



U.S. Catholic China Bureau

Program Update 2009

Overview:

Founded in 1989, at the initiative of the Maryknoll Society and the Society of Jesus, and with the affirmation of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Bureau today represents a cross-section of Catholic religious orders, organizations, scholars and others with China related interests. It strives to promote understanding of Catholics and other religious believers in China, towards re-engaging the U.S. Catholic Church in a new missionary partnership with the Catholic Church in China.

The USCCB takes inspiration and guidance in its programs from the many communiqués of late Pope John Paul II, and the expressed pastoral concern of Pope Benedict XVI, to Chinese Authorities and to the Church in China. These messages continually call for respectful dialogue and for mutual forbearance and forgiveness; seeking to foster reconciliation and unity.

A **Board of Directors**, at semi-annual meetings, provides consultation and guidance for USCCB activities. The USCCB has two full-time staff and one senior scholar, augmented on an ad hoc basis for program assistance. Through four committees: - Program, Development, Finance, and Communications – members of the Board collaborate on specific program activities. Dr. Regina Wentzel Wolfe, Professor of Moral Theology is Chair of the Board of Directors.

Major Activities:

EDUCATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES: providing the U.S. Catholic Community and others interested and concerned about China, including the religious and secular media, with reliable information and knowledge of the Catholic Church and the contextual situation for religious believers in China today.

- ◆ **China Church Quarterly** - reports on news and activities of the Chinese Catholic Church and contextual issues arising in the contemporary cultural, religious, and social spheres. Distribution averages: **1000 copies each quarter** (domestic/international); and 1000 promotional copies annually.
- ◆ **National Catholic China Conferences** - convened since 1980, and held every 2 years. Each Conference attracts some 80 participants from North America, Europe and Asia/Pacific. The last Conference was held in Belleville, IL in October 2008 with 78 participants. The next Conference will be in Fall 2010. The theme will be:

Continuing China – U.S. Conversations: Experiencing Jesus Christ through Chinese Eyes

–from talking about China, to first hand sharing of the faith journeys and Church experiences of Chinese Christians themselves, and exploring possible partnership.

- ◆ **Missionary Cooperation Plan** - USCCB has participated in the MCP annually since 1997 – speaking at Parishes to raise awareness about the Chinese Catholic Church, as well as to appeal for financial support. **In 2008: 21 parishes in 7 dioceses.** Estimated income is \$50,000+ which is channeled to support programs of the Church in China.

◆ **Religious Study Tours to China** – 11 Tours from 1990-2006. Average 15-20 participants. **Next Study Tour is scheduled for US Chinese priests in summer 2010.**

- Participants are provided with study materials prior to departure and orientation and de-briefing sessions while in China. Focus is on the Chinese people and local Catholic communities, and places of cultural and religious significance associated with the history of Christianity in China. Renowned tourist attractions are included in each city.
- Tour participants are followed up to encourage and facilitate their sharing of their experiences of the Church in China with the US Church through lectures and publishing stories in the Catholic media, as well as maintaining contacts which can support Chinese Catholics.

◆ **Chinese Seminary Teachers and Formators Project** – Initiated by the Maryknoll Society in 1991, this Project has served over 100 young religious, clergy, and lay leaders from China, sent to the United States by their local Bishops for graduate studies and on-going vocational formation. Cardinals Theodore McCarrick Archbishop Emeritus of Washington DC and Francis George OMI of Chicago have been designated by the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples to oversee the Project.

As it does for other US China-Church related programs, the Catholic China Bureau collaborates with the Maryknoll Society in support of the goals of the Project. Sr. Janet Carroll, MM, serves on an Advisory Committee of the Project, with Rev. Larry Lewis MM, who is the Project Coordinator. USCCB's role is consultative, as well as providing accompaniment for individual students, [especially Sisters/laywomen], and resourcing the annual Pastoral Formation Seminar and Summer Retreat. **Currently there are 34 students in graduate/formational studies in the USA** [16 priests, 2 seminarians, 14 sisters, and 2 laywomen].

USCCB also maintains communications with those who have returned to serve the China Church, visiting them when in China; responding to needs in their ministries; and channeling resources to seminaries and formation centers for religious women. As opportunity arises, we facilitate these students serving as speakers and/or resource/participants at US church and mission conferences.

◆ **Lectures/Seminars on China:** socio-cultural perspectives; Christianity in China; contemporary China Church development and so forth. Outreach includes: secular and religious, as well as educational, parochial, ecumenical, missionary and other organizations. (Jesuit Ministries meeting in Montreal, Passionists in China?)

