



THE
CARDINAL KUNG FOUNDATION



Homily of Paul Cardinal Shan, S.J.

Archbishop of Kaohsiung

President of the Taiwan's Bishops Conference

on the Occasion of the 97th Birthday of Ignatius Cardinal Kung

Bishop of Shanghai, Apostolic Administrator of Souchou and Nanking

Holy Spirit Church - Stamford, Connecticut

July 3, 1998



Your Eminence, Cardinal Kung, Bishop of Shanghai, Apostolate Administrator of Souchou and Nanking,

Your Excellency, Most Reverend Bishop Edward Egan, Ordinary of this diocese,

Monsignors, Fathers, Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Today, we celebrate the 97th birthday of His Eminence, the 10th anniversary of his arriving United States, also the feast day of His Eminence, St. Ignatius Loyola, which is on the 31st of this month. In this concelebration, first we thank God for all the graces given to His Eminence throughout his whole life. First, we thank God for giving Cardinal Kung a very good, devoted Catholic family, since his boyhood, it prepared his vocation for priesthood, and for his will to be a model shepherd, and a living martyr.

His Eminence was educated mostly by the Jesuit in Shanghai. After his priestly ordination, he was a pastor and principals of two Jesuit high schools. Then Cardinal Kung was named the first Bishop of Souchou. Later, he was transferred to Shanghai.

When Cardinal Kung was named a bishop, China was already in the hands of the communists. We know of some people who were named Bishops before His Eminence, but they refused. They knew the danger of being a bishop under the Communist rule. But his Eminence, with the blessings and the help of God, very willingly accepted this heavy cross. He accepted it as part of his life and as part of his mission. He knew that to be a bishop, he had to suffer, be imprisoned, and might have to sacrifice his life. With all such difficulties, he accepted willingly the cross that Our Lord prepared for him.

We must thank God for giving China such a model shepherd, who took care of his flock without any hesitation, even for imprisonment, even for death. Despite spending three decades in brutal Chinese prisons, Cardinal Kung never gave up his religious convictions.

We know that he was imprisoned for 32 years. The prison is not an American prison. The prison was a communist prison. There was no love, there was no mercy and there was no respect for human life. He passed 32 years of his life in prison. His Eminence passed the best years of his life in prison.

His Eminence is also a living martyr, a martyr without shedding his blood. To be a white martyr and a living martyr, it is much more difficult than to be a bloody martyr. To be a bloody martyr, you may suffer very much for a time, and you may be killed in an instant. To be a living martyr, you have to suffer your whole life, every moment of it. Even at 97, His Eminence has the anxiety of his flock in China. Being far away from his flock, he bears his cross in his heart, and in his prayers.

We also pray for his Eminence that one day in the near future, he may lead the Chinese Catholics back to China, when China is open, and when there is religious freedom. We pray and we know that this day will come soon. The evil power, the dark power, cannot control and rule the world forever. We know this is true from the history. If we pray, if we convert ourselves to God, God will deliver us very soon from such evil powers.

This is my second visit to Stamford. Ten years ago, shortly after His Eminence arrived in Stamford, I came here representing the Chinese Bishop Conference in Taiwan. I spent one week with him. I brought him Chinese Missal, Chinese breviary, documents on Vatican II translated into Chinese. I updated His Eminence about the changes in the world and in the church during the last almost forty years. When His Eminence was in prison, he lost contact with the rest of the world. He did not even know that there was a Vatican II. I was very happy to spend the time with him. I hope that I may come back to celebrate the 20th anniversary of His Eminence's arrival in the United States.

We also thank God for giving China such a model shepherd. His Eminence has served his nation and the Church very well. As you know, when Pope John Paul II was elected Pope, he named some cardinals in his first Consistory. At that time, there was one cardinal named in his heart, he was Cardinal Kung. We all spent 9 months in the wombs of our mothers. His Eminence remained in the Pope's heart for 12 years. His Eminence stayed in prison for 32 years. He stayed in the Pope's heart for twelve years. I pray and hope that Cardinal may live at least 120 years.

We also pray for the Kung family, for Joseph and Agnes, and other members of his family who have been taking very good care of His Eminence. I want to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Chinese Church, to thank His Excellency Bishop Egan. From the beginning, since Cardinal Kung's arrival in the United States, the Diocese of Bridgeport has been very generous offering all possible kinds of care to His Eminence. His Eminence first stayed in St. Joseph Hospital. Then his Eminence stayed in the Home of the Queen of Clergy, the Diocesan's home for elderly clergy. The whole Church of China is grateful to you and to the Diocese of Bridgeport.

We pray that the Church in China will have freedom very soon so that Cardinal Kung may go back to China to see his flock.