
China Church Quarterly

No.90 Oct 2012 - Dec 2012

US Catholic China Bureau, Berkeley CA

Dismissal of Shanghai Bishop An "Abuse"

The revocation of the title of Bishop of Shanghai for **Msgr. Ma Taddeo Daqin** is "sad" news and the gesture by the "*so-called* Bishops' Conference of China" is an "abuse of power" and an abuse of authority.

Msgr. Savio Hon Tai-fai, the secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, commenting on the news, said "that the *Council of Chinese Bishops* and the *Patriotic Association* have dismissed Msgr. Ma Taddeo Daqin as coadjutor bishop of Shanghai, revoking his Episcopal offices."

"This *so-called* 'Bishops' Conference has never been recognized by the Holy See and no conference in the world has the power to appoint or remove a bishop. This is a clear case of abuse of authority. Anyone involved in this act will have to explain why they have decided to cause such harm to the Church and the communion of the Church, both in China and in the world. "

"Bishop Ma did this in obedience to the Pope, but from the *Patriotic Association's* point of view that is a crime. He also decided to leave the *Patriotic Association* to better respond to his pastoral ministry. The PA's principles are 'incompatible with Catholic doctrine', as Benedict XVI says in his Letter to Chinese Catholics."

"The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples fully supports Msgr. Ma" stated Card. Filoni. "Indeed we have great respect for this young bishop who has dared to make a great gesture of truth, of love for the Holy Father. I know him personally, since he was a seminarian and I always pray for him, so that he may be sustained by the grace of the Lord in this difficult time. "

"Travelling around the world, in many dioceses I attend Sunday Mass and celebrations in support of the persecuted bishops and in particular in support of Msgr. Ma Daqin, who are suffering from the lack of freedom. Their and my prayers are added to those of all the Christians in China who are praying for him."



Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin of Shanghai Diocese

"I call on all communities around the world to pray for Ma Daqin: we turn to the Lord so that Msgr. Ma- and the many other bishops and priests in prison such as Msgr. James Su Zhimin and Cosma Shi Enxiang - can see days of freedom. "

"This violence and abuse against religious freedom only generates criticism of China from the international community. Our country, which has made such great strides in the modern world does not deserve to be demeaned in this way because of this style."

And on a closing note, **Msgr. Hon** turns to the new leadership that has emerged from the 18th Chinese Communist Party Congress, with Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang: **"We pray for the political leaders of China**, who brought peace and justice to the world. I pray and hope that the new leadership in China leads to a new vision of politics in the relationship between church and state, without using the traditional methods of the past, which are no good to anyone, do not create harmony within the Chinese Church or society, or in international relations".

[UCA News]

Church News

Five Years On, Pope's Letter Still Relevant

Five years after Benedict XVI addressed his *Letter to the Church in China*, its positive impact on the life of the Catholic communities is confirmed by the many initiatives responding to the Pope's guidelines. During the current "Year of Faith", this effort is expected to give priority to the formation of lay faithful, as well as the ongoing formation of priests, seminarians, and religious sisters.

It is obvious that, **if the government insists to impose more illegitimate episcopal ordinations**, the Catholic Church in China could become "*a State Church*" guided by the government, thus changing her very nature. Besides, the crisis in the Shanghai diocese has burst a long standing equivocation of the official religious policy. In fact, **the publicly declared decision of bishop Ma Daqin to resign from the Patriotic Association** in order to concentrate on his pastoral duties triggered the government's wrath in Shanghai. Over the years a situation had tacitly developed making it obvious that, to be accepted as a bishop or a qualified member of the officially approved Church, one would need to be a member of the Patriotic Association. And this is a particularly serious problem.

The Shanghai "official" bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian, already 97 years old, when expressing publicly his appreciation for the Pope's Letter five years ago, could add that in his almost two decades long episcopal experience in Shanghai, "the Patriotic Association never stepped over me". Yet now, Bishop Ma's confinement **confirms how the Patriotic Association is "stepping over" the bishops** also in Shanghai.

