



Christmas 2016

Dear Friends:

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

*Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just:
Let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour. (Isaiah 45:8)*

This is the Cardinal Kung Foundation's twenty-fourth Christmas newsletter since our establishment in 1992. By the time that you receive it, Advent will be over and the great day of our Lord's Nativity will be around the corner. The verse above, from the prophet Isaiah is the opening Introit prayer for the last Sunday of Advent. I chose it as an epigraph because not only it is sublime poetry inspired by God, but also because it is expressive of the joy that should fill our hearts as the dawn of our salvation rising from the East. The darker the times, the brighter will be the sun that chases sins away through its mighty heat. The Church in China, risen from the East, continues to walk with Jesus in His Passion, carrying the Cross. The underground church has put their hope in the Saviour for the past 67 years. As Cardinal Kung once said, "The Roman Catholic Church will never disappear in China. Please stand with us until Holy Mother saves us in Her own time."

The Persecuted Church gained another ardent advocate in Heaven

On November 24th, **Mother Teresa of Jesus, (Maureen) Fox, O.C.D.** peacefully passed into eternal life at the age 91 at the Carmel of St. Joseph, Spruce Grove, Alberta, Canada. Born in Cardiff, South Wales, Great Britain, she entered the Carmelite Monastery in Bridell, Cardige on 1952. During her 62 years of religious life, her assignments included being Novice Mistress at Bridell Carmel and Macau Carmel, and Secretary of the Association of Carmels of Great Britain, Mother Teresa of Jesus was then the Prioress of the Macau Carmel from 1985 for 31 years until her death. In March 1990, Mother Teresa arrived Canada with seven sisters to found the Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph in Spruce Grove, Alberta.

Mother's experience in Macau gave her a deep insight on Communist China and a profound love for the persecuted Church in China. She kept close contact with many faithful Chinese clergy and laity from around the world; many were former prisoners for Christ in China. They found great comfort in her advice, insightful words, literary assistance and the prayers of her Carmel community. When Bishop Kung arrived the United States in 1987, Mother reached out immediately to him. The Cardinal Kung Foundation is most grateful for her advice during the past 25 years. At every opportunity, she would talk to the Monastery visitors about the Underground Church. The Foundation celebrates the life and ministry of Mother Teresa of Jesus, and thanks God for sending the persecuted Church a great friend and advocate. I have no doubt that Mother Teresa will continue to intercede vigorously for us in heaven, joining force with Cardinal Kung and thousands of Chinese martyrs. *Please join us in prayers for the repose of the soul of Mother Teresa of Jesus, and for grace and comfort to her Carmel Community and her relatives.*

News and thoughts from the Underground Church

1) **From a seminarian** – Our diocese has no bishop and is under a Diocesan Administrator. This year, we are blessed with the ordination of five priests who are graduates of our seminary. Another two priests have recently returned from Europe after completing their advance studies. In spite of this, we do not have enough priests to work in our villages. Now, our seminary has started a theology class for catechists. Over 30 people joined this two-year course, attending evening classes twice weekly after work. When they graduate, they will offer significant help to our priests. Please pray for the success of this program and the safety of the participants. If this is discovered by the government, all of them would surely be arrested or fined.

2) **From a priest** – He returned to China a few years ago after his advance studies in Europe. "Our diocese is very vibrant with many pastoral activities. Thank you for supporting our priests with your Mass Stipend Program. Our priests in this very poor area rely on the stipends to cover their living expenses. We are deeply concerned about our immediate future. We will be obedient to our Holy Father. But we are very worried how Vatican will settle the underground church.

Vatican-China Negotiation Update

This negotiation, started in April 2014, has dominated news headlines. As it is kept highly confidential, we can only obtain information from the press that typically source their material from “China Experts”. If you wish to follow more closely this development or to gain another perspective, please *Google* “Cardinal Zen Ze-Kiun” who is the Cardinal Emeritus of Hong Kong.

