



THE CARDINAL KUNG FOUNDATION

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Christmas, 2014

Dear Friends:

**May the Prince of Peace bless you and those you love with peace, health and joy.
Merry Christmas.**

Please join us in prayers so that the Underground Church in China will have a peaceful, blessed Christmas. May I invite you also to pray for the persecuted Christians in Syria, Iraq, India, Nigeria, Pakistan and elsewhere, who are suffering so much because of their unshakable faith.

Let us not ask God why He allows this suffering. He will bring good out of every evil, a greater good. He did so at Bethlehem when King Herod sought the life of the Holy Infant and slaughtered thousands of the innocent little babies. Imagine! This was the first Christmas! These holy martyrs, and their parents, inaugurated the birth of the Church with their blood. But, then again, these slaughtered little ones, are now blissfully happy saints in heaven.

In many parts of America, in fact for all over the world, the Christian signs of Christmas in public market places and in commercial business have been reduced significantly in order to be politically correct. As Catholic, let us make a special effort to uphold the real meaning of Christmas in our own homes, and do this visibly. One of the best ways is by means of a Nativity scene, a crèche, be it modest or grand. The first Nativity scene was very humble. The first person to honor the Holy Family with a crèche is traditionally thought to have been Saint Francis of Assisi. His crèche was a living one. Saint Francis took upon himself the role of a production manager for a play. He orchestrated everything. A manger was set in place with an ox and an ass tied beside it. Even a baby was "borrowed" for that occasion. A high Mass was offered that Christmas Eve and Saint Francis, who was a deacon, sang the Gospel and gave the sermon. This was in 1223, three years before the saint was called home by the Lord.. (Friar Thomas of Celano's *First Life of Saint Francis of Assisi*, Part I, chapter 30, paragraph 84-87. Here is the link <http://www.indiana.edu/~dmdhist/francis.htm> Scroll down in Part 1 to chapter 30.)

Education program - Advanced education of clergy/religious is an utmost important project to the future of the Underground Church in China. In the past ten years, thanks to your donations, we have invested approximately **US \$1.5 million** in the advanced education of approximately four hundred students in the form of direct financial aid, or assistance through Mass stipends.

Upon the Map of China
Rests the Shrine and
Our Lady of She-Shan
Through Whom We Pray
"There may be one fold
and one shepherd"

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* In Memoriam

Many students have already returned to China upon receiving their Ph.D's., Master's, or Bachelor's degrees and now serving the Underground Church. This school year, we have approximately fifty such students under our financial assistance program, seven of whom are working on their Ph.D. degrees. At the time of printing this letter, we just learned that one student, a priest, has successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation. He received a standing ovation at the end of his defense from the about 75 people who attended. He had made all of us proud. On behalf of these students, we thank you for your prayers and generous financial supports.

Financial Situation of This Foundation - Unfortunately, the Foundation had **almost a thirty percent drop in our donation receipts this year**. This will significantly curtail our financial aids to the current fifty clergy/religious students. If the current donation trend continues, we may have to turn away some worthy applications. These students are from the poor underground dioceses. They have no other financial resources. It is very difficult for an underground clergy to come to the free world to study. In the last 22 years of history of this Foundation, we have **never** rejected any underground religious student requesting our aids, as long as it could be certified that they indeed belong to the Underground Church in China. We may have difficulty to continue on this target because of decreasing income.

"With what prayerful longing and love do I follow the life of the loyal Chinese Catholic communities." Blessed Pope John Paul II, July 1, 1991

In spite of this poor economy, a very large percentage of our donors continue to make deep sacrifice to support the Underground Church through the Cardinal Kung Foundation. It is painful for me to ask you to consider making a bigger donation during this Christmas season so that we can continue our education subsidies in this school year Sept 2014 to June 2015. I understand this may not be possible for some donors. However, if you are blessed with the financial ability to increase your help to the Underground Church, I beg you to consider to do so. Our Lady of She Shan will not be outdone by your generosity.

The Foundation is very mindful of your tremendous sacrifice in making your donations. We do not use outside fundraising companies, so that 100% of your donations go to support the missions of the Foundation for the benefit of the Underground Church in China. The underground clergy, nuns and students gratefully remember all donors' intentions in their prayers.

Besides your generous donations, we especially wish to thank you for your prayers. Many of you have written from different parts of the world. In this regard, the Foundation wants to extend our gratitude to many cloistered communities, convents, monasteries, and faithful people like you in America and elsewhere who have been praying for the Underground Church, for its bishops and priests, and for the work of the Foundation for many years. As Cardinal Kung once said at an interview regarding his 32 years in the communist jail, "I would not have survived even for one day in prison without the support of the prayers of the universal Church."

