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## MATTEO RICCI: A MODEL OF DIALOGUE

Benedict XVI has sent a Message to Bishop Claudio Giuliodori of Macerata, Italy, for the initiatives planned by the diocese to commemorate the fourth centenary of the death of the Jesuit Fr. Matteo Ricci. Fr. Ricci died in Beijing, China on 11 May 1610.

The Pope writes: "Matteo Ricci, October 1552, was gifted with profound faith and extraordinary cultural and academic genius. He dedicated long years of his life to weaving a profound dialogue between West and East, at the same time working incisively to root the Gospel in the culture of the great people of China. Even today, **his example remains as a model** of fruitful encounter between European and Chinese civilization.

Considering his intense scientific and spiritual work, we are positively amazed by the innovative and unique capacity he had in bringing together Chinese cultural and spiritual traditions. That was in fact the characteristic aspect of his mission to find possible harmony between the ancient and noble Chinese civilization and the newness of Christianity. This leads to freedom and true renewal within every society, as the Gospel is the universal message of salvation to the whole world, regardless of their cultural or religious context.

What made his apostolate original and, we could say, prophetic, was the profound sympathy he nourished for the Chinese, for their cultures and religious traditions. Ricci was likewise **a model of dialogue and respect for the beliefs of others** and made friendship the style of his apostolate during his twenty-eight years in China.

The Jesuit remained faithful to this style of evangelization to the end of his life. He used a scientific methodology and a pastoral strategy based, on the one hand, on respect for the wholesome customs of the place, which Chinese neophytes did not have to abandon when they embraced the Christian faith and, on the other, on his awareness that the Revelation could enhance and complete those customs.



**Matteo Ricci and Xu Guang Qi in China**

As the Fathers of the Church did in the time of the encounter between the Gospel and Greco-Roman culture, the author of the "*Treatise on Friendship*" undertook his farsighted work of inculturation of Christianity in China by seeking constant understanding with the wise men of that country.

I am therefore greatly pleased to join all those who recall this generous son of your land, **obedient minister of the Church, and intrepid and intelligent messenger of the Gospel of Christ**. Following his example, may our own communities, which accommodate people from different cultures and religions, grow in a spirit of acceptance and of reciprocal respect", the Holy Father concludes.

[Vatican Information Service]

# Church News

## The Changing of the Guard



### Rome:

Pope Benedict XVI has appointed the Holy See's under-Secretary for Relations with States and its chief negotiator with China, Vietnam and Israel as nuncio to Venezuela. The Vatican announced on Aug. 17 that **Monsignor Pietro Parolin has been promoted to archbishop**, and that the Pope has appointed another Italian as his successor, Monsignor Ettore Balestrero.

Monsignor Parolin joined the Holy See's diplomatic corps in 1986. He served in Nigeria from 1986 to 1989, in Mexico from 1989 to 1992, and has worked in the Vatican's Secretariat of State since 1992. For the past seven years, he has been under-Secretary for Relations with States (the equivalent of a deputy foreign minister). In that role, Archbishop Parolin has frequently come into contact with governments in Asia, in particular Vietnam, China and North Korea, none of which has yet established diplomatic relations with the Holy See. As under-Secretary for Relations with States, Monsignor Parolin has been heavily involved in seeking to foster better relations and greater understanding between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China.

Since 2007, he has headed the Vatican delegation in sensitive talks with Beijing in an effort to reach an accord on the crucial issue of the appointment of bishops and, in the longer term, the establishment of diplomatic relations and greater religious freedom for the Church in China.

### Beijing:

The director of China's State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), **Ye Xiaowen, has been appointed to a new posting** with the rank of minister.

Ye, 59, has been SARA director since 1995, with the governmental rank of vice minister. For his new posting at the Central Institute of the Communist Party of China (CPC), he takes on the titles of party chief and vice president of the political academy for democratic parties and people without party affiliation.

Despite China-Holy See relations having had ups and downs through Ye's 14 years as SARA director, they have stabilized in recent years into a kind of detente. During Ye's tenure, officials from China and Vatican have "made efforts in forming a basic mechanism of regular contact and dialogue."

