



United States Catholic China Bureau

# China Church Quarterly

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## China Demands Vatican Revoke Excommunication

China has demanded that the Vatican revoke the excommunication of the two Chinese bishops, recently ordained without the pope's approval, **if it wishes to improve relations**. This was the Beijing's first official response after the Vatican declared the excommunication of Father Paul Lei Shiyin, who was ordained bishop of Leshan on June 29, and Father Joseph Huang Bingzhang, who was ordained bishop of Shantou on July 14.

Beijing's defiant response came in a statement issued by the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), which was published in Chinese and English by Xinhua, China's official news agency, on July 25. SARA, in its statement, described the Vatican's threat of "**so-called excommunication**" of the two bishops as "**extremely unreasonable and rude**", and called for its revocation.

*"If the Vatican is sincere about improving relations, it should rescind the **so-called 'excommunications'**; and return to the correct path of dialogue" a **SARA spokesperson told Xinhua**. "The Chinese government is willing to improve Sino-Vatican relations through constructive dialogue", the statement said in English.*

The SARA spokesperson described the two new illegitimate bishops as devout and capable candidates who are supported by their priests and faithful. The Holy See, on the other hand, did not consider the two priests as suitable candidates to be bishops, and explicitly told them they did not have the pope's approval. It also instructed them not to present themselves for ordination, under pain of excommunication. The Vatican communicated to the Chinese government the reasons why it did not consider them suitable.

Since 1957, however, Beijing has insisted that its state approved "Catholic Church" can act independently of Rome and elect and ordain its own bishops. "*The practice of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association ordaining elected bishops is for the sake of managing the country's Catholic work and spreading the belief*", the SARA statement said.



By accepting to follow the government's line and be ordained bishops, the two priests broke Church law and incurred automatic excommunication. The Vatican formally declared them excommunicated some days after their respective ordinations, on July 4 and July 16. It said it did not recognize them as bishops, and stated that **they had not "authority" to govern the Catholic community in those dioceses**.

Recalling similar threats of excommunication made by the Vatican when the first two "*self-elected and self-ordained*" bishops were consecrated without the papal mandate in 1958, the SARA spokesperson claimed that "*history has proved that the Chinese Church would not be held up by the Vatican's threat*". "*The majority of priests and believers will more resolutely choose the path of independently selecting and ordaining its bishops, and the government will continue to support and encourage such practice*," the statement said.

The SARA statement came three days after a senior official of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association announced on China Daily, July 22, that the state-sanctioned Catholic Church community plans to ordain "**at least 7 new bishops**", with or without the pope's approval, as soon as "*the conditions are right*". It would appear significant, however, that while the spokespersons for SARA and the CCPA firmly insist that China has no intention of changing course on the "*self election and self-ordination*" of bishops, independently of Rome, at the same time they both signal an interest in dialogue with the Vatican on this whole question.

[Vatican Insider, July, 2011]

# Church News

## The Church Cannot Serve Two Masters

As a scholar who is not of the Catholic faith, I don't have a stance on how the Church in China should operate or who should have the authority to appoint Chinese bishops. I just hope that Catholics wish to be good citizens and good people of faith who observe the law, and that the Church teachings would be respected.

However, the three bishop ordinations that took place recently have triggered a rare disciplinary action taken by the highest governing body of the Universal Church as well as **discontent and division among mainland clergy and the faithful**. This is very regrettable.

Common sense tells us that China pursues the principle of separation of church and state. Catholicism is not a state religion and Church affairs are not state affairs. **The country should not run the Church and religious personnel should not hold office in political institutions.**

Church affairs should be dealt with by the Church itself. As the manager of society, the government has the authority and duty to supervise the Church according to law, but should only limit its supervision to this and no more. Most countries in the world do so.

But in China, there is always an extreme leftist force existing in some people's minds. **This internal leftist force does not cherish the new China** that was established by the revolutionary predecessors through decades of arduous struggle and bloodshed, nor cherish the brilliant results achieved in reform and open-up policy. It also goes against the Marxist principle on religions and reverses the direction of the Chinese revolution. It tries to drag the government into a mire of religious conflicts, doing something no other government in the world would do. If we judge the recent self-selection and self-ordination of bishops with this perspective, isn't it clear at a glance?

