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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”

October 7, 2018

May Our Lady of The Rosary bless and protect you and your family.

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* In Memoriam

This feast day has special significance to the Foundation. In 1949 immediately after the communists took over the government of China, persecutions quickly started all over the country. Persecutions targeted landowners, business owners, intellectuals and religious personnel, especially on religions with foreign connections. All aspects of the Catholic Church were attacked included churches, schools and charities run by religious. Foreign clergy and bishops were imprisoned, expelled or killed. After his ordination and for about 20 years, Father Kung mostly worked in education, first as a teacher and later as principle of two Jesuit high schools in Shanghai. Due to the religious persecution, many dioceses have no bishops. It was under such circumstances that Pope Pius XII asked Father Ignatius Kung to be the Bishop of Soochow, a new diocese adjacent to Shanghai. In the eyes of the world, to be a bishop in the midst of the communist persecution was very unwise. A bishop would expect to see his clergy and nuns arrested, facing increasing heavy taxes and fines, and dealing with new restrictive regulations on churches and schools. When asked to be a bishop, most clergy would politely back off. Some attempted to leave China. Father Kung was fully aware of the humanly impossible conditions of this request; but he also realized the urgency of providing bishops for the church to continue in China. After making a thirty-day day retreat, he obediently accepted God's will and Holy Father's call.

A bishop consecration at that time must be carried out as soon as arrangement could be made and before the government could stop the event. Contrary to this practice, Father Kung asked the Nuncio to delay the consecration for almost 4 months until the Feast of the Holy Rosary. He said, "*Without the protection and blessings of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, I will not have the strength and ability to be a bishop in a communist regime.*" The Nuncio reluctantly agreed. On the Feast of the Rosary in 1949, Bishop Kung took the first step of his journey towards Calvary. One year later, Bishop Kung was asked to be the Bishop of Shanghai, concurrently Administrator of Soochow and Nanking (capital of China at that time). As a bishop of three dioceses including the capital city and an international business center, the atheist government scrupulously hoped that Bishop Kung could be a strong advocate

for the government agenda. Otherwise, Bishop Kung must be eliminated.

Between 1949–1955, while dealing with the arrests of the diocesan personnel at all levels, exorbitant tax, fine and harassment, Bishop Kung made use of this short period of limited freedom to prepare the diocese for the inevitable onslaught of persecution. Bishop dedicated the Diocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary; vigorously trained catechists; started strong devotional activities in all parishes (rosary, homily, benediction, Legion of Mary), declared a Marian Year in 1953 which included a Perpetual Rosary in the Diocese for an entire year.

Once, at the end of the Stations of the Cross in a very crowded church, Cardinal prayed: "Holy Mother, we do not ask that you stop the persecution. We beg you to help us because we are very weak."

Cardinal placed his ministry in the hands of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. Let's us now imitate Cardinal Kung during this very difficult time for the Church and pray the Rosary for the Church in China and for the Universal Church.

Today in China After almost 70 years, the Church in China is still persecuted by its atheist government. At the 19th National Congress of China in 2016, the government announced comprehensive, restrictive religious policies to be carried out under the direction of an agency in the communist party, the United Front Works Department (UFWD), in order to rein all religions under the party in the name of "Sinicize all religions."

Meanwhile, the Catholic communities in China and the world were told that a new historic, Provisional Agreement between Vatican and China had been signed on September 22, 2018. In spite of its vast impact, only bits and pieces of this agreement were released by Vatican and China over the past weeks. Only a handful of negotiators have the full information: Cardinals Parolin and Filoni, Archbishop Celli, etc. Six millions of underground Catholics, bishops, clergy and nuns are left in confusion, fear and pain while the government continues its harassment.

Our Thoughts on the Vatican-China Provisional Agreement

Pope Francis said that signing the agreement involved a leap of faith.... it also required a readiness to trust the Chinese authorities. Speaking on his Papal plane returning from the Baltic visit, Pope said that he took responsibility for this landmark deal with China. Pope Francis admitted, "it's true, they (underground church) will suffer. There is always suffering in an agreement" and loss for both sides. For us, one critical question remains: To what extent was the fidelity and suffering of the underground church a critical consideration at the negotiation table?

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/09/26/180926b.html>.

<https://aleteia.org/2018/09/26/pope-writes-explanation-in-wake-of-new-accord-with-china-on-bishops>

The following remarks are mostly based on the information from the media and conversation with the underground church. We keep in mind President Xi's current religious policy; that is, to Sinicize religions. **Religions must be guided by the party and to promote the communist party agenda; religion must not have foreign influence.** There are five approved religions including the Patriotic Association, an independent Catholic church. Promoting an independent church is not old history. Patriotic Association bishops never ceased to give credit to an independent church for the growth of the church. A few months ago, Patriotic Association Bishops have distributed their 5-year plan to Sinicize their Dioceses and requested each parish to formulate its local plan to advance President Xi's policy to Sinicize religions. Will President Xi exempt the Catholic Church in China from complying with new religious regulations that deviate from the current practices of the Catholic Church?