**His deputy, Wang Zuo'an, 51, succeeds him as head of SARA.** Wang, who has been the chief official at SARA overseeing the mainland Catholic Church, has contacts among Vatican officials and other foreign Catholics. Vatican, Hong Kong [UCAN]

## The new Bishop of Hong Kong

Bishop John Tong Hon of Hong Kong, in an interview with the local press, declared that it is **more important to defend human rights and religious freedom in China than to attempt to normalize diplomatic relations** between Beijing and the Holy See. "We must show our love to all," he said, "but I will not dialogue nor accept invitations from the Patriotic Association or the Conference of Chinese Catholic Bishops." Bishop Tong added that in the case he would happen to meet per chance the leadership of one or the other official organizations he would simply greet them politely and keep a low profile.

Bishop Tong will continue to be director of the Holy Spirit Study Center which does research and pursues contacts with the Catholic Church in China.

In Hong Kong he will continue to implement the social doctrine of the Church "As a Church, we will certainly continue to take our place in public life. The way I will make my voice heard will be slightly different from that of Cardinal Zen," he declared.

[Eglisesd'Asie, MEP] Paris

## International Symposium in Beijing

From August 15 till 18 fifty historians and sinologists met in Beijing in an International Symposium on the History of Christianity in China. They came from ten different countries. The symposium was jointly organized by the Institute for the Study on Modern Chinese History of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Ferdinand Verbiest Institute KULeuven (Belgium).

Thirty papers were presented, 15 by scholars from Chinese universities and institutes of research, 15 by scholars coming from universities abroad. **Several papers discussed the important contributions of the Jesuit Antoine Thomas from Namur (Belgium)** since 2009 is the 300th commemoration of his death in Beijing. Thomas succeeded Ferdinand Verbiest at the imperial observatory in Beijing in the 17th century. Too little study has been done on him in the past even though his many letters, all written in Latin, are well kept. They are considered by scholars as a major source of information on the relations of the Jesuits with the emperor but also on other topics as the war between the Chinese and the Jungar Mongols of Inner Mongolia on which Thomas reported ten years before Chinese sources did. Scholars urged more study and publications on Thomas and on other Jesuits from the Low Countries as Philip Couplet, Francois Noel who made important contributions to the introduction of Chinese culture to Europe more than 300 years ago.

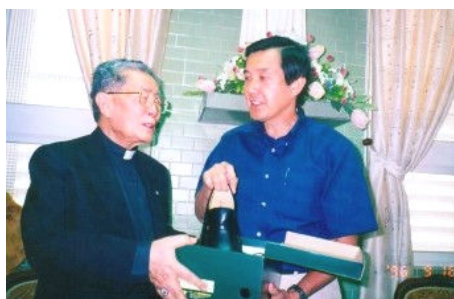
Other papers were on other topics: "Letter *Maximum Illud*", "Ancestor Worship", "Missionaries in China and Chinese Medicine", "God and sin in the writings of Francois Noel", "Contributions of the Jesuits to the knowledge of Tartary", "Louis Schram cism, Missionary and Ethnologist", "Contributions by missionaries to Chinese linguistics", "The use of the Bible translation of Jean Basset MEP (17th century) in the translations of the Protestants Robert Morrisson and Joshua Marshman (19th century)", "The Communist Party's Policy on Christianity around the Founding of the People's Republic of China", "The murder of Dutch Lazarist Bishop Schraven in Zhengding (Hebei) in 1937" etc.

Chinese as well as Western scholars drew the attention to the fact that not only the Jesuits of Ricci's time but also other missionaries in the 19th century were active in China. This was not only in evangelization but also as in their work as men of science.

**It was the 10th International Symposium of the Ferdinand Verbiest Institute.** During the closure session of the Symposium, scholars expressed their satisfaction about the academic level of the papers that were presented. It was observed that there was much more openness, even frankness in the expression of personal views now as compared to the early eighties when the Verbiest Institute had its first symposium. No ideology entered into the discussions. Both the organizing institutes agreed to jointly publish the proceedings of the conference and look forward to more cooperation in the future.

[Verbiest Institute] Belgium

## Card. Shan receives Taiwan peace prize



Card. Paul Shan, is to receive the **Presidential Award for peace**, for "his contribution to peace and ethnic harmony."

