

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Trust and Courage Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time Saturday, July 9, 2016
8:15 AM Is 6:1-8; **Mt 10:24-33** (St. Augustine Zhao Rong, priest and companions,
martyrs) (We should not be afraid because there is something greater in reality than all those
people that oppose us.)

“Therefore do not be afraid of them.”

Fear is one of the most powerful emotions in life. Why do policemen shoot? They shoot because they think they will be shot at—that’s fear. What drives so often the stock market, especially when it’s going downhill? It’s fear. **Fear is a constant component in life. It can kill and it can paralyze.** Martin Luther King in one of his famous addresses really scolded his fellow black people who out of fear never stood up for their own rights, just accepted abuse, discrimination, the back of the bus because they were afraid.

Now here **Jesus is telling the apostles not to be afraid.** He is promising them that they will be persecuted. This is all part of a whole section where he is talking about what is going to happen. It’s not going to be good, but he says, “Don’t be afraid.” This is a trial. **We have to see life as a trial.** It has all kinds of bad things in it. These bad things do not really come from God, but God has allowed them for a greater good. And one of the greatest goods is that we rise up. **In this case it’s about acknowledging Jesus, to rise up in the face of adversity, in the face of persecution, in the face of every evil and acknowledge Christ.** In the case of Martin Luther King he was talking about acknowledging justice. You could say that for any virtue, but here it’s about Christ.

We are celebrating today the memorial of some Chinese martyrs, **many Chinese martyrs.** **Augustine Zhao Rong** is the chief, but there were many of them. Augustine was originally a soldier who had been assigned to a bishop, a French bishop, who was executed. But the French bishop was so courageous—he was living out this gospel—that **the soldier was converted by**

the courage exhibited by this bishop. And then he sought out Baptism. He was not yet married and so he also sought out priesthood and was later one of the first native Chinese priests ordained. This is way back several hundred years ago, actually I think 1600s.

Now that's only one example of how **courage leads others to trust.** This is really all about trust. Why should we not be afraid? **We should not be afraid because there is something greater in reality than all those people that oppose us,** greater than guns, greater than imprisonment. **And this greater power is God. God is promising to be with us at all times,** knows the number of hairs on our head, and will be with us in every kind of adversity. And that's what we have to keep in mind. **So what Jesus is eliciting is trust and courage.** No, these are not simple things. No, this is not like falling water. This is something that really causes us to **choose in the depths of our hearts against all the strength and power of life as we see it.** But it is **how God works in our world to bring about new life.**