1 Pope to name bishops in China under the new deal Holy Father was very happy and emotional that he will be naming future bishops in China. From what was understood by the press and the practice in past years (prior to the signing of the deal,) China will permit the Pope to have some participation in the process of selecting bishops. The Pope may choose from a list of candidates elected by the local Catholic Patriotic Association currently consisted of clergy, nuns, laity and party officials. The United Front Works Department (UFWD), an agency in the communist party, will approve this list of candidates. The Pope will name one from the list. If the Pope disapproves of all the names, the Pope must wait for another list.

In the totalitarian world, the candidates will be thoroughly vetted by the communist party prior to election. Moreover, only clergy and faithful trusted by the party can serve on this selection committee. They are the eyes and ears of the party in that diocese. There is no free election in a communist state. In reality, the Communist Party/UFWD has the first right of refusal of bishop candidates through the local election committee. Pope Francis hopes to give China good shepherds through this deal. However, is the communist party the best judge of authentic, good shepherds?

2 Excommunicated Bishops As a part of the Deal and at the strong insistence from the Chinese government, The Holy Father has lifted the excommunication on eight Patriotic Association bishops (one posthumously). It has been said that two of the newly forgiven Patriotic bishops will replace two current underground bishops who have been asked to step aside.

Release of current prisoners of conscience The Beijing government stood firm for its own officials-bishops and successfully obtained recognition for ALL eight excommunicated bishops under this deal. Sadly, there was no similar consideration for the release of current underground bishops and clergy. One of them is **Bishop James Su Zhimin**, Bishop of Baoding who was arrested since 1996. Bishop Su's only crime was his never yielding fidelity to the Pope and his refusal to join the Patriotic Association. According to Vatican, for the first time the pope is now the head of all bishops in China under this new deal. ALL Patriotic Association bishops are now in communion with Vatican. This made the reason of Bishop Su's arrest, being firm in his communion with the Pope, no longer an issue. He should be automatically released.

Even civil government negotiates for the return of their citizens held by foreign governments. A bishop is a Successor of the Apostles and represents the Pope in a local church. **Could Vatican not even exchange the release of one holy bishop for 8 excommunicated bishops?**

3 Excommunicated Bishop Forgiven posthumously Holy Father lifted the excommunication of this bishop posthumously, but he has failed to ask Beijing to **exonerate thousands of martyrs and dry martyrs who suffered due to their fidelity to the Pope**. The new deal should make the reasons for their imprisonment irrelevant. Those unjustly martyred or arrested should be exonerated. Martyrs included the following: Father Beda Chang, S.J. first martyr of the Shanghai Diocese; Bishop Peter Fan, martyred in jail after 34 years of imprisonment; Archbishop Dominic Tang, S.J., Archbishop of Canton, imprisoned for 22 years without a trial; Cardinal Ignatius Kung, imprisoned for 32 years for refusing to lead the independent church.

When Cardinal Kung died in year 2000, the whole world gave thanks to God for giving the Church a holy good shepherd. Bishop Aloysius Jin, S.J. the late Patriotic Bishop of Shanghai, together with the Shanghai and Beijing government declared, "Kung was a prisoner of China and an enemy of the church. History will judge him." The Beijing government should exonerate all those prisoners so that they would not forever bear the stigma of a criminal.

4 Diocese Administrators While Vatican has approved jointly with the Patriotic church over 30 Patriotic bishops in recent years, Vatican has not approved any underground bishops during the same period. Each time an underground bishop died, Vatican assigned a clergy as an Administrator to manage the diocese. These Administrators have faithfully evangelized to keep alive the sacramental life in their dioceses. They have no titles, no recognition and no resources for long years. Their dioceses are very active, with many vocations in priesthood and religious orders. The government does not recognize them as bishops. Neither the Vatican nor the Patriotic Association has mentioned the fate of this group of dedicated Administrators under the new Deal. The Vatican has announced that the Pope is the head of all bishops in China, he should have the authority to give the title of Bishops to these Administrators.

For the past few years and while the negotiation was ongoing, significant pressure was put on these Administrators to register with the Patriotic Association and to hand over their diocese with its clergy and religious to the Patriotic Bishop. They remained steadfast to the Holy Father in spite of harassments. Have they been conveniently overlooked at the negotiation? Pope Francis and The Secretary of the States reiterated many times their admiration and appreciation for the suffering and fidelity of the underground church in China. We hope that Vatican will put their appreciation in actions. If the Pope does not name them bishops soon, not only will the clergy and faithful of these dioceses be demoralized, the universal church will also watch them with pain and great confusion.

5 United Front Work Department (UFWD) The new religious policy announced by the 19th National Congress last October placed all 5 approved religions directly under the UFWD. This agency will set religious policy and oversee its implementation to support the goals of the communist party. As President Xi has said, the Party must guide religions. Religion may not have foreign influence.

Among the 5 approved religions in China, Roman Catholic (estimated at 12 millions) is one of the smaller groups. Is Vatican confident that it can gain concessions on these new hostile religious policies that do not conform to Roman Catholic practices? Holy Father may be naming the bishops from the list of approved candidates, but these bishops and the dioceses will be governed by the communist party agency. Is Vatican handling over the evangelization of China and spiritual life of some 12 millions Catholic to atheists?