In recent decades such ambiguous policy favored the growth of many "*clandestine*" communities. The Holy Father, besides stating that "the clandestine condition is not a normal feature of the Church's life", adds that "there would not be any particular difficulties with acceptance of the recognition granted by civil authorities, on condition that this does not entail the denial of unrenounceable principles of faith and of ecclesiastical communion".

Due to the variety of local situations, **the Pope did not offer specific instructions on the matter, leaving it to the discretionary judgement of the various bishops**. The extreme difficulty to find workable solutions became clear in the case of Baoding diocese (Hebei); when underground coadjutor bishop Francis An Shuxin "surfaced" after 10 years in police custody, he was under strong pressure by *State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA)* to join the Patriotic Association, and his subsequent acceptance to become the official diocesan bishop caused a further split in the local community.

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, the prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, suggested that Party or government officials should be open to accept the criteria proper to the Church for the selection of bishops: "This is not an order of the Pope", he explained, because the bishops as successors of the apostles are expected to be faithful to the Church's doctrine. Naturally, as citizens, they need also to be loyal to their homeland, "giving to Caesar what is Caesar's": **but not at the expense of what is due to God**.

Such principle of separation between Church and State may not be easily accepted in China, with a tradition of imperial absolute power and a Communist ideology not recognizing to "gods" any special right. Besides, daily experience shows how easily **national pride and defense of sovereignty** can be made use of for political reasons or personal interest. According to some observers, certain decisions of the last couple of years affecting negatively the Church and claiming to contrast hostile foreign intrusions were **inspired by ultra-leftist factions**. The media, both in China and abroad, have given recently ample evidence of a dangerous revival of Maoist revolutionary methods, inducing some people to consider ideology an unsurmountable wall in China. In the words of Roman Malek, a scholar with great experience, we can't change the Communist system, but the system will change.

There is sincere expectation that **the new generation of leaders** called to govern this great nation for the coming decades will privilege programs of harmonious growth based on social justice, respectful also of the identity of minority religious groups.



On reviewing the present situation five years after the pastoral Letter addressed to the Catholics in China by Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Filoni underlines the clear orientation it provided to the life of the Church and to the evangelization ministry, showing **the pressing need to achieve unity within the communities**. The Cardinal dwells amply also on the present difficulties with the Chinese authorities, drawing from his rich experience as head of the Vatican Study Mission in Hong Kong. He does not hide his admiration for the economic development of China which he could witness directly during some visits to Beijing. But he treasures also the quality of the Catholics he has known: "How often have my Chinese friends shared with me their pride in belonging to their own country. Yet, they feel humiliated as Catholics in their own house, while being greatly esteemed and appreciated elsewhere!". He explains: "One time an elderly Chinese priest told me: **We Catholics in China are only given the freedom of a bird in a cage!**"

Cardinal Filoni is convinced that the Chinese Authorities can no longer be deaf to the cry of so many of their own citizens, and augurs a reconciliation between Rome and Beijing that could benefit both China and the Holy See: "Has not the time arrived for thinking about a new way for dialogue, **a dialogue that is even more open and carried out on a more equitable basis**, where it would no longer be possible for particular interests to undermine good will, trust and mutual esteem?". The fact that the Holy Father himself publicly declared the readiness of the Holy See **"to negotiations, so necessary if the difficulties of the present time are to be overcome..."**, is a most authoritative and clear statement that can be expected: "Let China rest assured that the Catholic Church sincerely proposes to offer, once again, humble and disinterested service in the areas of her competence, for the good of Chinese Catholics and for the good of all the inhabitants of the country".

