



## Evangelizing China

Summer 1995



*The fervor to evangelize China by many Roman Catholic religious communities is consistent with the Holy Father's August, 1995 mission intention. Alone, this news should be exciting and encouraging. Unfortunately, very often, their ardent love for China, and the missionary zeal have been taken advantage of, and misguided by the propaganda of the communist Chinese government and the Patriotic Association. Under the pretense of "bridging the differences" "love" and "charity", they have poured enormous resources into the Patriotic Association. By espousing the argument that helping an "illegal church" would not be effective in their evangelization efforts, they have almost completely ignored the loyal, underground church.*

*For the benefit of who wish to assist in the evangelization of China, we sincerely offer them our following observations and requests. Certain points are repeated from our previous issues. However, for the sake of completeness and for the benefit of our new readers, we believe that this repetition is necessary, while making this topic all inclusive.*



### 1. The 1988 Advisory to the World Bishops

The 1988 advisory to the world Bishops from the Holy See said that any contact with the Patriotic Association should be marked by "doctrinal clarity" and "fraternal charity". This advisory has not been officially superseded or canceled; therefore, it must still be valid.

**a. Doctrinal Clarity** - The Pope reconfirmed in Manila last January that:

*"A Catholic who wishes to remain such and to be recognized as such cannot reject the principle of communion with the successor of Peter."*

The Patriotic Association publicly denies the supreme authority of the Pope and rejects the principle of communion with the Pope, even though the denial might have been done under adverse situation.

The Pope continues to say that:

*"Genuine love...cannot be separated from truth ...Unity springs from conversion of the heart and from sincere acceptance of the unchanging principles laid down by Christ for his church."*

To accept the Patriotic Association as a member of the Roman Catholic Church, while it continues to proclaim its independence by denying the supremacy of Peter is not the "unity" and "love" as defined by Pope John Paul II.

An unchangeable principle laid down by Christ should not be freely adapted to fit different political, social or economic conditions. If one basic principle of Christ can be set aside to accommodate changes, other basic principles such as the sanctity of life would also be subject to personal choices and convenience. This is very wrong.

While we pray for the eventual true unity of the Patriotic Association with the mother Church, let us not lose sight of the fact that the Patriotic Association is not the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

**b. Fraternal Charity** - Charity and compassion must be properly and appropriately placed. Charity applies to all, but must first start with our obligation at home and focus on all the basic needs of the Roman Catholic Bishops. How long must these loyal underground bishops wait, having lived in poverty and struggled heroically, almost alone, with their apostolate for 45 years?

To give the Patriotic Association \$4.3 million (page 36, no. 5, 1994, 30 Days) from various Catholic institutions while the loyal underground brothers was "left with nothing" can hardly be called "Fraternal Charity". Your influence in the Universal Church can correct this trend. We pray that, in planning your evangelization policy in China, please keep in mind the Holy See's guideline that "contact with the Patriotic Association should be marked by DOCTRINAL CLARITY and FRATERNAL CHARITY".

## **2. Is the Universal Church endorsing the Patriotic Association who rejects the supremacy of the Pope?**

One does not donate to an organization let alone support them with millions, unless one approves of their policies and agenda. The accommodation or cooperation with the Patriotic Association from the organizations of the universal church is in effect an

endorsement of the Patriotic Association. Such endorsements encourage the Chinese government to continue their persecution of the underground Roman Catholic Church. They indirectly prolong the religious persecution in China.

Many are under the impression that there is now religious freedom in China. To permit the existence of the Patriotic Association (under strict government control) while persecuting the loyal Catholics cannot be construed as religious freedom. In the eyes of the faithful in China, the Universal Church has endorsed the Patriotic Association and its policy and positions by virtue of the Church's generous donation and participation in the Patriotic Association projects even though the Patriotic Association rejected the Pope's supremacy and the Vatican appointed Bishops. This would give a wrong signal to the Chinese government and the Patriotic Association.

### **3. Are you endorsing the Patriotic Association?**

Unfortunately, and without knowing it, many of you are already assisting the Patriotic Association. There are many religious communities, catholic charitable organizations and dioceses, all beneficiaries of your generous donations, currently engaged in projects with the Patriotic Association.

Donations from various catholic institutions have printed bibles in China which contain deletions and alterations regarding the supremacy of the Pope. The donations also supported Patriotic Association seminarians to study in the United States seminaries. These seminarians will return to China to be ordained by the Patriotic Association Bishops and serve in the Patriotic Association. These Patriotic Association Bishops support the "one child, one family" policy of China because they said that they should comply with the law of the country. Even an unjust law? In addition, these donations also built and renovated Patriotic Association churches while the loyal priests and bishops are forced to offer Masses in deserted fields. When making a donation, please ensure that your monies will be used for the church which is truly loyal to the Holy Father.

