



BISHOP THANH THAI NGUYEN

Bishop Thanh Thai Nguyen, a refugee from Vietnam who arrived in the United States in 1980, was appointed by Pope Francis as an auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Orange in October 2017. On December 19, 2017, Nguyen was consecrated as a bishop.

In Orange County Bishop Nguyen ministers for a diocese that serves the largest immigrant Vietnamese population in the world.

Bishop Nguyen graduated from the Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Cambridge, Mass., in 1990 and was ordained in 1991. He earned a bachelor of arts degree from Merrimack College in North Andover, Mass., and immediately began his novitiate year in Washington D.C. The bishop took his first vows with the La Salette Missionaries in 1987.

After ordination, Bishop Nguyen held two pastoral assignments in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. He later moved to the Diocese of St. Augustine, Fla., in 1996, and was incardinated a priest of the diocese in 1999.

In Jacksonville, Bishop Nguyen served as parochial vicar and pastor of Christ the King Parish for 17 years which included Vietnamese parishioners. During that time, he helped lead an effort to build a Vietnamese Center and preserve Vietnamese cultural traditions. He served at St. Joseph parish in Jacksonville, Fla., the largest parish in the Diocese with 4,000 families, from 2013 until his appointment in Orange County.

PERSONAL HISTORY

A native of Nha Trang, Vietnam, Bishop Nguyen was born in 1953, the second oldest of eight boys and three girls. He received a Catholic education in Vietnam and entered St. Joseph Seminary, a small diocesan institute in Vietnam, in 1966. His seminary formation was interrupted by the communist takeover in 1975.

After being forced into hard labor in the rice fields and suffering religious persecution, Nguyen and 26 family members escaped to the Philippines, surviving a harrowing tropical storm and 18 days at sea. The family prayed the Rosary together each morning and evening.

After 10 months in a refugee camp, the family left Manila in June 1980 for their new life in Beaumont, Texas.