The formula suggested by Cardinal Filoni to resume the interrupted dialogue is the **setting up of a bilateral "high level" Commission qualified to deal with "questions of mutual interest"**. The existence of ideological differences should not be an absolute obstacle to dialogue when the parties are seeking the real good of the people, as is shown by two cases mentioned by the Cardinal: "The Holy See and **Vietnam** have found a modus operandi et progrediendi. Even Beijing and **Taipei** have stable commissions at the highest level to deal with questions of mutual interest. Is it not possible to hope for a suitable and sincere dialogue with China?"

Such hope is evident in Cardinal Filoni's conclusion: "The Pope's Letter to the Chinese clergy and faithful remains valid. ...It can be a point of departure for a dialogue within the Church in China. It can also stimulate dialogue between the Holy See and the Government in Beijing".

To us believers, this is also a matter for prayer. Let us address the Mother of Jesus, venerated at Sheshan near Shanghai, with the words suggested by Pope Benedict XVI on 24 May 2008: "Mother of hope, in the darkness of Holy Saturday you journeyed with unflinching trust towards the dawn of Easter. Grant that your children may discern at all times, even those that are darkest, the signs of God's loving presence".

[Tripod]



Most Reverend Savio Hon Tai-Fai, SDB



Most Reverend Savio Hon Tai- Fai, SDB, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples received a Honorary Doctoral Degree from **Seton Hall University** on November 8, 2012 .

Archbishop Hon Tai-Fai, also delivered a talk entitled "Missionary Aspects of Priestly Formation."



Cardinal Tong: It's Never a Bad Time to Suggest Dialogue

Pessimists predict that the call for new dialogue with China is destined to fail. The Bishop of Hong Kong, Cardinal John Tong thinks otherwise. The Bishop pronounced some deep and meaningful words: "However oppressive external restrictions are, they cannot corrupt or take away the gift of faith, if there is faith."

Q- The President-designate Xi Jinping is calling for a "Chinese renaissance". Will this change the country's political profile? And when?

A- I believe China is called to move forward and open up gradually. But one should never expect quick changes. **Change should come one step at a time.** The future president Xi Jinping and the other six figures that will form part of the politburo will need time to integrate with one another and with their predecessors. The Party and the military do not want to lose their privileges. The opening up process will continue, also because the Chinese now travel, they go abroad and they are taking part in the internationalization process. The Chinese leadership will continue to make progress, albeit slowly.

Q- Cardinal Filoni recently proposed the establishment of an official commission between Beijing and the Holy See to deal together with controversial questions. What is China's reaction to this?

A- There have been no negative or positive reactions as of yet. The attitude seems to be one of cautiousness and observation and right now, that is not a bad thing.

Q- Some say the absence of official answers is proof that the proposal was ill-timed and destined to fail.

A- **Any time is a good time to propose dialogue.** In this moment of transition we cannot expect immediate answers. Officials have a lot on their plate right now, starting with some very sensitive domestic issues. There needs to be a period of stabilization. **The issue of China's relations with the Holy See will be addressed eventually.** I hope that the country's new political leaders will make it possible for dialogue between China and the Holy See to be built on new foundations.

Q- How could this be facilitated?

A- Everything would be much simpler if Beijing realized that dialogue and openness can benefit Chinese society much more than the Church. Of course we would be happy if external pressures on Church life ceased. But **however oppressive external restrictions are, they cannot corrupt or take away the gift of faith, if there is faith.** The possibility of enjoying Christ's love does not depend on external pressures ending. If the government respects religious freedom, new resources can be introduced. This would release energy for the creation of a new civilization instead of everything being reduced to a material concept of progress that ends up fuelling people's hedonism and egotism. This would be the best victory for everyone.

Q- In his speech, Cardinal Filoni presented the papal Letter sent out to Catholics in 2007 as the road map for the future of the Chinese Catholic Church. Was this reference necessary?

