

PRESS RELEASE

US Catholic China Bureau 22nd National Catholic China Conference November 3 – 5, 2006

The USCCB held its 22nd National Catholic China Conference on the first weekend of November at the *Simpsonwood Retreat and Conference Center* at Norcross, Greater Metro Atlanta, Georgia. Under the theme: ***Experiencing Jesus Christ Through Chinese Eyes***, 76 people came together from both North America and China to examine ways in which Chinese cultural, social, intellectual, theological, artistic and other perspectives reflect, as through a prism, dimensions which enrich mutual understandings of Faith in Jesus Christ. The overriding goal was to learn from Chinese Christians/Catholics themselves as they shared their Faith journeys. Many participants, especially those who attended previous USCCB conferences, were deeply impressed by this **critical transition in inter-cultural dialogue**: *from talking about the Church in China, to listening to and learning from uniquely Chinese perspectives* on Faith, characteristics of different spiritualities and relationships with Jesus Christ, and lived experiences of Church rooted in contemporary China's cultural and social contexts .

The **opening keynote address** was presented by Rev. Dr. Enoch Wan, Professor of Intercultural Studies at *Western Seminary at Portland, OR*. Active in missiological circles, WAN has authored and published extensively on Asian contextual theology. Rev. Paul SHI Hui Min, STD candidate at the *Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, CA*, presented a profound Christological reflection on the Passion of Jesus, from a contemporary Chinese perspective. Dr. Rachel ZHU Xiao Hong, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at *Fu Dan University in Shanghai*, and currently scholar-in-residence at the *Center for Spirituality at St. Mary's College at Notre Dame*, touched everyone with a forthright and poignant account of her personal journey from the detached posture of a cultural *Christian*, to full Faith and participation in the Roman Catholic Church in China. Many were deeply impressed by her courageously expressed dream, as both a Christian and a scholar, to establish a Catholic Studies Center at Fudan, as a

means to more effectively catalyze the interface between the Church and the Academy in China today.

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A Panel of three speakers addressed other aspects of the theme: perspectives on the vocational and ministerial developments among young women religious in China today; and the challenges inherent in the widely observed phenomenon of *China's Youth in Quest of Meaning*. The third panelist spoke from the depths of having experienced many years of persecution and suffering for her religious beliefs; but now for more than two decades rejoices in new found opportunities to live her Faith openly and in service to the Church at Shanghai. She entitled her paper: *Such Small Suffering and Such Abundant Grace*, reflecting how the dark years nurtured seeds of unimagined grace and joy.

The sessions were marked by **dynamic interaction among speakers and participants**, as well as in small group discussions. A highlight of the weekend was sharing a Chinese meal, followed by a spectacular **performance of music, dance and other forms of Chinese artistry** generously presented by the *Atlanta Chinese Community*. Most Rev John S. Cummins, Bishop-Emeritus of the Oakland, CA diocese and long time liaison between the US and Asian Conferences of Bishops, presided at the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy, at which the ACC choir also provided all the music, with the recessional ritual led by the children of the Community.

The **23rd National Catholic China Conference is scheduled for October 17 -19, 2008**. Following upon the Olympic Games to be held that summer in China, the theme will seek to foster *Cross Cultural Dialogue* among Chinese and American youth, laity, business people and those who have lived and served in China.

**Proceedings of the 22nd Conference are available
at cost of printing and postage. [\$10.00]**

[At preference of the speakers, we do not transmit these electronically.]

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