Christmas Gifts – You probably have someone on your gift list for whom you have a hard time finding an appropriate present. Consider offering a Holy Mass by an underground priest for your friends/family special intentions. The Mass is no doubt the most perfect form of prayer. If this friend is prayerful, the gift of a Mass will be very appreciated. If the friend is not very prayerful, the Holy Mass will bring him/her the needed grace. Upon receipt of the Mass card, they will also have a chance to learn about the persecuted Catholic Church in China. Your Mass offering is also a much needed support to an underground priest.

To request a Holy Mass through this Foundation, please send us one intention for each Mass together with an offering of U.S. \$10 or more for each Mass and the name of the beneficiary. You can also request the Masses online at www.cardinalkungfoundation.org. Please note that 100% of your Mass offering will be sent to that priest who offers the Mass at your request. If you can, please also make a small general donation to the Foundation to defray the administrative expenses involved in this Mass Program. Feel free to request some blank Mass cards to have on hand so that you can send a Mass card to your friend immediately on a special occasion: birthday, first Holy Communion, Confirmation, graduation, sickness, a surgery or for the repose of the soul. Send your Mass offerings to the Foundation ONLY when you inform your friend of such Mass by sending our Mass Card to him/her. We have two kinds of Mass cards - general intention and the repose of the soul. Please also let us know if you need envelopes to mail with the Mass cards.

Gifts to Charities in Wills - After providing for your loved ones, gifts to charities in a will is a way to thank God for all the blessings received in one's lifetime. It is also a way to allow the charitable work that is important to you lives on through your legacy. Please remember the Cardinal Kung Foundation in your will. Cardinal Kung Foundation gratefully remembers our benefactors, living and deceased, in about 100 Masses each year.

China-Vatican Relations

Is His Holiness Pope Francis Optimistic About The Church in China?

Reprint of an article by His Eminence Joseph Zen Ze-Kiun, Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong

Hong Kong (AsiaNews) - Cardinal Zen sent AsiaNews some of his thoughts about the relationship between China and the Vatican. The prelate will be present at the AsiaNews International Symposium, whose theme is "*Mission in Asia: from Pope John Paul II to Pope Francis*".

Cardinal Zen: Optimism and pessimism define two expectations about the future, namely the near future and the distant future. When it comes to the definite future, we believers are certainly optimistic: victory belongs to God and to those who put their hope in Him. However, the world's future is under God's province, and therefore the faithful are basically optimistic.

Optimism does not mean believing in immediate success. The faithful can hang on to hope even in the most desperate situations because they believe that everything is by God's grace. In success or in disappointment, they praise the Lord and persevere in doing His will.

On the return flight from Korea, reporters asked Pope Francis if he would like to visit China. "of course! Even tomorrow!" he said.

The question probably stems from news reports that Pope Francis and Mr. Xi Jinping had exchanged congratulations for their respective election, and that China had allowed the papal plane to fly over its airspace. These are certainly acts of good will, but not much more. The same goes for the Pope's answer to reporters.

Many will remember that in an interview I had the audacity to say that should the Pope be invited now to visit China, I would advise against it. Based on the great lack of religious freedom and the recent intensification of China's oppressive religious policy, I have no reason to doubt that such an invitation would be just a trick to manipulate the Pope and create a false impression. And one of its major effects would be to cause pain to those who are faithful to the pontiff's authority.

Should the current situation change miraculously, I would certainly be happy to see the Holy Father meet with his children, who have been kept away for so long.

However, we must understand that when Pope Francis said that he would like to visit China, he also said that all he wants from Beijing is the freedom to fulfill our religious duties. In stressing that "Pope Benedict's letter to the Church in China [...] is still valid", he also urged people to "read it!"

In that letter, Pope Benedict wrote that the principles of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association are in contradiction with Catholic ecclesiology, and that the most serious issue today for the Church in China is that bodies outside the Church rule over the bishops, which is to say that the state runs the Church.

People say that China and the Vatican have begun to talk. In Korea, during the meeting with the Asian bishops, the Pope spoke about dialogue.

For him, there are two essential conditions for a proper dialogue: first, to be consistent with one's identity; second, openness to understand truly one's interlocutor.

Journalists tend to emphasize the second aspect, but the former is equally important. The Church cannot sell itself short to please the other party.

Recently, the congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples held a seminar for bishops ordained in recent years. On that occasion, the Holy Father noted in his final speech the absence of Chinese bishops, saying, "I hope that day [for their visit] will not be far off!" Through our prayer, "they can feel the certainty that their suffering will bear fruit - and what fruit!"

This is Christian optimism. Current suffering is no reason to be pessimistic. Seeking immediate success (in evangelizing) could by contrast be very dangerous because it might lead possibly to betraying one's vows of fidelity.

Letters from Students in Cardinal Kung Foundation's Education Assistance Program

I wish to share two letters with you that I recently received from our religious students in our Education Assistance Program. One has graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Theology in Europe and is ordained a deacon. He has since returned to China. The other one is now studying in Europe. For the safety of these two students, their names and hometowns are kept confidential.

From the Deacon, Paul - I returned to China recently. Since my return, I have been working in poor rural areas. I am grateful to God for putting me here where I can feel, in a tangible way, His presence and His love for the Chinese Catholic Church. A few days ago, I accompanied a priest to give the last rites to an elderly man. He lived alone in a dilapidated mud hut. On entering the hut, we were immediately assailed by a strong foul smell, repelling and almost palpable. A paralyzed old man was seen lying on a brick platform. Apparently, he was lying there for a long period without the care of any of his relatives, relying only on some Catholic neighbors to give food and drink. The lack of nursing care had caused him bed sores all over his body. He was holding a crucifix crying continuously, "Jesus, Jesus, have mercy on me, Jesus!" This tragic scene moved me to tears. A few days after he was given the last rites, he returned to the loving arms of God, where there is no more pain and suffering, only love and comfort. This encounter was not at all unusual; in fact, similar events occurred during the past months.

At present, I am assigned to work in a county town to gain some practical experience. There is no resident priest here. Approximately once a month, a Mass is said by a visiting priest from the neighboring districts. This county has approximately 3000 Catholics. Consequently, the responsibility on me is very heavy. My heart aches for the poor, yet devoted followers of Christ. Their fervent longing for God strengthens my will to serve them and to follow my calling.

I have been doing evangelization work, encouraging family and group praying together, teaching them their faith and leading them to recite prayers together. At present, I already have 17 prayer groups, two Sunday Catechism classes, three groups for daily Eucharistic adoration, one group named the "*Loving Heart*" to visit the sick and assist the needy, and finally a small group for evangelization. Every time I teach catechism or lead the people in prayers, I watch them crowding in a small room, yet joyfully praising God or fervently learning about Jesus. I feel as if I were transported back in time to our early Church.

I would like to establish a small reading room for this community which, I believe, is specially dear to God. This reading room would have a collection of prayer books and spiritual reading for the local people to learn and to deepen their faith. The standard of living here is very low which seems to heighten people's thirst for learning. If possible, please assist us with some funding so that we can spread the good news of Christ in multiple ways.

In the meantime, I want to thank you again for the two portable Monstrances that you gave me when I left Europe for China. They are having ten continuous hours of adorations everyday in different villages or in the open fields. We are very grateful beyond our words for this precious gift. Thank you so much. Paul

Note from Joseph Kung - We are in the process of assembling a small collection of Chinese spiritual books for his reading room, if we could get appropriate support and cooperation from some book stores. We will also fund him what he needs for his reading room and for his pastoral works.

I believe that Paul will be clandestinely ordained an underground priest in about a year. At the ordination, there will be no congregation, only a few priests and the bishop. Once in a while, the words may leak out. The ordination may be interrupted by the Security Bureau with everyone at the ordination arrested; because ordination in the Underground Church is not legal in China! Please pray that this interruption will not happen at Paul's ordination.

From Maria, a nun recently arrived in Europe to start her Bachelor's Degree studies - I am deeply grateful for your subsidy and concern. I wish to thank those benefactors who care and donate to the Underground church. In China, most donations in material or money from foreign religious communities usually go to the Government's Patriotic church, and the Underground Church is usually overlooked. However, God has not forsaken us. Through the Cardinal Kung Foundation, Catholic overseas gets to know the persecuted Church and is able to directly help us.

I want to share with you an incident that my mother told me many times in the past. In the mid nineteen-eighties, my mother and some friends went to a pilgrimage at the Shrine of Our Lady of She Shan, Shanghai. She was so blessed that upon arrival at the Shrine, they heard that Bishop Kung was at the Shrine offering a Mass of Thanksgiving before his departure to the United States. The Cathedral and the entire shrine were packed with people. After the Mass, the crowd was pushing hard to get a glimpse of Bishop Kung. Miraculously, my mother found herself facing Bishop Kung and she quickly knelt down and kissed his ring. Even to this day, my mother would be overwhelmed with emotions whenever she talked about this incidence. I wrote to let my mother know that some 20 years later, her daughter is so blessed to receive financial assistance from Cardinal Kung's Foundation. I will always pray for the canonization of Cardinal Kung, for the works of Cardinal Kung Foundation and for the intentions of our benefactors. Maria.

Acknowledgement

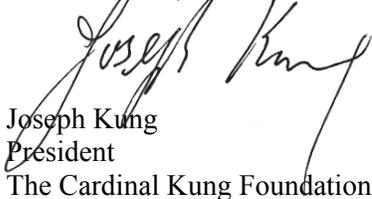
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The Cause

Please pray one Hail Mary daily for the opening of the cause of Cardinal Ignatius Kung.

Please let me know if you need any free prayer cards of Cardinal Kung or other holy cards as you will find published on our website. www.cardinalkungfoundation.org

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Joseph Kung
President
The Cardinal Kung Foundation

**Please Remember The Cardinal Kung Foundation in Your Will
Thank You**

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year