- *The USCCB Executive Director, Fr. Michel Marcil SJ gave talk on the present situation of the Catholic Church in China to the US Jesuit Commission for Social and International Ministries at their Annual Conference in Montreal in April 2009.*
- *Fr. Michel Marcil SJ was invited as speaker by the Passionist Historical Archives to the Memorial Celebration on the 80th anniversary of the death of 3 Passionist Fathers in West Hunan, China.*

◆ **Visitors from China** - Facilitate/collaborate on visits of church delegations (Catholic/Protestant); programs for religious studies scholars. Jointly with ecumenical partners, Seton Hall University/Asian Studies Dept. and other organizations.

COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING with China-related programs and projects sponsored under Catholic/Protestant auspices in partnership with the churches in China.

- Fostering China Church involvement of the Chinese American Catholic Communities in outreach to the Church in China; including joint planning for USCCB's National Conferences in respective dioceses.
 - Regular consultation with US Catholic Relief Services/ Hong Kong on collaborative initiatives in response to the growing HIV/AIDS crisis in China; as well as growing cooperation with Catholic Social Service Centers in Xian, Shenyang, and Shanghai dioceses.
 - Presentation on the work of the USCCB to representatives of Catholic organizations looking for opportunities to serve China through shared mission with the local Catholic Church.
 - Participation in US national conferences for other missionary and religious organizations [USCMA, OMSC, etc.] through Exhibits and participation of staff.
 - Celebration of the 90th birthday of Fr. Larry Murphy, MM, a founder of USCCB and a President of Seton Hall University.
 - Supportive outreach to newly named Bishops chosen by the Holy See in consultation with dioceses in China. During 2007, new bishops were ordained for 8 dioceses.
- ◆ **Advice and resource U.S. Catholic dioceses**, religious orders, mission offices, religious news services and other organizations vis-à-vis their interests and concerns about Catholic communities and service and support to the Catholic Church in China. Consultation and assistance to US Catholics visiting China [e.g., business, academics, tourists].
- Contacts in the China Network. Mostly Holy Spirit Study Center in Hong Kong and with Verbiest Foundation in Belgium.
 - Sr. Janet worked with Sr. Margaret Loftus, SNDdeN on a manuscript on Notre Dame de Namur Congregation in China 1930-49, and on a book project on History of the Maryknoll Society by Angelyn Dries, OFM.
 - Sr. Janet reviewed and discussed two projects for ORBIS Books: History of Christianity in China by Jonathan YY Tan and of Women in Mission by Susan Smith.
- ◆ **Briefings/Consultations:** Extensive consultations with major media correspondents on perspectives and implications of developments in the China Church. Provision of information, analysis and commentary following the January 2009 Consultation on China held in Rome to reflect upon the status of the Chinese Catholic Church and on Vatican-PRC conversations.
- ◆ **AITECE/U.S. Liaison:** recruitment/orientation of US Catholics to serve as English-language teachers and faculty of other disciplines in colleges/universities in China in collaboration with the Columban Fathers Society/Hong Kong. Some 51 U.S. Catholics (laity, religious and clergy) have served through these programs since 1982.
- **Currently: 7 USCCB sponsored teachers serving in China in 5 public universities**, including **two new teachers assigned** to colleges/universities in Sichuan Province and Guang Xi Autonomous Region in Fall '08. Among some 15-20 inquiries this period are being pursued for placement, 3 are potential for Fall 2009. There has been a noticeable drop in AITECE inquiries in the past months – due perhaps to turndown in US economy and people's concerns about job security.

- ◆ **Advocacy on Religious Freedoms** - USCCB serves in informational/advisory capacity on these issues, particularly regarding the China Catholic Church, for U.S. diocesan offices; Committees of the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference; other religious and secular organizations; media; government agencies; and major human rights advocacy organizations.
- ◆ **Ecumenical/Academic:** USCCB collaborates closely with the *Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History* at the University of San Francisco and with the *Ricci Institutes in Macau and Taipei*. Staff also participate and resource China Church related Ecumenical Networks conferences and programs.
- ◆ **Aid to China Church** - designated funds and materials received are allocated to meet expressed needs of Catholics and the Church in China, for small local projects in which leadership is provided by China Church personnel known to USCCB, especially ministries of women religious in China among poor and marginalized peoples in China; and including outreach to HIV/AIDS victims' families in NE Liaoning Province.
 - Upon the request of Professor Audrey Donnithorne, the "Sichuan Catholic Churches Reconstruction Fund" has been set up recently to help the rebuilding of the shattered churches in Sichuan, in the Municipality of Chongqing and the affected neighboring provinces.
 - "The Fund for Theological Translation" is USCCB's Aid to the Church in China for the Textbook Translation Project. This fund will provide financial assistance to Chinese Catholic seminary faculty, Chinese Catholic publishers, and other qualified translators to enable the translation, publication, and affordable distribution of seminary textbooks in China.

Revised June 2009

**U.S. Catholic China Bureau
Seton Hall University
South Orange, NJ 07079-2689**

**E-mail: chinabur@shu.edu
Tel: 973-763-1131
Fax: 973-774-7084**

Web: www.usccb.net