



United States Catholic China Bureau

China Church Quarterly

Issue No.68

Fall 2006

Editor's Note:

Light and Hope – the central themes of Advent, uniquely echo in the hearts of Christians in China – unswervingly grounded in faith and trust in the promised Messiah. They wait upon the Lord, albeit at times under a canopy of darkness which sometimes shrouds the dawn.



Autumn in China - as this issue of CCQ attests, witnessed just such a juxtaposition of events: pride and joy in many exciting developments portending the steady growth and development of the Church in China. Even as it assumes an ever expanding role in leadership, witness and service to society, it can be suddenly overshadowed by clouds of sadness and painful consternation, caused by a new unwarranted and unexpected contravention of Catholic religious beliefs by external political authorities. The PRC regime's oft repeated demand to be "free of interference in its internal affairs" rings hollow, if it will not in turn extend this same prerogative to the Chinese Catholic Church, an officially recognized religion in China.

The hasty, illicit consecration on November 30, of a new auxiliary bishop for the small diocese of Xu Zhou in Jiangsu Province, was widely lamented. In an official response, the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, with utter sensitivity to the plight of Chinese Catholics and their religious leaders, acknowledged the spiritual drama, suffering and inner unease of those forced to take active part [in events] contravening Catholic tradition. Liturgy by definition is not magical. It is meaningful only insofar as the participants willingly give their assent. No early power can intrude nor compel acquiescence. Therefore, let us be steadfast in prayer, joyfully awaiting **the Coming of the Lord!**

22nd National Catholic China Conference

The USCCB held its 22nd National Catholic China Conference November 3-5 at the Simpsonwood Retreat and Conference Center in Metro Atlanta. With the theme: ***Experiencing Jesus Christ Through Chinese Eyes***, 76 people from North America and China shared a cross-cultural dialogue around cultural, social, intellectual, theological and artistic perspectives, forming a prism, through which new insights and understandings of their faith in Jesus Christ were shared. This Conference marked a **significant transition in intercultural dialogue**: from talking *about* the Church in China, to listening to and learning from uniquely Chinese perspectives on Faith, characteristics of diverse spiritualities and ways of relating to Jesus Christ; as well as experiences of Church rooted in contemporary China's cultural and social contexts.

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

The 23rd National Conference is scheduled for October 17-19, 2008 most likely in the Mid-West. Following upon the Olympic Games to be held that Summer in China, the theme will seek to continue the "**Cross Cultural Dialogue**" focusing on Chinese and American youth, laity, business people and those who have lived and served in China for some time.

Proceedings of the 22nd Conference are available at cost [printing and postage @\$10.00]. At request of the speakers, these are not transmitted electronically.

- *Christianity in Chinese Cultural Context*, Rev. Prof. Enoch Wan
- *Christianity in the Chinese Cultural Context*, Rev. Joseph Wenxi Zhang
- *Reflections on the Biblical Jesus: in the Eyes of Traditional Chinese Faithful*, Rev. Paul SHI Hui Min
- *My Spiritual Pilgrimage to Fullness of Faith*, Dr. Rachel ZHU Xiao Hong
- *Reflections of Women Religious in China Today*, Sr. Avila FU Hong Liang
- *Such Small Suffering and Such Abundant Grace*, Cecilia TAO Beiling
- *Chinese Youth in Quest of Meaning*, Dr. Jean Paul Wiest

Ed. Note: *Quarterly reflections are usually shared by one of the young clergy or religious leaders doing graduate studies in the USA. This time we present a contribution excerpted from a paper of a Catholic laywoman at the China Conference.*

My Spiritual Pilgrimage to Fullness of Faith

Dr. Rachel ZHU Hong Liang, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Fu Dan University, as well as visiting Professor at East-China Christian Seminary, in Shanghai, is currently a visiting scholar in the Theology Dept. of Notre Dame University. An intellectual disciple of Schillebeeckx, she has authored numerous articles in scholarly journals; been recipient of several prestigious research grants, and participated in many international conferences. Her paper at the recent China Conference, recounts the fascinating and labyrinthine pathway by which she came to faith as a Roman Catholic. Beginning from the challenges and tensions inherent in being the daughter of a staunchly convicted Marxist father, drawn in as a "cultural Christian" in the 1980s in China, and swept up in the so called *Christianity Fever* era, her journey continued as a visiting scholar at Yale University. There, she and her husband Daniel were "*surprised by the spirit.*" Led on by the ever deepening implications of her theological insights and encounter with *Catholic Social Thought*, they at last found their home in the Catholic Church, which also enabled Rachel to reconcile the multi-faceted intellectual and spiritual dualisms of her life. *An excerpt of her paper follows:*

The Reconciliation of Dualisms

"Owing to various historical and political reasons, Chinese Christian churches have been burdened by many kinds of dualism. In China even today, Christianity is still regarded as a foreign religion; and Chinese culture and its symbols and ceremonies are regarded as the alien to Christian faith. Moreover, the conflict between the registered and the registered churches distracts the focus on the Mission of the Church and betrays God's commandment of love. Concerning the division among these different groups, Robert Schreier reminds us all that "*the Church is a community of memory and hope*". The incarnated and suffering God has provided us with the memory of His Passion, encouraging us to speak out of the provocations and sufferings of the past, to help build a safe and peaceful present, and to construct a pathway of hope to the future.