The recent incidents related to bishop ordinations **damaged the atmosphere of building a harmonious society** and interfered with the general situation of maintaining social stability. History has told us repeatedly that the **leftist disaster** harms

the country. Any excuses for "self-electing and self-ordaining bishops," regardless of "sovereignty" or "religious freedom," are feeble, laughable and not worth refuting.

Some practices in the China Church are difficult for people to understand. For example: to put into the same document two diametrically opposing concepts "**independent or self-governing**" and "**communion with the Successor of Peter**," or to have a Chinese bishops' conference that never convenes a general assembly and whose president never declares any statements or responses on major issues such as excommunications and the current chaotic situation.

What should fall silent does not keep silent, and what should not keep silent does.

In the end, I would like to say that the country belongs to us. Chaos will not disturb the enemy, but it will disturb ourselves.

\* *Ren Yanli headed the Christian Studies section of the World Religions Institute at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing before retiring in 2005. He was a researcher at the Academy, a think tank of the Chinese government, since the 1980s and obtained a doctorate from the Catholic University of Sacred Heart in Milan, Italy, in 2001.*

[UCA News, July,2011]

## Chinese Church "Resists"

Increasingly, in the standoff between the Vatican and Beijing over the illicit episcopal ordinations, one can see signs of the "resistance" of the bishops, the priests and the faithful to the Patriotic Association (PA) and Government in their attempts to determine the life of the Church, even in the more religious and sacramental elements.

The Holy See expressed its appreciation for this "resistance" in the statement published on July 16 last following the ordination - without the mandate of the Pope - of Fr Joseph Huang Bingzhang as bishop of Shantou, Guangdong.



## Protestant "House" Churches

**Msgr. Paul Pei Junmin** of Liaoning had been pegged as the chief concelebrant for the ordination. But his **priests and faithful** staged a sit-in of perpetual prayer and study in the cathedral for days, until the ordination had taken place, to prevent their pastor being "*kidnapped*" and forced to take part in the celebration.

**Another bishop** managed to hide before being detained and dragged to the ordination.

**The four bishops of Guangdong** were not so lucky, they were "*kidnapped*" by government officials and the police a few days before the ordination of Shantou. They were not free to return to their dioceses. But in Guangdong churches, the priests released the Holy See declaration on the excommunication of Fr Huang and urged Catholics to remain faithful to the pope. **People welcomed the homilies with loud applause.**

**Another example of heroic resistance is underway in Harbin.** Here, according to rumours, in the coming months the illicit ordination of Fr Joseph Yue Fu Sheng is due to take place. In anticipation of his ordination, the PA had already elected him national vice-president of the PA in December last year.

But this ordination has been continuously postponed due to the **resistance of the priests** of the Diocese of Harbin who do not want a bishop appointed in opposition to the pope. According to AsiaNews sources, "the candidate, Fr. Yue, is ready and eager, but his priests threaten to desert him".

**Members of the "clandestine" Catholic communities** are "*saddened*" about what is happening in the open communities, especially the illicit ordinations and suggest the Vatican proceed in appointing bishops to clandestine communities. For several years, the Vatican, hoping for an agreement with the Chinese government, has blocked all ordinations of clandestine bishops.



Letter of Pope Benedict XVI to the Church in China

Amid growing pressure, house churches in China "**are at a critical moment**," the pastor says. The congregants are seated in rows of folding chairs, clasping their hands in prayer or studying passages in their Bibles. The choir is sitting up front ready to sing on cue. A cross hangs behind the pastor. The service looks like a Christian service you would see pretty much anywhere else in the world. But this is Beijing, and the Sunday service is illegal.

I couldn't stop glancing at the door and wonder - **are the authorities on their way?** This must be the feeling the people in informal churches here have lived with for decades, I thought.

In China, the government allows religious activity but tightly controls it, requiring Christians to meet at state-approved churches. Many Chinese Christians prefer to worship on their own terms at "house" churches, which generally start as small prayer meetings in people's homes.

In recent years, the authorities have tolerated these underground churches. In fact, the parishioners CNN spoke to seemed unfazed by their church's illegal status. However, **Pastor Ezra Jin**, the leader of Zion Church, said these churches are now under tremendous pressure - **in the midst of China's crackdown on dissent here in the wake of the Arab Spring.** "*We are at a critical moment*," he said. "*What we need is communication.*" *House churches*, he said, *cannot afford to stay silent* - one of the reasons he granted CNN rare access to film in his banned church.

Jin is concerned that China's house churches could become targets of jittery authorities like one of Beijing's biggest house churches, **Shouwang**. Over the past several months, Shouwang's members have been routinely detained and its leaders put under house arrest. The government defended its actions, saying the congregants were repeatedly gathering illegally in the streets. Jin finds the development troubling. He and over a dozen other house church leaders have filed a petition to top Communist Party officials calling for greater religious freedoms. He fears that without dialogue, underground churchgoers could face a fate similar to practitioners of another - heavily persecuted - spiritual group. "**Shouwang's case could deteriorate into a massive crackdown if not handled properly**," he said. "**We are trying to send a message to remind the Communist Party leaders not to inflame this incident, not to tackle it the way they did the Falun Gong.**"

The government officially allows freedom of religion but has long been wary of churches, suspicious they could be a source of opposition. Pastor Jin doesn't see himself as a threat. He hopes his decision to speak up will foster understanding - and possibly **lead to legal recognition of house churches without the government controls.** "*We are very aware of what we are doing,*" he said. "*And we are ready to pay the price.*" He is a man of God now emboldened despite, or perhaps because of, the Chinese government's heavy hand. [CNN, Beijing]

### Closing the Academic Year

At the end of the academic year 2010/2011, 110 major seminarians of 7 Chinese major seminaries completed their cycle of studies in philosophy and theology. According to what "*Faith*" in He Bei reports to Fides, the closing ceremony of the school and academic year in the major and minor seminaries took place in China late June. The 110 major seminarians who completed the course of studies are as follows: 26 of the Major Seminary in He Bei, 4 of the major Seminary in Beijing, 14 of the Major Seminary of She Shan in Shang Hai, 14 of the Major Seminary of Shaan Xi, 24 of the Regional Major Seminary in Si Chuan, 19 of the South Central Regional Major Seminary in China, 9 of the Major Seminary in Shen Yang.

There were no seminarians who completed their studies this year at the National Major Seminary which is located in Beijing, at the Major Seminary of St. John Montecorvino in Shan Xi, and at the Major Seminary of Ji Lin.

During the solemn closing ceremony of the academic year of the Major Seminary in He Bei held June 21, the Rector and the Bishop of the Diocese of Jing Xian (today Heng Shui) His Exc. **Mgr. Peter Feng Xin Mao** presented the Baccalaureate certificate to 26 major seminarians. For the first time the Seminary invited the seminarians' parents to attend the ceremony which took place in an atmosphere of intense emotion. Among these parents there was also a poor farmer, widow, who raised her only son alone. When the 16 year old son told her he wanted to become a priest, the woman's only concern was to ensure that it was not only an emotional impulse of the child, so she prayed every day in these years, so that her son would be worthy of the Lord's call. When she took her son's Baccalaureate certificate, with her ruined hands due to the hard work in the fields, her first thought was to thank God for her son's vocation. To promote priestly vocations, the 26 seminarians offered 800 yuan from their savings to the Foundation of Ding Han for the support and the formation of vocations.

[Agenzia Fides, Beijing]

### Anglican Delegation Visits China

A delegation of Anglican primates from 11 countries across South America, Africa and Southeast Asia, visited China at the invitation of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA).

The leaders of the Global South Anglican Communion were welcomed by SARA director Wang Zu'án on August 31 and later held talks with deputy director Jiang Jianyong, where China's religious freedoms and other topics were discussed. On September 2 they visited the headquarters of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) and Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church in China (BCCCC).

There they held informal discussions with Bishop Joseph Ma Yinglin, who was ordained without papal mandate in 2006 and elected BCCCC president and CCPA vice-chairman in 2010. The two government-sanctioned organizations are not recognized by the Roman Catholic Church.

Archbishop John Chew of Singapore, who is leading the delegation, told the host "*the exchange was a valuable opportunity for everyone to understand each other's development, enhance friendship and face new challenges together.*"

Bishop Ma said this was the first meeting between officials from the Chinese Catholic authorities and Anglican bishops from these regions. "*We have not had contact with the Anglican Church from as far afield as Africa and Latin America before,*" he said.

An Anglican source in Hong Kong said the Church there has no connection with the communion or this delegation. He cautioned against these kinds of exchanges **organized by China's religious departments.** "We can hardly know the hidden agendas especially since there are vast interests between China and Africa."

[ucanews.com, Beijing]



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U.S. Catholic China Bureau,  
Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079  
Tel: 973-763-1131 E-mail: chinabur@shu.edu  
www.usccb.net

## An In-depth Look into China and the Church Relations

*The illegitimate ordinations that have taken place recently, have worsened relations with the Vatican.*

A temporary break in the recent convulsions in the relationship between the Catholic Church and China gives us a moment to compare the different actions taken by the Vatican in response to the recent illegitimate episcopal ordinations celebrated in China. We may well find that, as a basic approach, the specific content and practical implications of these actions are not completely comparable.

On one hand, the response of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) has been given. The Vatican department responsible for the Chinese Dioceses has entrusted them with a detailed *vademecum*, published by Fides News Agency last July 12. The response ventures into canonical interpretation (an area for which the Vatican has a specific department - the **Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts**).

The question and answer text produced by CEP aims to give a detailed outline of the consequences **omitted** from the communication issued by the Holy See on July 4 after the illicit episcopal ordination of Joseph Lei Shiyin.

Among the specific items addressed, the text issued by the Vatican CEP reiterates that the illegitimate bishop **"has incurred excommunication latae sententiae (V. Can. 1382), which has also been publicly 'declared' by the Holy See."** It also specifies that as canonical punishment **"he is forbidden to celebrate Holy Mass, administer or receive the sacraments, or assume any ecclesiastical office," because "although he was ordained bishop, he does not have the power to govern the diocese."**

As for the bishops who took part in the ceremony as consecrators, the *"vademecum"* of CEP categorizes **all of them** as suspects in a state of **"presumed imputability"** in which **"they are presumed to be subject to excommunication."** All prohibitions that derive from this state are described in detail. Through a series of theoretical steps, without any reference to factual conditions under which the rite of ordination took place, the text concluded that **"until his 'presumed imputability' is withdrawn, the bishop in question must abstain from all public ministry. Meanwhile, he is obligated to contact the Holy See."** In the meantime, **"priests and the faithful must avoid receiving the holy sacraments from him."** This is not because they "are

in a position to judge the conscience of the bishop in question, but because his 'presumed imputability' is not yet withdrawn."

Thus, according to CEP, if Rome does not free the consecrating bishop from his state of *"presumed imputability,"* any pastoral explanation directly from the bishop to his flock on any coercion that led him to take part in the illegitimate consecration is null and void. The CEP blog cites canon 1331 of the Code of Canon Law, which **was not mentioned** in the official Vatican declaration.

It is clear that the two declarations issued by the Holy See (and published by the Vatican Press Office and L'Osservatore Romano, unlike the clarification of CEP) after the two illegitimate ordinations of June 29 and July 14 both make a clear distinction between the illegitimately consecrated bishops and the consecrating bishops. In the Holy See's communication published on July 4, we read only that they **"are exposed to serious canonical sanctions under Church law."** In the second communication, published on July 16 following the illegitimate ordination in Guangdong, the Holy See refers to the specific condition of coercion under which episcopal consecration was performed, and, with regard to the consecrating bishops, says they are *"aware that some bishops, contacted by civil authorities, had expressed their wish not to participate in an illegitimate ordination, including acts of resistance,"* and that *"despite this the prelate had been forced to take part."*

In a measured and **deliberate final passage**, the Holy See's communiqué reveals that such an act of resistance *"remains meritorious before God and appreciated by the entire Church,"* and that *"equal appreciation also goes to those priests, consecrated persons, and faithful who have defended their own pastors, accompanying them in this difficult time with prayer and sharing in their intimate suffering."*

**In these two declarations, the Holy See clearly intends to identify the weaknesses and individual responsibilities of the illegitimately consecrated bishops, without extending the shadow of suspicion and distrust to the entire ecclesial area submitted to the diktat of government religious policy.**

It's not the first time in the Chinese dossier, marked by so many complications and ambiguities, that the Vatican Palaces have noticed **non-conforming attitudes** and tendencies.