A- Perhaps in certain situations, the indications and suggestions given in that Letter were not heeded as they should have been. We must ask everyone to take these suggestions on board. I noticed that in some cases, things improved when Benedict XVI's letter was taken seriously as an expression of the magisterium which aims to inspire the condition of the Church in China. In a number of local entities, members of so-called open and illegal communities **stopped fighting and attacking each other.** In some cases the two groups actually started getting closer.

Q- You were a keen participant in the recent Synod as President Delegate at the Assembly. What struck you the most about the Synod meetings ?

A- I was struck by the real experience of communion, characterized by freedom and a diversity of feelings and ideas. I was also struck by the fact that we often find ourselves faced with the same emergencies and difficulties in different contexts. **Materialism, hedonism and secularism exist in China too** and they would go on existing even if communism disappeared. All of today's mankind is conditioned by these phenomena. But I am still hopeful for the future. I am optimistic because I am a Christian and I believe that Christ really did rise from the dead.

[Vatican Insider]



Social Issues

Hope for a Chinese Political Experiment

Chinese Communist Party leader Hu Jintao's opening speech at the 18th Party Congress was a **disappointment** to many listeners, offering no major signals that the leadership is willing to advance political reform. The keynote speech was couched in the usual conservative and Marxist terminology, but **one paragraph buried deep in the text** was just what proponents of a long-running experiment in public policy consultations have been waiting for.

The section in question urged the ruling party to **"improve the system of socialist consultative democracy"**.

Academics and officials say the mention of **"consultative democracy"** is the first ever in such an important document, and it is seen by some as a strong endorsement of the long-standing experiment with this form of democracy in **Wenling**, a city of 1.2 million in **Zhejiang province**. The city has formalized public consultation on public projects and government spending at the township level, even though there is no voting and decisions remain the preserve of the state machinery.

Xi Jinping was party boss in Zhejiang in 2002-2007, as the Wenling project deepened. The congress report is the most important political speech in China. Delivered once every five years by the party's general secretary, it sets down political markers and charts a development course for the coming 5 to 10 years.

"Of course this is a good thing," said Chen Yimin, a Wenling propaganda official who has been a driving force behind the system of **open hearings, where citizens can weigh in on things like proposed industrial projects and administrative budgets.** "This shows that the democratic consultations... that we have been doing for 13 years since 1999, have finally gained recognition and approval from the centre. It opens up space for further development. It says our democratic consultations are correct."

Chen Tiexiong, a delegate and party boss of **Taizhou, the city that oversees Wenling**, agreed. "I looked at that part of the speech closely because in terms of promoting democratic politics Taizhou has done a lot, and it has been in the form of **consultative democracy.**"

The reference to **"consultative democracy"** was a tiny signal in a speech that paid lip service to both political and economic reform, but stressed the Communist Party must remain in charge. Scholars say **Wenling's model goes farther** than other attempts in China to include local residents in government decision-making, and has promise as a mechanism for defusing social tensions .

"If every place could use consultations or discussions on major issues like Wenling, the localities would achieve stability and many issues could be resolved," said Sang Yucheng, a professor at Fudan University in Shanghai.

Hu has been criticized for neglecting political reform during his decade in office, and the mention of **"consultative democracy"**, while important, still points toward a cautious approach. It is a politically palatable way to listen to the voice of the people without ceding power. With tensions on the rise across China over corruption, authorities will need to move quickly to douse unrest.

"Especially for the next government, I think political reform will be a very important topic that they must face," said Jia Xijin, an associate professor at Tsinghua University's School. "If for the next 10 years still we have no reform in the political formal structure, there may be more and more social tension and social problems."

Xi Jinping, who takes over from President Hu, seems likely to continue the tradition of caution, but **Wenling-style consultations now look set to expand.** When he was party chief of Zhejiang, Xi visited Wenling to learn more about the consultation sessions. In 2008, when he visited Zhejiang as vice president, Xi invited the head of one of the townships in Wenling that pioneered the consultations to give an eight-minute progress report.

