



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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June 22-23, 2019

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

I am writing to you about an important matter before the California state Assembly, and to ask you to contact your state Assembly Member to oppose a bill that threatens the confidentiality of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

SB 360 would take away from priests and from everyone who works with priests in parishes and Church agencies across the state the full right to confess their sins with the assurance of confidentiality.

The state Senate has already approved SB 360 by a vote of 30-4, and it is now before the state Assembly. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is protected by the seal of confession. Under no circumstance can a priest disclose anything he hears during confession. This protection afforded to our Catholic people assures them that what they say in confession will never be revealed, so that they may have full confidence in attaining peace of conscience. It is a protection the Church has respected from time immemorial.

Importantly, this legislation will do nothing to protect children. Priests and Church officials are already mandated reporters of sex abuse of children. In our Archdiocese and in all California dioceses, strict policies are already in place to protect children and to require and facilitate reporting to law enforcement of any suspected abuse. Any violation of a child is unconscionable, and the Church is committed to protecting all children from abuse of any kind.

For the weekend of June 22-23, each parish has received letters to distribute at Mass for parishioners to sign, if they so wish. You may also go to sfarch.org/keeptheseal for more information, download a letter to send to your Assembly member, or send a note via email to your state representative.

Please take the urgent action needed at this time, and join me in asking your representative to preserve religious freedom and oppose SB 360.

Wishing God's blessings upon you and your families today and always, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco