



THE CARDINAL KUNG FOUNDATION

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Dear Friends:

We wish you a happy feast day on the **Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. The Church on earth unites with the Church triumphant in heaven in welcoming the Mother of God in her body and soul as she ascended among the choirs of angels to her most exalted place where she was crowned Queen of Heaven. Before reciting the Angelus on August 15, 2013, Pope Francis said: "...Mary's journey to heaven began with the 'yes' in response to the Heavenly Messenger's announcement of God's will to her. And in reality it is just like this: every 'yes' to God is a step toward Heaven, toward eternal life....God wants us all with Him, in His house!....Let us all pray: 'Mary, Queen of peace, pray for us!'"

Celebrating Cardinal Kung's 115th birthday

In commemorating Cardinal Kung's birthday, Monsignor Stephen DiGiovanni, the Pastor of the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Stamford, Connecticut, wrote the following piece on his Church Bulletin that I have the privilege to reprint here with his permission:

August 2nd is the birthday of the late Ignatius Cardinal Kung, who lived the last years of his life in Stamford following nearly 33 years of imprisonment for the Catholic faith by the Communist Chinese government. He died in 2000, and his funeral was here in the Basilica. So important was the Cardinal for his dedication to Christ and His Catholic Church, that Saint Pope John Paul II sent a Cardinal Stafford to the funeral to represent him.



Ignatius Kung (Gong) Pin-Mei was born to Kung Xin Yuan (1871-1947) and Li Xian Yuing (1878-1958) on August 2, 1901 in Pudong, Shanghai, China. He was the eldest of four children, and was baptized in Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Tangzhen Village, Pudong, Shanghai, China.

The Kung Family is a venerable Catholic family, practicing the Faith for at least five generations at the time of Ignatius' birth. His father's elderly sister, Aunt Martha, presided over a small village school teaching classical Chinese and the Catholic Catechism. The Cardinal credited his vocation to the priesthood to the influence of his Aunt Martha, who also provided him at home with the equivalent of his first five years of primary school education. A Marist brother provided the young Ignatius with his instructions for his First Confession and First Holy Communion. He received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the customary age of eight or nine years. Following graduation from high school, and eight years of seminary training, Ignatius was ordained a priest on May 28, 1930 and began his pastoral work.

He served in parishes and in various Catholic schools during World War II. As the Chinese civil war concluded with the victory of Mao ZeDong and the communist party in 1949, Father Kung was named by Pope Pius XII as the first bishop of the new Diocese of Soochow on June 9, 1949.

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

At his Episcopal consecration on October 7, 1949, the Feast of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Bishop Kung told those gathered that Pope Pius XII's creation of a new Chinese diocese was heroic, at the very moment the communists were threatening the Catholic Church throughout the country: "I thank the Holy Father above all for his confidence in me. Better than anyone else, he knows our situation [the imminent persecution of the Church by the communist Chinese government] Despite this, he has created a new diocese. Is this not a palpable proof of his paternal confidence? Yet, it is he who holds the rudder of this new ship [the Diocese of Soochow], as if repeating Christ's own order, 'Put out into the deep', and I confidently respond, 'At your word I will lower the nets.'" As the communist control of the country and its war against the Catholic Church continued to develop, Pope Pius XII transferred Bishop Kung on July 15, 1950, naming him the first Chinese Bishop of Shanghai and Apostolic Administrator of Soochow and Nanking. He was now the bishop of the most important diocese in China with the largest Catholic population, just in time to do battle with the communist government.

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

The Catholic Church in China had been experiencing a great spiritual renewal beginning with the defeat and expulsion of the Japanese military forces at the end of World War II. Since then, many robust initiatives were made to evangelize the pagan Chinese majority, especially in Shanghai and to strengthen the spiritual lives of the Catholics there. These were dangerous times as the communist central government organized efforts to co-opt various religious groups. Most protestant groups willingly co-operated early on and accepted “patriotic” Chinese forms and control of their religions. But the Catholic Church was different: it was the largest of all missionary efforts in China, with more than 3,000,000 Chinese Catholics, with the largest number of priests, religious brothers and sisters, both foreign and native born. And, it was international, with headquarters not in China, but in Rome. The communist propaganda machine began its work by painting all non-Chinese influences and organizations as enemies. The communist government quickly began expelling foreign missionaries, especially foreign-born Catholic priests, religious brothers and religious sisters. Any who remained were incarcerated, as were many native clergy. Bishop Kung warned his priests:

“You must not have any more illusions about our situation. You have to face prison and death head on. This is your destiny. It was prepared for you because Almighty God loves you. What is there to be afraid of?”

This was his life, and he urged all Catholics and clergy in his diocese to remain faithful to Christ despite the pressures by the government. On September 8, 1955, he and hundreds of Catholics in Shanghai were arrested. He remained imprisoned for the next 33 years. He was released only because he was sick, and the Chinese government feared his death would be interpreted as martyrdom. While still in prison, Bishop Kung was secretly named a cardinal by Pope Saint John Paul II.

Please pray for the opening of the cause of canonization of Cardinal Kung. I ask that each member of our parish offer one “Hail Mary” daily for this intention. And, please pray for China, and for the underground Catholic Church in China, still persecuted today. —Monsignor DiGiovanni

Doctorate Degree for Our Director/Treasurer

One of our founding Directors and Treasurer, Mac Chung Ping MAK, has been conferred upon last May the degree of Doctor of Ministry from Fordham University of New York. His professional title is Practical Theologian. The title of his dissertation is “Impact on the Ministry of the Church in China by Pope Benedict XVI’s Letter to Chinese Catholics”. You may read his dissertation at www.proquest.com or at any computer terminal in the public library. We congratulate Dr. Mak for his achievement.

China News

1) Catholic Church hierarchy in China, 70th Anniversary -- This year (April 11, 2016) marks the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the Catholic Church hierarchy in China on April 11, 1946 by Pope Pius XII. This consists in the establishment of 137 dioceses within 20 ecclesiastical provinces. Thomas Cardinal Tian Gengxin, SVD, became the first cardinal from the Far East in the same year on February 18, 1946. This is not to say that there had been no previous hierarchy of the Church in China. As far back as the early fourteenth century, John of Montecorvino was appointed by Rome as archbishop of the Church in China. From the seventeenth century onwards, there existed a system of apostolic vicariates.

However, with the takeover of China by the Communists in 1949, it did not take long before the government intervened and, in 1957, the Patriotic Association soon set up its own party-controlled bishoprics. Episcopal provinces, previously established by the Church authorities in the Vatican, were abolished by the Chinese government.

Father Sergio Ticozzi, PIME, researcher of the Holy Spirit Study Center of the Hong Kong Diocese, wrote on April 9 this year in the Hong Kong Sunday Examiner: “I wish to confirm that the Holy See is prepared to address the entire question of the circumscriptions and ecclesiastical provinces in an open and constructive dialogue with the Chinese Episcopate and — where opportune and helpful — with government authorities.”

2) Cultural Revolution, 50th Anniversary – AsiaNews wrote: “Fifty years ago, May 16, 1966, Mao Zedong launched a campaign to eliminate his rivals, beginning a period of Chinese history referred to as the ‘Cultural Revolution’....This bloody campaign killed nearly 2 million people and sent a further 4 million to concentration camps....Today, the Party does not dare to lift the veil on the responsibilities of the ‘Great Helmsman’ (Mao Zedong) and those of the other leaders, and 50 years later has yet to grant justice to the victims (they are Christians lumped together with intellectuals, professionals, landowners and academics as enemies of the people, and Catholics in particular), or issue an apology to those who have suffered.”

“During these periods of the dark night of my soul” recounted author Gerolamo Fazzini of a certain imprisoned priest in his book titled *The Red Book of Chinese Martyrs*, “caused by the mental and physical stresses of the Communist persecution, I suffered so much that I thought there could not be anything worse.” This priest spent the Cultural Revolution in forced labor in a factory in northern China where 1,000 detainees committed suicide. “Churches were knocked down,” reported the *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner*, “while others were used for housing weapons for battles that raged across the country, as priests were detained, tortured, and killed in an orgy of violence that engulfed the entire population.” UCAN reported that “a doctor had two Red Guards standing outside the door of his clinic throughout the day. Only at night when he was sure no one was watching would the doctor lock his door, unfold a secretly stashed portrait of Our Lady of Lourdes, then pin the image to a board before starting to pray....Many years later, the pin holes on the portrait show how faith was maintained during the difficult era.”

A succession of priests and sisters were tortured and died, and even a convent of sisters running a school for the diplomatic corps in Beijing was attacked and the sisters beaten. AsiaNews recounted that one was whipped so hard in the face that she almost lost one of her eyes. The next day, they were tried and the foreign nuns were expelled. The Chinese nuns were sentenced to 20 years in prison. On reaching the village of Lowu on the China/Hong Kong border, Sister Mary O'Sullivan was so exhausted with fever that she passed out. The Chinese guards threw her on a cart for the other nuns to push her across the bridge. She was taken to hospital in Hong Kong, but died the next day.

These are just a few examples of thousands of atrocities committed by the Communist regime during this Cultural Revolution. It ended when Mao Zedong died in 1976. We remember and pray for all these victims. Those who were martyred and those who were tortured or imprisoned for their Christian faith were united to the Cross of Christ, bringing on countless graces for the salvation of souls, especially in China. "Precious in the sight of the Lord are the deaths of His saints" (Psalm 115:15).