During the Dengist period of "reopening," which followed the terrible years of the Cultural Revolution, the "placet" sent from Rome at the end of 1981 helped develop the "clandestine" web of **bishops unrecognized by the government**, as well as **many illegitimate bishops consecrated under the political control** of the Patriotic Catholic Association. Starting from the end of the fifties they also experienced the way of the "canonical sanatio" to reaffirm their communion with the Pope, **kept hidden because of outside conditions**, but never denied in the intimacy of their hearts. **Even the Holy See survived pockets of distrust for long periods of time, which were also overcome by a growing pastoral discernment marked by important stages.**



China's state-backed Patriotic Catholic Association

One of these was the study started in 1983 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and headed by Joseph Ratzinger, on the illegitimate episcopal ordination of Chinese bishops, which in 1985 came to confirm **the full validity of the illegitimate bishops** (and consequently that of the sacraments administered by them). Yet even in 1988, the CEP issued orders to reiterate that "every *communicatio in sacris with bishops and ecclesiastics taking part in the Patriotic Catholic Association*" was to be avoided. This gave weight to the arguments of those who continued to **deny the validity of the liturgies and sacraments celebrated in the "opened" churches**, while in reality, for millions of Catholics who had suffered the most bloodthirsty persecution, it became easier to pray, attend Mass, and receive the sacraments.

At that time, the most circumspect functionaries of the Holy See continued to collect information that confirmed in ever greater detail the faithfulness of the **depositum fidei** of so many **bishops recognized by the government**. Many of them, for instance the great **Bishop of Xian, Antonio Li Duan**, after years of prison and re-education camps, showed courage in reaffirming their faithfulness to the successor of Peter, even within the para-ecclesiastical bodies controlled by the regime.

Already in those years, many scholars and visitors to China opposed the recently-returned way of speaking and reasoning, saying that **it was not right** to identify the Patriotic Association of Chinese Catholic, a political body controlled by the regime, with **the part of the Church in China that accepted and supported such control**. Even back then, many specialists on the Chinese Church question judged the name "**Patriotic Church**" (never used in the official pronouncements of the Holy See) to be unjust, given that bishops, priests, and the faithful,

Though "registered" at the Patriotic Association, were and professed themselves to be faithful to the Catholic faith and felt themselves to be in full communion with the Pope. But little by little, in the Vatican offices there were those who were **worried about a total alignment of Catholics and the local Church with the religious policy of the Party**. They took a harder line, which called upon the bishops to "demonstrate" their faithfulness to the Pope by **breaking all ties with the Patriotic Association**.

An important stage in this progressive clarification of ideas was a meeting held by the Holy See in September 1993, in which the Vatican leaders of the Secretary of State and CEP, worried about issues with China, delineated clear directions both for the "clandestine" community and the "open" community. At that summit, **it was established that from that moment on every episcopal election, to be considered legitimate, would have to receive prior permission from the Apostolic See**.

Among the protagonists of this shared and gradual acknowledgment of the real dynamics of Chinese Catholicism (which reached its height in the letter of Benedict XVI to the Chinese Catholics in June 2007), there was also **Monsignor Fernando Filoni**, current prefect of CEP and at that time head of the Center for Holy See Studies in Hong Kong - a kind of unofficial apostolic delegation which the Vatican still maintains in the former British colony. "*Faith in China*," wrote Filoni to the leadership of CEP in March 1994, "*is the same as the Universal Church, even if currently its manifestation has various levels of expression, and there are doubts on the validity of the sacraments... In the effort to reconstruct step-by-step the relations between the Chinese Church and the Universal Church, we need to perform more gestures of welcoming than of separation.*"

Following this road, which is dotted by many serious incidents (such as the 5 illegitimate ordinations ordered by the Chinese regime on 6 January 2000, which were imposed by the conservative wing of the Chinese leadership in order to sabotage a positive phase of Chinese-Vatican negotiations), **a provisional solution was reached only in 2004.** This was an **experimental series of episcopal ordinations taking place with parallel consent**, which was made known to the faithful of the dioceses, of the Holy See and the Chinese civil authorities. With this system, important episcopal appointments were carried out between 2005 to 2010, like that of Beijing and the young auxiliary of Shanghai, Joseph Xing Wenzhi.

Among the many factors that mark and determine the current harsh change of scenario, there is one that inspires **the resurgent mistrust that seems to inform some Vatican representatives** in dealing with bishops who obey the regime's orders in the religious field.

In the last few years, while the heroic bishop-witnesses such as Antonio Li Duan and Mattia Duan Yinmin (for whom the faithfulness to priestly ordination also meant persecution and privation) were disappearing, with government approval, a new generation of priests and bishops – **both in the "official" area and the so-called "clandestine" area** – has displayed episodes of **paradoxical careerism**, with young priests spending their time networking and seeking out ecclesiastical and political alliances in order to become bishops.