The announcement of the award was made September 15 by the National Association for Culture during a press conference at which Card. Shan was also present.

The cardinal stood out in September for his marked efforts to aid the victims of Typhoon Morakot, which claimed more than 500 lives and caused extensive damage to buildings and agriculture in the country. Despite being diagnosed with cancer for some time, Card. Shan continued to travel to the affected areas to comfort the homeless and encourage aid. He also met the Dalai Lama, who visited disaster areas.

Typhoon Morakot gave occasion to a lot of religious/diplomatic activities in Taiwan. Beside the Dalai Lama, Card. Paul Cordes of Vatican Cor Unum and Ye Xiao-Wen of the Beijing State Administration of Religious Affairs visited the typhoon victims.

[Asia News] Taipei

# Religious Issues

## A China Priest on Pope's Letter

Father Peter Peng Jiandao of Handan in Hebei province received his formation in the underground Church community before he surfaced to work openly.

Father Peng, 44, was baptized in 1982 and was ordained a priest in 1990. He enjoys writing and has a blog where he shares his pastoral ministry and observations on the development of the Church in China.

His commentary follows:

Chinese Catholics were excited to receive the Pope's pastoral letter dated Pentecost Sunday May 27, 2007, after having suffered different kinds of persecution.

The Chinese government blocked the letter five hours after it was made public on the Internet. But this was long enough for Catholics who waited overnight in front of computers. Once the document was released, it took them just a few minutes to download and print. Copies of the letter then spread nationwide within days. The government was sensitive to this, but it seemed could do nothing about it.

**Both the "official" and "underground" Church communities first welcomed this letter** but then the underground community kept fighting for its faith principles while the official one continued to uphold the banner of patriotism. More than 200 Church representatives took part in the commemoration of the golden jubilees of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) in July 2007 and of the "self-election and self-ordination of bishops" in December 2008. Among such participants, quite a number were Vatican-approved bishops.

No matter what the Vatican said, Chinese Catholics kept doing things their way. It is something difficult for Europeans to understand. The Holy See may be surprised to see that no one seriously implemented the contents of the letter, although it was warmly welcomed. Cardinal Joseph Zen of Hong Kong, now retired, encouraged mainland bishops to emulate the martyrdom spirit of Saint Stephen. But would they listen? One mainland bishop remarked, "We are under Communist rule in mainland China. Things are not so easy."

The underground community leaders were grateful for the letter as the Pope praised them for not "compromising," but were sad to see the revocation of special faculties given to their community, and the Pope's instruction of reconciling with the open Church community, which many in the underground community have opposed.

Even though it was a difficult choice to reconcile with the open Church, **some underground Church leaders took great steps forward.** To name a few, Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo of Zhengding in Hebei province accepted open Church priests from Shijiazhuang diocese for the sake of unity. Bishop Stephen Li Side of Tianjin also accepted some open Church priests, removing years of enmity between the two communities. Bishop Joseph Wei Jingyi of Qiqihar in Heilongjiang province also did the same.

How has the papal letter influenced the Church in China? Many leaders in the open Church will possibly insist on their old ways. The Eighth National Congress of Catholic Representatives would still be an assembly of Church leaders. Their speeches would still uphold the principle of an "independent, autonomous and self-managed" Church.

China's ancient image as "a nation of etiquette" is related to "face" (giving respect). As such, mainland Church leaders joined the celebrations of the CCPA and the "self-election and self-ordination" of bishops because of "face." They were not really under a "so-called threat" or a "complete loss of freedom." It is no longer the time of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the Chinese government does give its people a certain extent of freedom now. The point is whether mainland bishops should talk about "giving face".

For the Church in China, the papal letter has become part of history. No one in the open Church studies or propagates it anymore. The letter seems not to be a concern for them. Some underground Catholics continue to study it but with an "uncompromising" spirit. It is sad to see **the papal letter appear "like a shooting star" that serves only to be an epochal symbol for the Church in China.**

Handan, China [UCAN]





## All female religious institutes

Some 78 women religious from 23 Chinese provinces representing almost every female religious congregation in mainland China, took part in a solemn Eucharistic Procession with thousands of lay faithful. The meeting was held recently at the parish of Yang Jia Pu, diocese of Tai Yuan. According to information, dressed in their respective religious habits the sisters drew the attention of people watching the procession, filling the faithful and the priests with pride. At the meeting the religious reflected on the meaning of life in the Catholic dimension, the importance of the family and of family prayer to consolidate and hand on the faith.