Concerning the relationship of local culture and the Christian Faith tradition, *Gaudium et Spes* teaches us

that God revealed himself according to different cultures in different epochs; Christian tradition and local cultures communicate with and enrich each other. [GS No. 58] Out of these perspectives, **it is important for Chinese Catholic scholars** to proclaim such a message of reconciliation to the Churches, and **to further explore the possibilities of a fully and authentically contextualized Christian faith.**"

Witness of an 'Orthodox' Catholic Scholar

"Upon my return from Notre Dame to China next year – in addition to my own research and writing projects, **my personal vision is to implement my dream to initiate a *Catholic Studies Center*, dedicated to research and teaching of Catholic thought and history.** I want to take this scriptural verse as the burden I will bear for my future: "*The one to whom much is given, will have to give much; if much is given into her care, of her more will be requested.*" (Lk12:48). As I have already mentioned at the beginning of this paper, there are many Christian Studies Centers in the Chinese academic network so far, but few of them provide sustained consideration to Catholic Christianity. The mission of the Center I envision would be to do academic work, and to pursue cultural exchange towards horizontal integration, including these activities:

- 1. Publication** of several series of readings for both academic and Christian believers. **Translation** of Western classical works in Catholic spirituality and in fundamental theology. Support for **contextualized or original works of Chinese writers**, to introduce both systematic and pastoral theology.
- 2. Seminars for the students** in religious studies programs as well as for religious and lay people in dioceses. In past few years, the program in which I have been teaching has successfully arranged a two-year graduate level pastoral training course for local Protestant pastors. It would be also feasible and practical to provide such a program for Catholic priests and Sisters, only a few of whom are likely to receive financial support and official permission necessary to go aboard for advanced studies.
- 3.** This Center could also **facilitate cultural exchange programs** such as inviting international scholars in Catholic studies to lecture as visiting scholars.
- 4.** The Center would also **encourage students and scholars** in religious studies to **participate more actively in Church** liturgy and pastoral activities. "

USCCB's First Matteo Ricci Award

The Board of Directors of the U.S. Catholic China Bureau has presented its first **Matteo Ricci Award** to **Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington DC**. Named for the famed 16-17th century Jesuit missionary to China, this award has been created "to honor individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the Catholic Church in China consistent with the purposes and goals of the Bureau."

The award was **presented at a gala dinner held at the Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See in Washington DC, on October 11, 2006 and attended by 80 invited friends, benefactors and guests of the Bureau**. It was accompanied by a symbolic gift in the form of a miniature replica of one of the newly installed stained glass windows at the *Cathedral of St. Ignatius in Shanghai* portraying Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. [The panel is one of over 900 new windows being designed and created by Theresa WO Ye, a woman artist working in the style of traditional Chinese paper cut art; and under the direction of Tom Lucas, SJ, of the Fine Arts Dept at University of San Francisco. These windows are replacing the French gothic style stained glass which was totally destroyed during the Cultural Revolution in China.]

The citation noted in part, that Cardinal McCarrick has "for two decades... followed in the footsteps of Matteo Ricci, who was widely revered as the foremost cultural mediator between China and the West." For his tireless efforts to build bridges of friendship with the Chinese people, McCarrick is widely respected in both religious and secular circles in China and abroad; as well as for opening effective channels of communication for the Church. Known also for his lifelong dedication to promoting the human, social and spiritual well-being of peoples in many lands, the **Cardinal has also advocated with a judicious and prudent manner, for a fuller enjoyment of human rights and freedoms for the peoples of China.**

As a founder and charter member of the **Catholic China Bureau** in 1989, **Cardinal McCarrick remains active as one of our Episcopal Patrons**, providing pastoral leadership and wise counsel in the implementation of our mandate to initiate a new missionary partnership with the Catholic Church in China.

Congratulations! 10,000 years!



Mr. John Murray, St. Paul, MN,
with Cardinal McCarrick

China Honors Ricci

A square in commemoration of *Matteo Ricci*, the Italian Jesuit missionary who introduced the world map, Western mathematics and astronomy to China in the 16th Century is to be constructed at Nanchang, capital of east China's Jiangxi Province. Covering 2,900 square meters, **Matteo Ricci Square**, will be located at the southern end of the City Center. A ten-foot tall statue of Matteo Ricci will be erected in the center of the square, with a brief biography in Chinese and English inscribed on the base. Designed as a leisure attraction with open-air cafes and a Roman-style theater, construction was to be completed by the end of September 2006.