In this regard, the Chinese situation cannot be separated from the general obfuscation regarding the real nature of the episcopal ordination, apostolic succession, and the ties of communion that bind the pastors of local Churches to the bishop of Rome. In the everyday practice of the Church, and certainly not only in China, the appointments of bishops and their movements from one location to another end up often being perceived as prizes and awards granted by **officials of a universal bureaucracy notable for their positions** and their ability to cultivate relationships of power.

On several occasions, Benedict XVI has invited everyone to reflect on the reasons for and effects of these depressing results. Perhaps also the recent, painful Chinese events – where the interference of the regime has focused attention on the theme of the episcopal appointments, to the point of paroxysm - can help such reflection.

[Vatican Insider, 07/19/2011]

## Social News

### China's Corruption Fight

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao vowed to crack down harder on corruption, to build a clean government.



China's ruling Communist Party said that it plans more inspections and supervision of officials as it battles corruption, a deep-rooted problem that has gotten worse and **could threaten political stability.** The party will monitor the use of public vehicles and supervise officials' financial assets to curb and combat illegal financial activities. Its vice chairman for discipline, Wu Yuliang, said widespread corruption was standing in the way of economic development.

A central bank report released last week said thousands of corrupt officials have stolen more than \$120 billion and fled overseas since the mid-1990s, with the U.S. a top destination.

But Chinese officials have since backed away from the report. Wu said the numbers in it were incorrect, though he added that China was *"strengthening international cooperation in law enforcement to catch and prevent corrupt officials from fleeing abroad."*

Wu said China is monitoring the overseas assets of officials and their movements to prevent corruption, but he did not give details on how much money has been stolen. *"The Chinese government attaches great importance to the issue of corrupt officials fleeing overseas,"* Wu said. *"We have conducted many campaigns to catch those officials and return their money."* He said nearly 140,000 graft cases were filed in China in 2010 and that more than 146,000 people were punished in corruption cases.

[Associated Press, Beijing]

# Reading Notes



- **God Is Red: The Secret Story of How Christianity Survived and Flourished in Communist China.** *Liao Yiwu, Translated by Wen Huang.* HarperOne, September 2011.

In 1990, Chinese dissident *Liao Yiwu* was imprisoned for writing a poem about the Tiananmen Square protests and remained under police surveillance after serving a four-year sentence. Moreover, in the past ten years, *Yiwu* was denied leave from China and forbidden to publish "illegal" works outside of China.

Now, with empathy and compassion, *Yiwu* gives voice to another persecuted people in China - Chinese Christians. His new book recounts their ongoing battle for freedom of expression and religion. In *God is Red*, Liao reveals that Christianity is undergoing a resurgence in China. According to the World Christian Database, five percent of China's population practices Christianity, making it the country's largest formal religion.

Providing an unprecedented glimpse into a deeply complex religious and political reality, Liao shares the stories of a wide range of astonishing and unique characters for whom Christianity is life-sustaining-a faith that has enabled survival, forgiveness, a sense of community, and peace, both under Mao and now as Christians continue to be persecuted. Through this human lens, *Liao Yiwu* reveals a new Christian identity which is distinctively Chinese.

- **China: the whys of the conflict between church and state.** Gossaert V. – Palmer D. A., *The religious question in modern China*, The University of Chicago Press, 2011 pages 441.

The Chinese anti-religious policy for the moment fails. Instead, the hasty rush to secularization by the state generates a favorable reaction to the development of religion. This explains why in China Christians are growing at a rate of twenty thousand new baptisms every day and with a total of 200 million faithful; **a phenomenon with which the government does not know how to deal.**

As can be seen from the events last year with the Catholic Church, the government has stopped acting with tolerance and now, through the Patriotic Association (Beijing-approved Catholics) imposes illegal ordinations (illegal because not endorsed by the Vatican) in an attempt to have a *government's Catholic Church*. China and the approach to religion is the subject of a documented book by two scholars of the University of Chicago.

The basic problem, the authors argue, is if and to what extent religion has a place in China today, to help build a society open towards the future. The answer is: we will see; meanwhile in the medium term the government thinks that religious groups should be monitored because they are too independent from the project and the structure of a centralized state.

## US Catholic China Bureau Address Change

We will be moving to Berkeley, California  
**Effective January 1, 2012,**  
 Our address at Seton Hall University  
 South Orange, NJ 07079, will be changed to:

1646 Addison Street  
 Berkeley, CA 94703.