In the life of the Catholic Church in mainland China, **religious Sisters play a fundamental and indispensable role in pastoral care, evangelization, charitable and social work.** They befriend and console abandoned children, disabled persons, old people left alone, people with AIDS or leprosy. They are called "the guardian angels of hospital wards", always present for every emergency, not excluding earthquakes.

Although they never speak explicitly of the Gospel or try to forcefully evangelize anyone, their presence and service is the most convincing witness. Without clamor or slogans, the sisters soon draw people to become followers of Christ. According to the most recent statistics, in China there are about 5.000 professed women religious and about 600 novices.

Tai Yuan [Agenzia Fides]



## Jesuits in China

For the most part, the Jesuits in China are located in the two special Administrative Zones of Macau and Hong Kong. In the rest of China there are no Jesuit communities (the Chinese government does not recognize masculine religious orders). Yet, there are around ten old Chinese Jesuits, of whom three are bishops, who still have some pastoral activities around Shanghai and Xianxian (Hebei). All the other Jesuits in China work in three different sectors: Church ministry, intellectual apostolate and social apostolate.

**In the Church ministry,** there are Jesuits from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan or other countries who are invited in the officially registered Seminaries, where they collaborate in the formation of the young priests of tomorrow. Moreover since many Chinese priests and religious desire to deepen their spiritual life, Jesuits respond by going to China to give the Spiritual Exercises or training sessions for persons who would be able to give the Spiritual Exercises in their turn.

**In the intellectual apostolate,** the universities in China desire to improve the formation in business administration. To answer this need, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities in the US, in collaboration with Beijing University offer an International MBA Program. Some foreign Jesuits teach in other universities. For example one Jesuit from Switzerland offers a course on Business Ethics in different Beijing universities.

**In the social apostolate,** some Jesuits from Macao and Taiwan work with Chinese Sisters to offer equipment and formation to leprosy victims. Another example is the school project in ten poor Catholic villages, in the North of China. More than 400 children cannot go to school because their parents are too poor to afford it. Like many other foreign religious congregations of men and women, there are Jesuits who try to answer the call of dioceses or the invitation of universities. Despite the present political constraints many individual initiatives are possible.

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# EDUCATION

## AITECE Update



An old proverb teaches that *"a picture is worth a thousand words"*. St. Francis of Assisi once counseled his Friars to *"preach the Gospel always; and when necessary, use words"*.

AITECE teachers in China share many tales which affirm these maxims. Recently, *Bernadette Hagan*, who has taught in China for the past decade, received a letter from a former university student, now a successful businessman. He thanked her for all she taught him which has contributed to his success; but went on to say **"the most important thing you taught me was how to be a good person"**. Indeed, the witness of one's life and professional dedication *always speak* louder than we can ever imagine.

As China continues its advance into modernity and towards global power status, its impact for good or ill, will be judged by the degree to which ethical principles are integrated into its performance as a social, economic, and political actor on the world stage. AITECE teachers have a unique opportunity to foster the development of such moral underpinnings in their students.

If a second career, or sabbatical interlude, or a desire to serve others in a meaningful and rewarding endeavor, is stirring in your mind, please **contact USCCB's AITECE liaison** for information on how to take the first steps on such a journey: [carroljc@shu.edu](mailto:carroljc@shu.edu)

**AITECE has forty teachers in China for the start of the 2009-10 academic year...** of whom **only two are from the States**. Others hail from the *UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the Philippines*. They teach in 23 colleges/universities and professional schools, in Beijing and in 9 provinces all over China. Ordinarily, a one [academic] year commitment is preferred - with occasional availability for single semester placements. A language-related degree, or in lieu of this, certification in TESL- is a basic requirement. The upper age limit, now strictly enforced, is currently 65; and good health is essential.

There are limited **openings to teach in other disciplines** – with the caveat, that Mandarin Chinese is the usual medium of instruction in China's colleges and universities. Most recently, China is interested in recruiting teachers of both **Arabic and Spanish as second languages**. Clearly, China is intent on providing well qualified people for the conduct of its foreign policy and international economic affairs.