6 Communist Government and Evangelization The good will of the communist government in promoting Christianity and the Catholic Church in China is questionable judging from some of the new religious regulations effective last October:

- Minors under age 18 may not receive religious instruction, attend church or listen to homily. Signs or guards have been posted at the entrances of many churches. This regulation will reduce Catholics in future generations. Will First Holy Communion in China be changed to age 18?
- As most underground parishes do not have churches, Holy Masses are typically offered in a home of a faithful. The new regulation stated that hosting unregistered clergy or nuns or conducting unregistered activities is punishable by heavy fines or confiscation of the property. This will reduce the availability of Holy Masses in the underground church. It may also drive some clergy and faithful further underground.
- The government is cracking down on underground seminaries as unregistered activities. Many consider underground seminarians poorly trained due to their illegitimate status. A holy priest does not learn from books

alone, but from the holy examples of their dedicated bishops and priests. Their curriculum and text are not censored. Many seminarians graduated with advanced degrees from overseas seminaries. In spite of their academic ability, experience and fluent language of their host countries, they did not seek incardination overseas, but returned to serve in the underground dioceses. We hope the Vatican will truly treasure these clergy.

- The Chinese government is also cracking down on its own party members. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) declared that it will strictly enforce disciplinary action and will dismiss party members who practice religion.
- Government employees (includes teachers, professors, doctors, nurses, militaries and employers of government units) who practice religion will be invited for re-educations. Repeated offender may be dismissed or lose major benefits. In some parts of China, children of a government employee who practice religion may not apply to universities. Such religious discriminations greatly limit the ability of Catholic Church to evangelize.
- Online sales of bibles have been abruptly stopped. Only one version of the bible which is approved by the Patriotic Association is available for sales. Websites for evangelization and religious activities must be approved. Many have been shut down.

Second Negotiation Just Began Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported that the Holy See hopes to convince the communist government to recognize about 12 underground bishops (out of the over 30 bishops) by the end of 2018. We are totally puzzled. These are bishops consecrated by Vatican. They are Successors of the Apostles and bishops in communion with Pope Francis. By this historic Deal, Pope Francis is now the head of all bishops in China including the previous 7 excommunicated bishops. It is inconceivable that Holy Father needs to negotiate and to convince the government to accept his own bishops, not even all of them, only 12!

Bishops Synod on Youth 2018 At the opening of the Synod on Youth in Vatican early this month, Pope Francis emotionally welcome “for the first time,two bishops from Mainland China. We offer them our warm welcome: the communion of the entire Episcopate with the Successor of Peter is yet more visible thanks to their presence.” The two bishops are: Joseph Guo Jincai, Bishop of Chengde (Hebei province) and John Baptist Yang Xiaoting, Bishop of Yan’an (Shaanxi province). No underground bishops were invited.

Bishop Joseph Guo Jincai was excommunicated for accepted illicit ordination on 2010. He faithfully serves the Patriotic Association and the government. He was appointed the General Secretary of the Patriotic Association “episcopal conference” for Chinese bishops, an important trusted post. This Bishop Conference does not include the “underground” bishops. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said that the Catholic Church couldn’t recognize this Bishop Conference as it has elements incompatible with Catholic Doctrine. As *Catholic Herald of UK* pointed out, “the Patriotic Association Bishop Conference may not be recognized by Rome, but its leadership is in the synod hall.”

The Foundation’s Programs

In spite of this new Deal, the government does not recognize the underground church that is faithful to Rome. Some reports indicated that under this Deal, the government will not force the underground bishops to register. However, there are many other ways to punish them for the years of loyalty to Vatican such as refusing to give residency or benefits that other citizens enjoy. Rome may appreciate their fidelity and suffering, but proved to be hand-tied as there is no action that Rome is prepared to take unilaterally regarding its own bishops without lengthy negotiation. All Patriotic Bishops are now “in communion with the Pope”, and with Vatican’s understanding the bishops continue to report to the UFWD of the communist party. In the future, any harsh, restrictive actions and policies implemented through the Patriotic Association will no longer be religious persecution, but legitimate, internal administrative issues.

The Cardinal Kung Foundation will continue all our current programs to help the underground church. We will carefully evaluate their needs, the impact of Vatican-China Deal, and future negotiations and religious policies.

I urge you not to forsake these faithful members of our Church. When you celebrate Thanksgiving, please remember a gift or a sacrifice for the underground church. Regard this as inviting an underground clergy or nun to share your Thanksgiving meal. Their sacrifices bring grace and blessings to us all.

I enclosed a prayer card, *Prayer for Priests* by Bishop Kung written during the persecution in 1953. You may wish to include this in your family prayers. Please pray for the Patriotic Bishops. Pray that Our Lady of China bless and sustain the underground church. Pray also for the underground seminarians that they may have the courage to follow their vocations. Please pray for Holy Spirit’s guidance on our Holy Father during this difficult period of the Church.

The Directors join me in thanking you for your prayers and continued support.

Agnes Kung
Director, Programs.