



天主教中美交流中心

United States Catholic China Bureau

THE U.S.C.C.B: A NEW VISION

The inspirational closing speech of Fr. Mark DeStephano, SJ, the Chairman of the board of the USCCB

✦ **Fr. Michel Marcil, SJ** - our Executive Director has discussed something of our roots and the changes that have been taking place; China and our Bureau are, indeed, at a watershed moment.

✦ I am here to ask you to imagine the future; a future between two thriving branches of the Church: China and the U.S.

✦ I ask you to let your imaginations explore freely, to articulate a new vision of the role the U.S.C.C.B. might play in fostering a deep and abiding relationship between our two churches and our two peoples.

✦ This shared future can only be realized through broad cooperation, an **active sharing of faith experiences between Chinese and Americans**, a fostering of sympathetic listening, understanding, and compassion. Only then will our actions truly be meaningful.

✦ The new vision I propose to you today is that of a broader and deeper democratization of the USCCB; an appeal to shared visions, shared goals, and shared involvement.

✦ The time for simply raising funds in parishes and publishing a newsletter has passed.

✦ The New USCCB must become, in my estimation, a clearinghouse of information and activities related to the Church in China.

✦ Our work must be with efforts to make ourselves better known, such that we might take a greater role of leadership in the area of U.S. - China Church relations.

✦ We, **as a group**, must become better informed, better educated, and better advised about the Church in China.

✦ I propose the establishment of a council of scholars of the Catholic Church in China, to which we will invite the greatest scholarly minds available, to come together regularly to share their research and their insights.

✦ Our Board must become better prepared; I urge that we undertake a formal program of formation, reading, and discussion, to be conducted online; after a trial period, I propose that this formation program be extended to include anyone who wishes to become better



✦ We have already begun to connect with other great clearinghouses of information of the Church in China, such as the Holy Spirit Center in Hong Kong, the Verbiest Center in Belgium, the Ricci Institute at the University of San Francisco, and the Berkley Center at Georgetown University.

✦ I propose that we work our way towards becoming the major source of information to which the American bishops will turn when they want advice, training, or greater interaction with the Church in China.

✦ Our Bureau must have a greater Chinese presence – a goal that we have been working towards, but to which we must continue to strive.

✦ I propose that we do our best to bring more Chinese to Board meetings and conferences so that they can teach us about the reality of the Church in China today.

✦ I envision a USCCB that is truly a clearinghouse for all information about the Church in China.

✦ Through the inspiration and guidance of **Fr. Rob Carbonneau**, the Director of the Passionist Archives in Union City, NJ, we have taken a first step in linking archival sources to Asian Studies programs and the next generation of American Catholics; this initiative also links the Passionist Archives with my home institution, St. Peter's College (SPC).

✦ Our vision for the future is to establish a network of the archives of all those American dioceses and religious orders that engaged in activities in China, especially in the early twentieth century.

✦ The site of the Passionist archives in Union city, NJ, a wonderful and spacious building, may also serve as an excellent new location for the operations of the USCCB.





✦ I am also pleased to announce that we have begun discussions with SPC, which has expressed an interest in housing the USCCB on its campus.

✦ Should this move occur, the USCCB would become involved in academic life, by working closely with the Asian Studies program and with academic departments to offer lectures, sponsor speakers, train students in archival work, and host cultural events that will make Chinese culture and the Church in China come alive.

✦ I propose that the Bureau fully exploit the academic aspect of its mission to inform American Catholics about the Church in China.

✦ One necessary step in the vision is to bond ever more closely with Chinese Catholic Communities here in the U.S., and actively seeking new ways to get them actively involved in our work.

✦ I urge that we reach out more actively to Chinese priests and nuns, especially through associations to which they already belong.

✦ We must become a household word to every Chinese Catholic community in the country.

✦ As we face a bright future, we must also rejoice in our past. I will urge our Board to authorize the publication of various monographs, papers, and, perhaps, books that chronicle the birth and growth of the USCCB over the last two decades in preparation to the USCCB 25th anniversary.

✦ I urge an expansion of our search for new grant monies so as to continue our book translation project and foster other projects that bring direct aid to the people of and in China.

✦ We must expand our Missionary Cooperation Project by involving more speakers, more dioceses, and more parish pastors who are willing to offer their help.

✦ Perhaps through our cooperation with **George Cheng's** Inter-Friendship House and with, Catholic academic institutions such as SPC, we should explore more opportunities to bring Chinese scholars of the Church in China to do research here in the U.S.

✦ Likewise, we must make greater efforts to prepare Catholic lay volunteers to do work in China.

✦ To American news and information media, the USCCB must become the face and the voice of the Catholic Church in China.

✦ We must write more timely book reviews, articles, and opinion-papers that keep the plight of the Church in China in the forefront of the American Catholic consciousness.

✦ We gladly accept the challenge of engaging with religious policy makers from the P.R.C., with scholars for Chinese Institutes, and with officials of the State Administration for Religious Affairs. We hope for contributions to the forging of a new, more tolerant policy and practice of openness to Roman Catholicism in China.

✦ In January we will honor **Roger Cardinal Mahoney** with the Bureau's Ricci Award, in recognition of the Cardinal's support of the USCCB since its inception, and his tireless work for the good of the People and the Church of China.

✦ In short, we must implement every aspect of the strategic plan developed by the Board one year ago through the inspiration and guidance of past chairwoman **Dr. Regina Wolfe**.

✦ This is the USCCB I imagine, that I long for: democratic, participatory, welcoming, prepared, proactive, living, and prayerful.