For about 20 years, Vatican has not appointed any bishops to replace the deceased underground bishops. Therefore, many underground dioceses are now under Diocesan Administrators. Meanwhile, numerous Patriotic Bishops have been elected and ordained by the China Catholic Patriotic Association which is control by the government’s Religious Affairs Bureau....Some bishops had “consent” from Vatican prior to ordinations. Others would eventually seek Vatican recognition, but in both situations, they remain Patriotic Association bishops. They benefited from both worlds, getting the legal and financial protection of the communist government as well as the blessings of the Vatican! The Vatican policy is puzzling. The underground church does not lack suitable bishop candidates with experience, talents and training. There are dozens of experienced priests with Masters and PhD degrees awarded by European universities. They are known to the Vatican. They are faithfully serving the Underground Church. They have demonstrated their faith and fidelity.

According to various reports, both Vatican and the Chinese Government have agreed to leave the thorny questions off the table such as underground bishops still imprisoned or disappeared. The Holy See would reinstate eight excommunicated official bishops (some with wives and children). Vatican officials met with Patriotic bishops during their visits to China, but did not meet with the Roman Catholic underground bishops.

Even in recent years, the Patriotic Association bishops have publicly credited their ability to evangelize to being an independent church. President Xi has also said, even in recent months, that religion must be controlled by the Chinese government without foreign influence. Their unwavering position is very clear. Would an agreement with Vatican soften the position of the communist government? Would this agreement change the commitment of the Patriotic Bishops to the Holy See while they are subjected to the constant scrutiny of the communist authority? As an independent church, the China Catholic Patriotic Bishops Conference will nominate bishop-candidates. Vatican would have weak veto power; that is, if Vatican could justify its objection to the satisfaction of the Patriotic Bishops Conference. The latter may even decide to go ahead ignoring Vatican’s objection. It is noteworthy that this Bishops Conference was declared as “incompatible with Catholic doctrine” by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in 2007.

In a recent interview with *Katholisch.de*, the German Bishops’ official website, Cardinal Joseph Zen “described the dangers of the Vatican’s current policy of working with the Chinese Government while weakening the Catholic witness of the lay faithful who are not willing to submit themselves to Communist rule.” Cardinal Zen pointed out that a Communist regime “...is a totalitarian regime which wants to control everything...the church may not be controlled by a government, by a regime.” He further said that “The good-will of the Chinese government cannot be relied on. Even while the negotiation is ongoing the Chinese government is removing Crosses from the roofs and it sharpens with new rules to control the faithful and their pastors....Pope Francis is far away, he does not know China or the Chinese government....There are people in the Vatican who insist upon having a success...the historic breakthrough.” Cardinal said that he knows of many good priests and bishops in the Chinese Church. But they have to obey the state, they are being led by the nose by the government...they are not shepherds, but only representatives of the state. They do not serve the gospels, but the political power.” Cardinal (then Bishop) Kung once related a story. In mid-1980, the government reopened a few seminaries. A young man asked, “Bishop, should I join the seminary?” Bishop Kung replied, “Do you wish to preach Jesus’s gospel or the gospel of the government?” A few months later, Bishop left China for America. Three years later, Bishop Kung received a note from China, and it read, “Bishop, I want you to know that I have returned to my diocese in the country side and joined an underground seminary. Please pray for my vocation.”

When asked if Cardinal Zen is against Pope Francis with his many critical remarks, Cardinal Zen reiterated, “I criticize the Vatican, but not the Pope. If (Pope) Francis comes to an agreement with Beijing, I will stop speaking, I will disappear....and never appear publicly again. I have also said to my brethren: retreat quietly and wait until better times come.”

Recent Bishop Ordination. On November 10, 2016, China ordained Msgr. Peter DING Lingbin, bishop of Changzhi. Msgr. Ding has been approved by the Holy See. *AsiaNews.it* reported that “as in the past, the papal letter sent to Msgr. Ding was read in private to the priests...the letter of the Council of Chinese bishops was read in Public.” At the end of the ceremony, Msgr. Ding thanked the bishops, priests, faithful present as well as officials of the United Front and Religious Affairs Bureau, The report said that he thanked the Pope in his heart. So much for being in communion with the Pope and fidelity to the Pontiff.

Please pray for Holy Spirit’s guidance on Pope Francis and the Vatican negotiation team. Please remember the underground church during this blessed Christmas.

*The Board of Directors joins me in thanking you for your generous support.
May the Holy Family bless you and your loved ones.*

Joseph Kung & the Board of Directors