3) Sino-Vatican Negotiation – Much has been reported in the media on the secret direct negotiations between the Vatican and China that continues for the past two years. The first meeting was in the Vatican on June 27-28, 2014. The second meeting was held in Beijing on Oct 11-16, 2015. The third meeting was hosted in the Vatican on Jan 25-26, 2016. The fourth meeting was believed to have taken place in Beijing the last week of April of this year. This April meeting was regarded as successful, although still shrouded in secrecy, to the point that both sides have agreed and have formed a Working Group to negotiate and work out the main issues. The general consensus from the media is that the most important key issue of these negotiations is the nomination of bishops in China.

Father Bernardo Cervellera, the Founding Editor of the AsiaNews, wrote: "...It would seem that Beijing's proposal is....: Vatican's approval of the (Chinese) government recognized Council of Bishops (an entity of the Chinese government)...(and) approval of the competency of this Council (not the Pope) in the appointments of new candidates to the episcopacy who will be 'democratically' elected (in short according to the suggestions of the Patriotic Association). The Holy See **MUST** approve the Council's appointment, and has a **WEAK** veto only in 'severe' cases, which must be justified if used. If the Holy See's justifications are considered 'insufficient' (by the Council), the Council of Bishops may decide to proceed anyway.

"If this information is accurate, can the Holy See accept the claims of the Chinese counterpart? Does this approach still respect the true authority of the Pope to appoint bishops? Can the Pope sign such an agreement? (Pope Benedict said: 'The authority of the Pope to appoint bishops is given to the church by its founder Jesus Christ. It is not the property of the Pope, neither can the Pope give it to others').

"Do our officials in Rome know what an election is in China? Do they know that the so-called Episcopal Conference is not only illegitimate, but simply does not exist? What exist....are the Patriotic Association and the Bishop's conference (that) always work together as one body, which is always chaired by government officials....Signing such an agreement means delivering the authority to appoint bishops into the hands of an atheist government...."

America Magazine reported: "At the end of 2015, there were 112 Catholic bishops in China (99 in active ministry, 13 not). Seventy belong to the open church and are recognized by the government, while 29 are underground and not so recognized. (Most of the 112 bishops are recognized by Rome.) Beijing redrew the ecclesiastical borders and recognized only 97 dioceses to the Vatican's 138....There are now some 40 dioceses without a bishop. If the two sides fail to reach an agreement on this central question, Beijing could, and probably would, ordain 10-20 bishops without papal approval. Such a move could mean that in addition to the eight illegitimate bishops already in China, there would be 20 to 30 more. This would in fact be a schismatic church. Rome wants to avoid such a scenario and is investing much effort in the dialogue."

However, according to Telegraph of UK, as an example, an underground priest is quoted saying "Rome may betray us. If this happens, I will resign. I won't join a church which is controlled by the Communist Party". "To work for a bishop appointed by an atheist government would be anathema to any good priest, and to accept the ministrations of such a bishop would be repugnant to any faithful catholic layperson too," Catholic Herald of UK editorized. There are enough reports pointing to the fears that Catholics in China's underground Catholic Church are very concerned over the possibility of Rome's cooperation with the Chinese government in appointing bishops. This is because, as Telegraph remarked: "there are signs that Rome may be willing to compromise. Pope Francis has publicly praised China and voiced the hope that he will visit the country."

If the agreement indeed is signed, there is no necessity for the Chinese government to ease off the pressure on the loyal underground Catholic, since Rome may have de-facto given the Chinese government the power to appoint bishops and to govern the Catholic Church in China. Cardinal Zen, the Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, wrote: "We do not see any sign that would encourage the hope that the Chinese Communists are about to change their restrictive religious policy....It is unthinkable to leave the initial proposal in the hands of an atheist government who cannot possibly judge the suitability of a candidate to be a bishop." Even though Cardinal John Tong, the current Bishop of Hong Kong, explained, according to Catholic world News, that the Sino-Vatican negotiations are aimed at ensuring religious freedom in China and establishing unity within the Church on the mainland, Cardinal Zen voiced his deep concern about the quiet talks between Vatican officials and their Chinese counterparts, saying that Chinese Catholic have not been kept informed about the content of these negotiations. Even a commission established by the Vatican to oversee talks with China has not been briefed. Let us pray that the dogma of the Catholic Church that the bishops must be appointed and approved by the Pope will not be eroded because of the eagerness of the Vatican to establish relationships with China.

4) Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin of Shanghai – As we previous reported, Father Ma Daqin was ordained on July 7, 2012 as Auxiliary Bishop of Shanghai by the Holy See, but appointed Coadjutor Bishop of Shanghai by the Chinese government. At the time of his ordination, Father Ma was vice-chairman of the Shanghai CCPA (Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association), and a member of the national standing committee of the CCPA. During the ordination Mass, Father Ma made history by not only rejecting the imposition of hands by an excommunicated bishop, but also refusing to drink from the same cup of the illicit Bishop. As soon as he became bishop at the end of the Mass, he declared that he would resign from the Patriotic Association. His words were met with thunderous, spontaneous, and repeated applause comingled with much joyful tears flowing freely from the 2,000 attendees at the Mass. “In the light of the teaching of Our Mother Church, as I now serve as a bishop, I should focus on the pastoral work and evangelization. It is inconvenient for me to take on certain responsibilities. Therefore, from this day of consecration, I will no longer be convenient to be a member of the Patriotic Association. May we be one For the Greater of God!” Bishop Ma declared.

AsiaNews reported: “for his ‘insubordination’, a few hours after the ordination, he (Bishop Ma) was placed in solitary confinement in the Shanghai Sheshan Seminary....denied all visitation rights and stripped of his right to bear any sign of his Episcopal ordination neither miter or cross, nor celebrate in public.....Bishop Ma was also stripped of the title of ‘bishop’ of Shanghai (by the Chinese government) and subjected to ‘investigation for violating norms’.....They (the Chinese government) revenged by closing the seminary; placing controls on female religious orders, closing down the diocesan publishing house. They would not allow the opening of a Holy Door for the Jubilee of Mercy; large sum of money disappeared from the accounts of the diocese.”

For the true reasons we simply do not know, after four years of solitary confinement, and of traumatic interrogations and brain washing, **Bishop Ma recanted his resignation from the Patriotic Association.**

On June 12 last, Bishop Ma wrote in his blog: “.....I was tricked by outside elements, and made errors of words and deeds against the Patriotic Association. On reflection, I find this was an extremely unwise move, and my conscience was not peaceful, hurting those who selflessly cared for me and helped me for a long time....For this, my heart has been uneasy and felt guilty. I hope to use this concrete actions to remedy these mistakes.....The Patriotic Association is not how many outsiders judge it to be, and I believe most of the priests and faithful in Shanghai recognize and trust the Patriotic Association. The PA has an irreplaceable role in the development of the Church in China.....” AsiaNews reported.

Media reported that many Chinese faithful are incredulous at Bishop Ma’s recantation. Some, as a sample, said that they are not “sure” that the above writing was really written by Bishop Ma. Some flatly said: “It is a lie: The letter is not by the Bishop. It was written by someone else. It is the usual government game, and we don’t believe it anymore.” Others show compassion and understanding for the bishop: “Who knows what he must have endured and suffered for so long....The Chinese government can even make a stone confess to its mistakes.....” Many people also believe that this may be a tactic of the Chinese government to strengthen its negotiation power with the Vatican and to demoralize the underground Church.

Catholic World News wrote: “Cardinal Joseph Zen, the retired Bishop of Hong Kong, has questions whether Bishop Ma’s reversal can be taken seriously...Father Gianni Criveller of the Pontifical Missions and a long-time missionary in China observes: ‘I believe that the question of whether Bishop Ma has written the article or not is misleading, because a person kept under house arrest, under pressure and multiple interrogations and under ‘political’ lessons, cannot be considered to be free, not even when he writes with his own hand.”

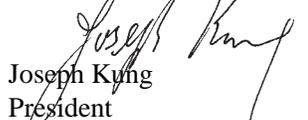
The Vatican remained silent of Bishop Ma’s reversal until Cardinal Zen protested on June 22 the Holy See’s initial silence. Cardinal Zen said : “The Vatican should clarify and give guidance, for the truth, for justice and for the good moral of love. They should protect the Church’s reputation, Bishop Ma’s reputation, and eradicate that chaos and dejection in the Chinese Church. Not saying anything is irresponsible” A Chinese bishop in southern China wrote: “It is a pity that the Vatican is silent....I hope that Ma Daqin’s ‘conversion’ was not piloted by someone in the Vatican to promote an increasingly pointless dialogue.”

One day after Cardinal Zen’s protest, Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican’s spokesman, responded on June 23 that “With regard to the recent declarations attributed to Msgr. Taddeo Ma Daqin, Auxilliary Bishop of Shanghai, these have come to the attention of the Holy See through his blog and via press agencies. No direct information is currently available. Any speculation with regard to a presumed role of the Holy See is inappropriate. The personal and ecclesial life of Msgr. Ma Daqin, like that of all Chinese Catholics, is followed with particular care and concern by the Holy Father, who remembers them daily in prayer.”

This report of Bishop Ma is developing. Please intensify your prayers for this very urgent matter facing the Catholic Church in China. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the true success of the Sino-Vatican negotiations, for Bishop Ma, and all other bishops in China, and for those underground bishops, priests, other faithful who are still incarcerated by the Chinese government.

Thank you.

In the Immaculate Heart of Mary


Joseph Kung
President
Cardinal Kung Foundation

Please Remember the Cardinal Kung Foundation in your will
Thank you