Born in 1552, Matteo Ricci arrived in Macao in 1582. From there, **he promoted Catholicism and science in many Chinese cities**, including Beijing, Guangzhou, Nanjing and Nanchang; and **introduced China's cultural and scientific attainments to Europe**. Ricci spent three years in Nanchang from 1595 to 1598 and told his friends about the city in his letters, one of them noting that Nanchang had clean, wide streets and was at least twice as big as the City of Florence, Italy.

Ricci died in Beijing in 1610, and then *Emperor Wanli* of the imperial Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) had Ricci's grave set in the western part of the city proper. **Visitors to Beijing today often go on pilgrimage to the site of Ricci's Tomb** and that of other early missionaries to China.

China Infodoc 06/06

80th Anniversary of the First Six Chinese Bishops

On 28 October 1926, six Chinese priests were ordained to the episcopacy in Rome by *Pope Pius XI*. No Chinese bishop had been ordained in the 241 years since *Bishop Gregorius Luo Wenzao* of Nanjing became the first Chinese Bishop in 1685.

Celebrations to mark the 80th anniversary of the first Chinese bishops, took place in the dioceses of Anguo, Fenyang, Haimen, Puqi, Taizhou and Xuanhua which they served. **Special emphasis was placed on reflecting on the development that has taken place since then in the local Church.**

Three new priests were ordained during the October 28 commemoration. One, *Father Wang Jianjun*, expressed his gratitude to *Archbishop Celso Constantini*, the Holy See's first ambassador to China, saying that in the seminary the archbishop is well remembered for bearing hardships and endeavoring to develop the Chinese Church. The 1926 ordinations took place during the tenure of Constantini, who later became a Cardinal.

A priest, also from Xuanhua Diocese, shared that young Catholics are unaware of the significance of the 1926 ordinations and that the importance of the anniversary had to be stressed during prayers and homilies. Some lay leaders recounted the history of the diocese, sharing pastoral experiences and giving faith testimonies.

This year also marks the 60th anniversary of the naming of the first Chinese cardinal and the establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in China.

Divine word Bishop Thomas Tien Keng-hsin, was named the first cardinal in China and in Asia on 18 February 1946. Two months later, on April 11, Pope Pius XII announced the establishment of the Chinese Church hierarchy and erected 20 ecclesiastical provinces with 79 dioceses and 38 existing vicariates. HKSE 12/06

ISBN: 1084-8401

Editor: Janet Carroll, MM

Layout & Design: Barbara Lewis McCarthy

Subscriptions: US/Canada: US\$10.00

Overseas: US\$15.00 - airmail

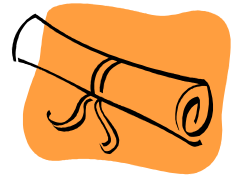
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The Bible on a Piece of Silk

An authentic work of art, a Bible written on a piece of silk 5,007 meters long, a combination of Chinese culture and Christianity, has been given a place in the *Guinness Book of Records*.

This "longest" Bible in the world, on display at the Exhibition Hall in Beijing, is perfect in every detail. Its fifty volumes are written in 900,000 *Cao Shu* Chinese characters (one of the most important types) and it is the work of one artist. **The white silk, which signifies sacredness and purity, is decorated with pale blue silk as a sign of Heaven, the House of the Father.** The outer cover is green and the work is tied with ribbon of red, the color of life and energy and the national color of China. **The 5,000 meters of silk recall five thousand years of Chinese history and civilization.** The volumes are contained in boxes of scented wood with bronze decorations and the lock is a Chinese symbol of happiness reflecting that the contents of the box contain the "happiness of mankind."



Fides

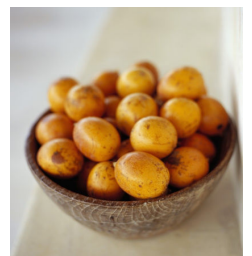
Eggs Multiply Like "Mustard Seeds"



The start was quite modest, collecting money to buy two eggs a week for each seminarian and sister in a northern Chinese diocese to supplement their meager meals. In 1996, Rev. John Baptist ZHANG Shijiang entrusted some money his

family had given him to start a fund, to help improve the diet of seminarians and nuns in his home diocese of Xingtai in Hebei Province.

Over the past 10 years, the charity fund spread throughout China and now supports the education of more than 5,000 school children, irrespective of their religion or even the lack of one. Today, the Vocation and Education Fund, which operates under Jinde Charities, has more than 600 donors in many dioceses in China. A few months ago, Jinde Charities became the first officially registered Catholic NGO in China.



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