## Master's program in Pastoral work

The National Seminary in Beijing will start a master's degree program in October to train mainland Chinese pastoral workers and catechists. The seminary is now receiving applications to its first **three-year pastoral and catechetical master's program** that will start on Oct. 5.

Father John Chen Shujie, the seminary's deputy rector, said six priests, nuns and laypersons have submitted applications, mostly from dioceses in northern China.

Applicants should have a bachelor's degree and a standard of English comparable to that required by local universities for postgraduate students. Applicants also require approval from a bishop, and a letter of recommendation from their parish priest or Religious superior.

After running a bachelor's program in theology for six years, Fr. Chen said, "God has given us the opportunity to train highly qualified personnel by launching the master's course." He said the program aims to **help Church workers keep pace with theological developments in the universal Church**, develop evangelistic work in mainland China and contribute to the inculturation of the local Church.

Along with local Chinese priests and lecturers, there will also be foreign teachers arranged by Leuven University and the Lumen Vitae Institute in Brussels. Lectures will also be simultaneously translated into Mandarin-Chinese but some course materials will be in English. Father Chen observed that so far, applicants appear relatively competent in English.

The **Verbiest Institute** of the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium is co-organizing this "breakthrough" program.

According to the July newsletter of the Verbiest Institute, the Chinese civil authorities have approved the program. The newsletter hopes that after their studies, graduates will start pastoral centers in their own dioceses.

Beijing [UCAN]

## Engaged Learning in Living Realities

Summertime offers students the chance to move away from classrooms and campuses – and engage intellectual theories and ideas in dialogue with lived reality. This is essential for those preparing to engage in the dialogue of life through pastoral ministry and provide spiritual leadership in the Church. It holds true for the young clergy, women religious, and few lay Catholics, currently in the *Maryknoll Society-sponsored Chinese Teachers and Formators Project*. While most spent the Summer doing required course work at their respective colleges and universities, several had unique opportunities to enhance academic studies through other experiences.

In keeping with the policy that enables them to return to China mid way through their degree programs, for the purposes of re-connecting with their local churches and consulting with their ecclesial and religious superiors, as well as maintaining essential cultural and familial bonds, about one-third of the group spent several weeks in their home dioceses during Summer. Some, such as *Sr. Hedy Zhang Xui Kai*, doing an MA in theology in Chicago, took advantage of these visits to do some field research, which will be useful for future writing assignments and dissertations; while others taught short-term courses, sharing newly acquired wisdom and skills with peers at home.

Others on home visits also volunteered to minister among victims of the Sichuan Earthquake last May, many hundreds of thousands of whom remain in dire straits. The Church maintains a significant presence in this area. **Fr. John REN DaHai**, one of last year's graduates from the Maryknoll Project, is the principal Project Coordinator for all the Catholic relief efforts in this region.

**Sr. Therese GE Wan Xiang** from **Jilin Diocese** and **Sr. Joyce Zhang Shuang Hong** from **XingTai Diocese** in HeBei, both did intensive 3 month Clinical Pastoral Education programs as part of the degree requirements for the MA in Pastoral Theology at St. John/St. Benedict University, Collegeville, MN.

Sr. Therese, whose internship was at *BroMen Hospital*, served by the Peoria, IL. Diocese, observed that CPE “gave me a good opportunity to practice pastoral care theories I’ve learned in school. However, the most beneficial thing was becoming more aware of my own strengths and needs, which can lead me to be a better caregiver, as I try to integrate my gifts and limitations.”



Sr. Joyce was resident within Transfiguration parish, which serves the Chinese Community in lower New York City and did her CPE program at Harbor Health Care VA Hospital in NYC. She spoke of the experience as “*an operation on my soul, a turning point for growth in my life*”. Not only did it enable her to become a better chaplain, she also experienced the process as a way to “*more fully live the charism of my Congregation, the Sisters, Helpers of the Holy Souls and to become a better religious.*” Keenly aware of language barriers, at first she “*almost gave up*” trying to initiate conversations with patients; but persevered and became more comfortable, “*recognizing the need for greater patience with myself*”. Personal experiences of loneliness [far away from her culture and home in China], enabled her to empathize with the loneliness of so many of these men. She described herself as “*a person thrown into a lake or a river, always struggling to get out of the water day after day, tired of struggling. The CPE program was like a lifeboat for me to continue my life journey*”.

