott, O.P.



“As a priest, I look forward to giving hope to the people of God. Despite the challenges that life brings, I want to assure everyone that Christ, in His divine mercy, loves them.”

—Fr. Pius Youn, O.P.



A Bishop Comes Home

The Christian Family's Commitment to the Church and San Francisco

In lieu of an individual donor profile, this piece will highlight the Christian Family, whose connection to the Dominicans and the Church has blessed many throughout San Francisco and beyond. Parts of this story have been borrowed from Paul Totah's May 24th article in the *Catholic San Francisco*.

Born to Robert and Gloria Christian, Bishop Christian is a fourth-generation San Franciscan and the eldest of seven children.

Their father, Robert, gained a modicum of fame as an inventor with Christian Engineering, the family's company. He



Robert Christian (now Bishop Christian) is the eldest of Robert and Gloria's seven children. Here he is pictured with all his siblings in 1965.

helped Ore-Ida make use of leftover slivers of potatoes by creating a device to turn them into Tater Tots.

His younger brother, John (who works for the Archdiocese of San Francisco heading its real estate division), said Bishop Christian's siblings always knew he was inclined to a vocation, and noted that "when Bob was left in charge of us at night, he always made sure we said our prayers before going to bed." It was clear to everyone that Robert would one day enter the seminary.

John added, "I remember coming home from school once and confusing some words, telling my mother that Sr. Martha also thinks Bob should go to the cemetery! When Bob entered the Dominicans in 1970, the family shared universal excitement, save for one, my grandmother, who always wanted great grandchildren."

Though their parish growing up wasn't Dominican, St. Dominic's was the neighboring parish, and they'd visit often, especially when their father developed a deep devotion to St. Jude later in life. This helped him manage the successes and challenges of his life. John remembered that when they worked for their father in the summer, traveling to the office together on Monday always meant a stop at the St. Jude Shrine in St. Dominic's to light a candle and gather prayer cards.

The family also enjoyed a fun tradition for a time when Bishop Christian was in formation with the Dominicans. During those years, they'd have an early dinner on Christmas Eve, then went to bed. At 10pm they'd all be awoken to go to midnight Mass at St. Albert's, the Dominican House of Studies in Oakland. They looked forward to this because everyone was treated to hot chocolate at 1am, following the Mass.

How have the Dominicans impacted their family? "Speaking personally,"
(continues on page 8)



(Top) Robert and Gloria Christian hold baby Robert Francis Christian (1948).

(Above) Fr. Robert Christian stands with his parents, Robert and Gloria, at his 25th anniversary of ordination. Fr. Robert's family always thought he was inclined to a vocation, and when he entered the Dominicans in 1970, there was universal excitement.

Visit opwest.org/donate to learn more about how you can help the Dominicans.