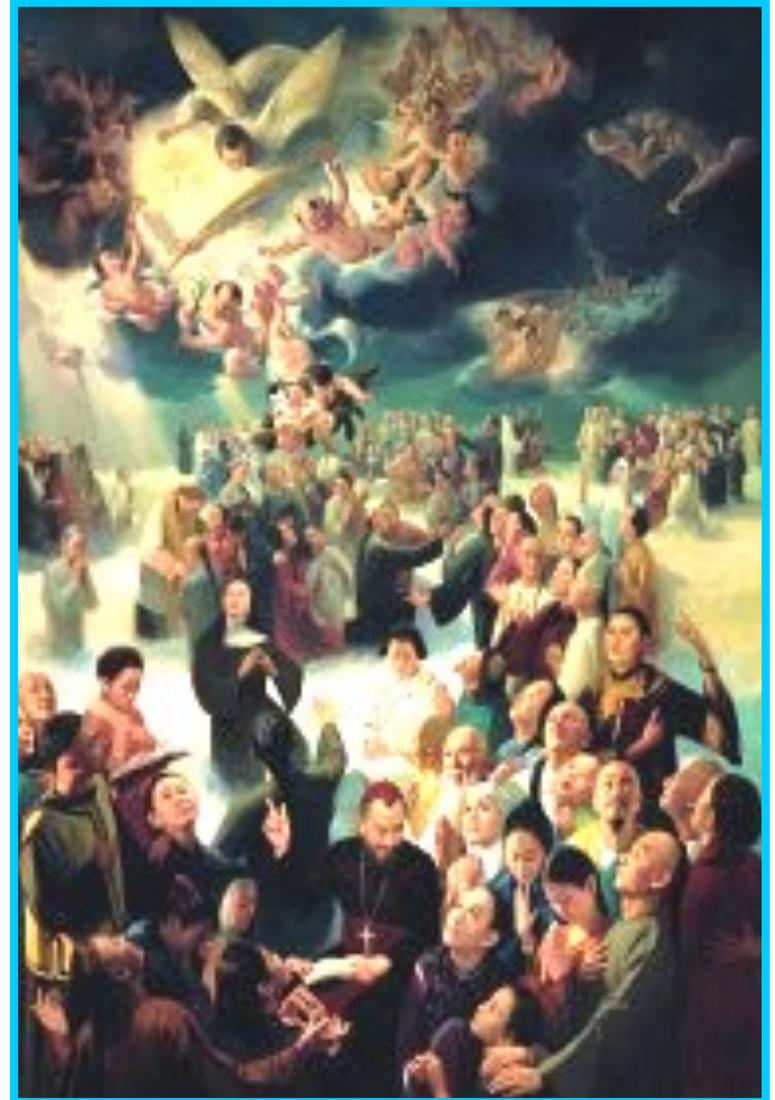




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NOVENA TO SAINT AUGUSTINE ZHAO RONG AND COMPANIONS

RECITED FROM: JUNE 30TH TO JULY 8TH (ORDINARY TIME)



Feast Day: July 9th

Novena

The word Novena derives its name from the Latin word “novem” meaning “nine.” A novena can be either a private or public devotion in the Catholic Church to obtain special graces.

St. Augustine Zhao Rong and Companions

Novena Prayer

**All-powerful, ever-living God,
turn our weakness into strength.
As you gave Augustine Zhao Rong and the
martyrs of China
the courage to suffer death for Christ,
give us the courage to live in
faithful witness to you.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.**

(mention your intention here)

Amen.

St. Augustine Zhao Rong's story

Zhao Rong was a humble soldier, forced to accompany another saint and martyr to his execution in 1815: St. (Bishop) Gabriel Taurin Dufresse. Bishop Dufresse, a missionary from France, made his way to China in 1776, when America was fighting a revolution. The Bishop was among a large group of martyred Church leaders, who had been hiding in “underground” Catholic homes to escape persecution by Chinese authorities concerned with “outside influences.” Bishop Dufresse turned himself in, upon the encouragement of another bishop; he feared for the lives of the families hiding these priests and bishops. When Bishop Dufresse turned himself in, soldier Zhao Rong accompanied him to his execution.

Christianity arrived in China by way of Syria in the 600s. Depending on China's relations with the outside world, Christianity over the centuries was free to grow or was forced to operate secretly.

The 120 martyrs in this group died between 1648 and 1930. Most of them (87) were born in China and were children, parents, catechists or laborers, ranging from nine years of age to 72. This group includes four Chinese diocesan priests.

The 33 foreign-born martyrs were mostly priests or women religious, especially from the Order of Preachers, the Paris Foreign Mission Society, the Friars Minor, Jesuits, Salesians and Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

Augustine Zhao Rong was a Chinese soldier who accompanied Bishop John Gabriel Taurin Dufresse (Paris Foreign Mission Society) to his martyrdom in Beijing. Augustine was baptized and not long after was ordained as a diocesan priest. He was martyred in 1815.

Beatified in groups at various times, these 120 martyrs were canonized in Rome on October 1, 2000.