### **4. What are some of the positions of the Patriotic Association and its leaders?**

Despite the claim that some Patriotic Association bishops pray for and love the Pope in their hearts, the positions of many Patriotic Association leaders are only too clear.

On the continuous imprisonment of the underground clergy, Bishop Jin, the government appointed Bishop of Shanghai, and Chairman on the Seminary Education and Formation Committee in the Patriotic Association, said there was no clergy imprisoned in China for their faith; rather they broke the laws. What laws?

His Holiness announced in 1991 that Cardinal Kung, while still a prisoner in China, was elevated in pectore to the Cardinalate. An immediate response arrived from China. The Patriotic Association of Shanghai, whose president is Bishop Jin, announced that the Shanghai Diocese (of the Patriotic Association) remembered vividly the "crimes" of Bishop Kung who sinned against his country and God. For the Pope to elevate Bishop Kung while still a prisoner was yet another example of the pope's interference with the internal affairs of China. To this, the Shanghai Diocese of the Patriotic Association must strongly oppose.

### **5. Pope Pius XI teaching on Ecumenism**

It seems to us that the very clear teaching of Pope Pius XI in his encyclical letter MORTALIUM ANIMOS of January 6, 1928 has never been abrogated, superseded or repudiated by the Holy See. Therefore, it is still sound teaching. In this letter the Pope Pius XI condemns certain errors of false ecumenism, expressing:

*"Since the Mystical Body of Christ, in the same manner as His physical body, is one, compacted and fitly joined together, it were foolish and out of place to say that the Mystical Body is made up of members which are disunited and scattered abroad: whosoever is not united with the Body is no member of it, neither is he in communion with Christ its head."*

The Patriotic Association certainly is not a member of the Mystical Body. It should not be treated as such.

### **6. The Canon Law's position on the Patriotic Association?**

The Patriotic Association continues to refuse submission to the Roman Pontiff. Its bishops have been consecrated without a papal mandate. On this subject, the Canon Law Section 751 states,

*"...schism is the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him."*

Canon Law Section 1382 further states:

*"a bishop who consecrates someone a bishop and the person who receives such a consecration from a bishop without a pontifical mandate incur an automatic "latae sententiae" excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See."*

In view of the above, it should be clear to us and to the entire Catholic community that the Patriotic Association is a schismatic church. Please be aware of this principle when and if you are being courted by these Patriotic Association bishops for whatever reasons.

## **7. The Roman Catholic (underground) Bishops' Conference**

The underground Bishops' conference should be respected as the authority of the Roman Catholic Church in China, similar to the Bishops' Conferences of any country.

*"The diocesan bishop is to rule the particular church committed to him with legislative, executive, and judicial power in accord with the norm of law" (Canon 391).*

*The "norm of law", as explained in the commentary of "THE CODE OF CANON LAW" commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America, is "the bishop's ordinary pastoral care".*

*Inasmuch as the Roman Catholic Bishops (underground) are appointed by the Holy See throughout communist China, these bishops not only must bear responsibility for their dioceses, but also entitled to have their opinions respected and decisions complied with when the work and policy of these religious communities falls within their dioceses. Any true assistance which purports to assist the Catholic Church in China should be in line with the policy, pronounced practice, philosophy and effort of the Vatican appointed bishops. Their approval is mandatory (Canon 678).*

*In the universal church, no religious community would dream of entering a diocese without the approval of the diocesan bishop. The same philosophy should apply for the underground bishops. More cooperation, not less, is needed in the case of the underground church in view of their desperate conditions. In your policy decision for evangelizing China, such past and current opinion from the underground bishops, e.g. their recently published pastoral letter from the Chinese Roman Catholic Bishop Conference, should be heavily weighed.*

*Sadly, in recent years, not only has the financial support to the Patriotic Association from the Universal Church far exceeded that of the loyal (underground) Church, but also more emphasis has been directed to the opinion of the Patriotic Association Bishops than that of the underground Ordinaries. One cannot condone, but may understand, why businessmen and politicians can abandon the principle of human rights in the name of "trade". A true Catholic can hardly comprehend why the learned Church Fathers would sidestep basic Church principles in order to meet with the approval and seek the goodwill of the Patriotic Association. It creates an appearance of betrayal and abandonment of the loyal Roman Catholic Church. This overture to the Patriotic Association deeply hurt the morale of the loyal Church. We pray that your community will take the leadership to correct this situation.*

## **8. The Vitality of the Underground Church**

*The loyal Roman Catholic Church grew from three million in the 1950's to the current eight million amid severe communist persecution. The bishops of the loyal Church never complained about such persecution, nor have they sought relief. The illegal status of the loyal Church, the so*