The official was the most junior to brief Xi and when the discussion was over, Xi was quiet, "He didn't say this was a good thing, and he didn't say it was bad. But the fact that (the representative) was selected to give a briefing is already **a sort of recognition,**" according to He Baogang, a scholar at Australia's Deakin University who has acted as an advisor to Wenling officials. [Reuters]

EDUCATION

School Seeks Mainland Students

The Fu Jen Faculty of Theology in Taiwan will accept more Catholic clergy and nuns from mainland China for theological studies. More than 100 mainland students are studying at the theological faculty since the school accepted mainlanders three years ago, said Jesuit **Father Louis Gendron, SJ** who became the dean in September, 2012. (1)

"Except for a handful who are priests in their 40s, the majority of the Religious men and women are in their 20s and 30s, and they are doing fine so far." Despite the expansion plan, Fr Gendron cannot yet give a figure of how many more students will be enrolled: the list has to be approved by the Interior Ministry.

"It is a different channel from other mainland students whose applications are made through the Education Ministry as the faculty is managed directly under the Vatican," he said. Recognized by the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education, the faculty's three year full-time theological program will also have its first batch of mainland graduates next year.

Fr Gendron expects the enrollment of mainland faithful can be realized in one or two years' time when the faculty is ready.

"Compared to Hong Kong, the Philippines or Western countries, studying in Taiwan has the advantage of having Mandarin Chinese as the medium for teaching. That means we do not have to struggle to learn a new language," said a priest who asked not to be named. However, he said there is still a limited supply to meet the huge demand from more than 100 dioceses and uncertainly whether would-be students can get permission to leave the country.

The Faculty of Theology has become an independent institute detaching from the Fu Jen Catholic University after the Taiwan government and the Vatican signed a mutual recognition accord of each other's educational qualifications in 2011.

[UCA News]

(1) Fr. Gendron was a member of our USCCB Board of Directors.

New Website Rare Documents

Boston College launched a new website, **Beyond Ricci**, on August 20, 2012 which provides access to books containing historical narratives, maps, correspondence and musical compositions depicting life in China during the era of early east-west exchange, which was initiated by the Jesuits. Published in five languages, the website can be found at www.bc.edu/beyondricci.

Australian **Father Jeremy Clarke SJ**, the author, says "This website takes knowledge and information that is rare and beautiful and puts it into the academic domain, providing an interdisciplinary resource for scholars and students of disciplines ranging from history and geography, to Latin and Chinese." **"It was a labor of love and an act of homage to my Jesuit brothers and their Chinese counterparts,** whose remarkable scholarship is preserved in these rare books that will now be available to visitors from Chestnut Hill to Canberra, San Francisco to Shanghai," Father Clarke says.

The website focuses on books from the Jesuitica Collection by or about Jesuit missionaries including Father Matteo Ricci, Father Philippe Couplet and Father Alvaro Semedo, as well as Rome-based Jesuits, Father Christopher Clavius and Father Athanasius Kircher, who made use of the information sent back by the missionaries from China. The website is written by Father Clarke. He has selected the books and images from the 2,500-volume collection in the Boston College library, all of which were published prior to the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773.

Father Clarke is a member of the Australian province of the Society of Jesus. He studied Chinese history at the Australian National University in Canberra under renowned scholar, Geremie Barmé. He recalled that he first learned about Father Ricci at school, which prompted a life-long interest in his missionary work and the work of his fellow Jesuits in China.

"I am proud of this site and hope that it will help to enhance understanding of Chinese history and the role the Jesuit missionaries played in establishing these important ties to the East," the Australian scholar concluded.

[Catholic News]



New Archive: The Passionists in China

During the summer of 2012 the Ricci Institute received the China archives of the Passionists of the Province of St. Paul of the Cross N.Y., a Catholic congregation that sent missionaries to **Hunan Province** between 1921 and 1950. The collection contains more than 40 linear feet of materials, including letters, diaries, reports, financial accounts, baptismal records, audio materials, and thousands of rare photographs.