Often the priests in the Project are called upon to provide pastoral services and retreat/reflection days for Chinese Catholic communities in various US dioceses. **Fr. John FENG ErHui** took advantage of an invitation from his priest-uncle to put theory into practice, preparing liturgies, weekly homilies, working with youth groups, etc. among Chinese Canadian Catholics in the Toronto diocese.

Currently there are 14 Sisters, 14 priests, 1 seminarian and 1 laywoman in this Project. In mid August, they all came together at Maryknoll, New York, for a Guided Retreat provided by **Sr. Atsuko Miyama RSCJ**. Then, energized and refreshed in heart, mind, body and soul, they all returned to academic studies: 3 to Spokane, WA; 1 to Berkeley; 4 at Collegeville, MN; 6 to Chicago; 1 to LaTrobe, PA; 7 at Fordham U. in New York; 5 to Washington DC; 1 to Baltimore; and one Sister to begin at Boston College. Should you have a specific occasion in your parish or diocese at which these young future Church leaders might participate, it could truly be a rich experience of mutual evangelization. ***Please remember them and the Church in China in your prayer.***



# Reading Notes



XU Guang Qi

- **Ode in Praise of XU Guang Qi: Disciple of Matteo Ricci.** Aloysius JIN Lu Xian, SJ. Shanghai, China: Guang QI Press (2009) 37pp. pamphlet.

Issued as a Pastoral Letter by the Bishop of Shanghai Diocese, the ODE celebrates the fame of a faithful Catholic layman and high Minister of the Ming Dynasty State in 16<sup>th</sup> century China - who brought glory and honor to both his religion and his country. JIN reflects upon XU Guang Qi's four loves: for country, for the people, for science and for the Church. As such XU is presented as a fitting candidate for canonization as the premier Chinese confessor of the Faith.



- **Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China.** Yoshiko Ashiwa & David L. Wank, Eds. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press (2009). 265pp, glossary, index. \$24.95pb  
Ten essays reflecting the deliberations of a distinguished group of historians and social scientists convened at Stanford University in 2004. The work crosses disciplinary boundaries to address broad issues emergent within the five religions officially recognized in China today. Their perspectives go "*beyond extant portrayals of the opposition of state and religion*". The unifying theme is that religion occupies a certain "space" in modern Chinese polity and society, and that that space is in constant negotiation among a multitude of actors in both the political and religious spheres.
- **The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Mind.** David M. Lampton. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press [2008] 361pp. \$21.95pb  
In this book, the author, a respected scholar and expert on Chinese politics, documents China's growing power and influence in military, economic, and intellectual spheres. It is based upon extensive interviews with elite political leaders, diplomats, and others in China, countries on its periphery and in the USA.
- **The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History.** Paul Clark, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.(2008) 352pp.  
Cited as a groundbreaking study of cultural life during a turbulent and formative decade [1966-76] in contemporary China, the author seeks to '*explode several myths*', arguing that this decade was a "*period of innovation*" - which unfortunately came into conflict with efforts to enforce a top-down modernization, resulting in devastating, destructive and tragic social chaos...
- **Opening China: Karl F.A.Gutzlaff and Sino-Western Relations, 1827-1852** Jessie Gregory Lutz, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. [2008] 364pp. \$45.00pb  
A monograph on the colorful and controversial career of this independent Protestant missionary, which brings into focus major issues of European imperial designs in China; and such missiological issues as: biblical translation, recruitment and the call of western missionaries to China, the inadvisability of independent missionaries, the role of indigenous evangelists, and how the confluence of these issues were perceived by Chinese authorities, with long lasting impact on Sino-Western relations.



## 24th National Catholic China Conference

September 23-25, 2010

Our Lady of the Snows Conference Center Belleville, Illinois

*"Experiencing Jesus Christ  
through Chinese Eyes:  
Continuing China - U.S. Conversations"*

Note: We hope to be able to invite a Bishop, a priest, a sister and one lay couple from China to update us on the Church in China and to explore with us possible partnership in mission.