*called unofficial church, never bothered the loyal faithful. Despite unrelenting pressure from the government, this year's enormous gathering of a minimum of thirty thousand persons on May 23rd and fifty thousand on May 24th in Dong Lu's Marian Shrine is testimony to the courage of the loyal Church and an example of their prowess against the persecution.*

### **9. Is Abandoning the Underground Church Justifiable Due to its "Illegal" Status?**

*Sympathizers of the Patriotic Association often argued that aiding an "illegal church" under its many restrictive conditions makes missionary efforts not effective, and therefore the Patriotic Association should be courted and assisted. We must be mindful that the missionary mandate, since it comes from Christ Himself, is of a higher order. (cf. Matt 28: 16-20; John 20: 21-23)*

*While we must make a strong effort in our missionary endeavors, the fruit of the mission is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The blood of the martyrs is the seeds of the church inspite of the "illegal" status of these martyrs. The loyal church in China has grown from 3 million to 8 million even with its "illegal status", lack of churches, bankrupt finances, and continuous persecution for 45 years. Active help from the universal church will not only encourage and console the suffering church, but also increase its effectiveness a hundred fold. For this, we pray that your community will not use the "legality" issue in China as the basis for any decision on your agenda.*

*The yet-to-be-certified miracle of the recent supernatural phenomenon at the Shrine of Our Lady of Dong Lu on May 23, 1995 is perhaps an important message of love from Our Holy Mother to the underground Church. Before these 30,000 underground and loyal Catholics, God chose to demonstrate that, despite their "illegal" status and activities, the loyal faithful remain close to His heart. This miracle has been confirmed by the local Ordinary.*

### **10. Stubborn Ideologist or Agents of Change?**

*In the early 1950's, thousands of clergy including Fathers Beda Chang, S.J., Francis Chu, S.J., Vincent Chu, S.J., Xavier Tsai, S.J., Bishops Ignatius Kung, Peter Fan, Dominic Tang, S.J. and thousands of others went to jail or were martyred. They willingly took up the cross and followed Jesus to Calvary. (Sanguis Martyrum- Semen Christianorum).*

*Recently, one priest said in a conversation that the underground Church seemed to be oblivious to the changes in the political and social trend in China. Other priests would travel frequently to China to teach in Patriotic Association seminarians while oblivious to the needs of the loyal Roman Catholic Church. They are all China "experts" and "scholars".*

*Concurrently, many instances of cooperation with the Patriotic Association are approved by bishops in the free world such as:*

a. *Open concelebration between the Roman Catholic and Patriotic Association priests, (Communicatio In Sacris?)*

b. *Training of the Patriotic Association priests in Catholic seminaries in the West, and*

c. *Giving faculties to the Patriotic Association priests to administer sacraments in a Catholic Church in the west*

*We will abide by the decision of the Holy Father. But, in the absence of official proclamation from His Holiness, we feel puzzled by the above local decisions. Are the basic teachings of Christ, which can never be changed, malleable to accommodate trends and special situations, such as the Patriotic Association?*

*Bishop Kung turned down the offer of freedom and refused to join the Patriotic Association: "If I leave the Pope, not only would I not be a Bishop, I would not even be a Catholic." If the basic principles of Christ are adapted to the changing time, then does it mean that the thousands, who were incarcerated in the 1950's continuing to the present, are merely stubborn, inflexible ideologists who cannot change with the times?*

*Are the bishops of the free world who are supporting the Patriotic Association advocating that the loyal underground church should abandon their fidelity to the Pope and join the Patriotic Church in order that the "half truth" be preached? Or are they hoping that the Patriotic Association can be persuaded by the \$4.3 Million of donation and return to the universal church? Are St. Thomas Moore, St. John Fisher, Archbishop Tang, Bishop Peter Fan, and Cardinal Kung the steadfast true sons of the Church, or are Cardinal Wolsey, Patriotic Association Bishops Fu Teshan, Zong Huaide, Jin Luxian "agents of change"?*

### **11. "Afflictions and hardship...from within and without"**

The Pope in his Manila trip last January also expressed:

*"The Church presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God...By the power of the risen Lord, she is given strength to overcome patiently and lovingly the afflictions and hardships which assail her from WITHIN and WITHOUT..."*

Are the issues we outlined above some of the "afflictions and hardships" that the Pope referred to?

At this juncture, we will leave you to debate with the following passage:

*"Enter through the narrow gate. The gate that leads to damnation is wide, the road is clear, and many choose to travel it. But, how narrow is the gate that leads to life, how rough the road, and how few there are who find it." (Matt 7:13-14)*