The collection documents the complex relationship **between American missionaries and local Chinese communities**, and reveals many aspects of social and cultural life during this tumultuous period of Chinese history. With the assistance of *Rev. Robert Carbonneau*, an archival specialist from the Passionist order, the Institute has undertaken a two-year project to digitize and catalog this collection. Once completed, the archive will be open to faculty, students and scholars in Chinese-Western cultural history, and a selection of items will be posted online for general access.

[Ricci Institute]

Museum for Matteo Ricci

The first museum dedicated to the Jesuit missionary, Father Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), was inaugurated on 13 May, 2012. The museum is situated in **Zhao Zhou**, in the province of **Guang Dong**, the place where the Italian missionary landed in 1583, arriving in continental China with Father Ruggieri. This "Museum of Cultural Exchange between China and the West of Matteo Ricci, according to the complete official denomination, is near "**Xian Hua Si**" (*Temple of Flowers and Saints*), the first Church, constructed by Father Ricci. The Director, ad interim, of the Ricci Institute in Paris (Centre d'Etudes Chinoises), together with members of the civil authorities of the province of Guang Dong and the city of Zhao Qing, presided at the inauguration.

According to Father Gabriel Li Jia Fang, parish priest of the nearby parish of the Immaculate Conception, "with this museum, which is in a famous touristic locality, we hope that more and more people will come to know the Catholic faith and the life and works of this great missionary". Besides **manuscripts, clothes, astronomical instruments** belonging to Father Matteo Ricci which remind us of the great contribution he gave to China and the whole world, there are also **objects and photographs** of missionaries offered by the local Church.

[Agenzia Fides]

The Door of Faith in China

The "Door of Faith" in the Chinese Catholic communities of the continent opens. **The diocese of Tai Yuan** also invoked the martyrs who marked the history of the diocese in the last century during the **opening ceremony of the Year of Faith**. Over 2,000 faithful attended the Mass presided over by His Exc. Mgr. Meng, Coadjutor of the diocese, with about fifty concelebrants. As was the case in many other parishes in the diocese, in addition to the reading of the Bishop's pastoral Letter for the Year of Faith, a brief history of the five martyrs of the last century was also read, so that their intercession helps to strengthen the faith of believers and make them be witnesses of faith like them.

Although it is the harvest season for the faithful peasants of **the village of Xiao Han of the Diocese of Tian Jin**, they did however, not want to miss the solemn opening of the Year of Faith, which was celebrated on October 14. Over 700 faithful of the **diocese of Xi An** attended the opening of the Year of Faith presided by His Exc. Mgr. Joseph Dang, Ordinary Bishop, on the evening of 11 October in communion with Pope Benedict XVI. Mgr. Dang explained the meaning of the Year of Faith and the Faith itself, presented the diocesan pastoral plan for this year and delivered to the faithful the guide for the Year of Faith.

Even the **diocese of Ha Er Bin** celebrated the opening of the Year of Faith with the celebration presided by Pope Benedict at the Vatican on October 11. The ceremony was presided by the apostolic Administrator and was followed by a Seminar on the Year of Faith. The diocese prepared plenty of material on the subject, including a "special" with all the documents of the Pope and the Holy See for the Year of Faith, so that the faithful can "deepen faith, strengthen faith and promote evangelization in the Year of Faith, through the Eucharist and the encounter with Jesus, opening the Door of Faith."

[Agenzia Fides]

ISBN: 1084-8401

Editor: Michel Marcil, SJ

Proofreader: John A. Baumann, SJ

Layout/Production: Mengpin Hsiao

Subscriptions: US/Canada: US\$10.00

Overseas: US\$15.00 - airmail

U.S. Catholic China Bureau,

1646 Addison St., Berkeley, CA 94703

Tel: 510-900-2015 E-mail: chinabur@shu.edu

www.usccb.net

