
China Church Quarterly

No.93 July - Sept 2013

US Catholic China Bureau, Berkeley CA

Holy See-Beijing Diplomacy Not Likely in Near Future

Tou Chou-shen, former ambassador to the Vatican from Taiwan between 2004 and 2008, believes that a high level dialogue between the Holy See and Beijing may be in the too hard basket at present and diplomatic relations out of the question.

UCA News reported that the Taiwanese diplomat said on the status of the Vatican: "*in the diplomatic world, for diplomatic relations to be forged, Beijing would have to first relinquish its control over religious activities, which is not likely to happen, given its track record on insisting that the Catholic Church in China must exist outside of Vatican authority.*"

He noted that the late **Pope Paul VI** once tried to promote a two China policy, but the idea was not accepted on either side of the Taiwan Strait or by most members of the international community. "The Vatican has since stuck to a one China policy," Tou noted, and has never tried to hide its desire to improve its relations with China. He added that the Vatican also believes that the time is not ripe to suggest that it could recognize both China and Taiwan and that the appropriate conditions for forging diplomatic relations with Beijing are simply not in place at present.

Meanwhile, at a seminar held at the Fu Jen University in Taipei, the former bishop of Hong Kong, Joseph **Cardinal Zen Ze-kiun**, said that despite the difficulties with Beijing, the Vatican should do all it can to strengthen its diplomatic ties with Taiwan. "The Vatican would be wrong if it gave up on Taiwan, as the Church has never abandoned a friend in its history."



The Ordination of Bishops Increases Tensions Between China and Vatican.

Cardinal Zen added that he believes that the Vatican's policies towards Beijing have compromised the Church and created confusion among Catholics over what is and what is not legitimate within the Church. He called the Vatican approach **as giving in to Beijing**, which has led to the government enslaving the Church. He pointed to Czechoslovakia as an historical example of where Catholic people remained faithful to the Church, despite the failure of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Prague.

Ambassador Tou said at the seminar that **the authority of the pope to appoint bishops remained a stumbling block to peaceful relations between Beijing and the Holy See**. An appeal in October last year for a high level dialogue between Beijing and the Vatican by the prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Fernando Cardinal Filoni, may reflect an attitude in the Vatican that previous discussion had taken place at too low a level, with people with no authority to make decisions.

[Sunday Examiner]

Church News

China-Vatican Relations

Archbishop Pietro Parolin drew the world's attention as the media gave favorable coverage to his appointment as the Vatican's new secretary of state. Previously the under secretary for relations with states from 2002 to 2009, this distinguished diplomat led the Holy See's negotiations with **China, Israel and Vietnam**. Upon taking up his new post, only second to the pope in the Roman Curia, what kind of changes will Archbishop Parolin bring to China-Vatican relations?



Archbishop
Pietro Parolin,
the Vatican's new
Secretary of State

Some Church people in China are optimistically expecting relations will be improved. But others foresee **a rather long period of stalemate**. Why? Let's start with the year 2000 when there were hopes for diplomatic ties. Each time diplomatic ties seemed close, bishop ordinations unapproved by the Vatican took place, prompting condemnations from the Holy See. Negotiations then stalled. Why did the government-sanctioned **Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA)** dare to arrange illegitimate ordinations at those critical moments? It should go without saying that these were deliberate acts of sabotage, orchestrated by the government.

China is not in a hurry to establish ties with this tiny European state. When the Vatican offers her olive branch, China rejects it tactfully so as to protect her international image. It therefore allowed the CCPA to concoct these "**ordinations**" leading to the Vatican's condemnation. The Beijing government could then accuse the Vatican of "*intervening in China's internal affairs*," blaming her for disrupting negotiations.

Why doesn't China want to normalize relations with the Vatican now? It's perhaps better to view this problem from another angle. What would China gain from normal relations at this point? The key point is that Beijing sees international relations in terms of political value and Vatican ties offer neither military nor economic benefits.

Several decades ago, China could have used diplomatic ties with the Vatican to boost its international status and image. But today, China has already risen to become a world power.

The huge Chinese market of more than 1.3 billion remains an irresistible charm to the world. China has many friends around the globe, many of them forged through trade and investment.

China has no urgent need for friendship with the Vatican. Establishing ties with the Vatican would affect the dynamic between China and Taiwan as Beijing continues to demand that the Vatican ends ties with Taipei. China and Taiwan have in recent years ended their cold war and agreed not to disturb each other's diplomatic relations. The importance of Vatican relations pales in comparison. The Vatican would see diplomacy with China as the key to evangelization in the most populated country on the planet, drawing more Chinese to Jesus Christ and his Gospel. And China would gain nothing from this move.

It is not the arrival of a new pope or secretary of state that could speed up negotiations. Still, let's be cautious while remaining optimistic - surely one day China will be under God's reign.

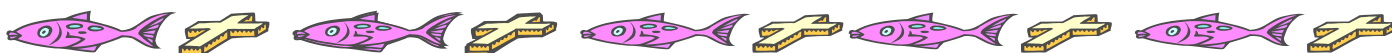
[UCA News]

ISBN: 1084-8401

Editor: Michel Marcil, SJ
Layout/Production: Mengpin Hsiao

Subscriptions: US/Canada: US\$10.00
Overseas: US\$15.00 - airmail

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Funeral for House Church Leader

Tens of thousands of mourners attended the funeral of **Pastor Samuel Lamb in Guangzhou** on August 16, paying tribute to the beacon of China's unofficial church movement amid a heavy police presence. A wide column of people, many dressed in traditional mourning of white or black, formed outside the Guangzhou Yinhe funeral house in Tianhe district. The event was scheduled for August 17, but Lamb's church announced in the morning it was bringing the service forward, citing "venue limitations". Elderly rural women waited with city office workers **for up to an hour to enter the building and walk past the casket**. Lamb, also known as Lin Xiangao, died on August 3, at age 88.

*"There are nearly **30,000 people** here today,"* one employee with the funeral home said. *"I have been working here for 10 years and have never seen anything like this before. Even the funeral procession for **Guangdong's former party chief** did not attract such a turnout."* Dozens of plain-clothes police and uniformed officers watched the crowd. Activist lawyer **Tang Jingling and his wife** were removed from the line by state security agents, witnesses said.

Wen Yu, a 38-year-old lawyer, said more would have attended if the funeral were held as originally planned. *"So many people who had heard of Lamb's name or his preaching flocked to attend his memorial. Many can't make it today because of work,"* Wen said. He suggested the service was rescheduled because *"authorities didn't want to see a funeral service get out of control"*. *"Pastor Lamb's passing represented the **end of a generation of remarkable Christians who held onto their faith during the 1950s and underwent labour camp reform**,"* Wen said. *"**Upon their release, they continued to preach, laying the seeds of gospel in modern China. They are the reason why Christianity can prosper in China today.**"*

Lamb was one of the most influential leaders of the mainland's house church. In 1958, he was sentenced to 20 years in jail because **he refused to register his church with authorities**.

After his release in 1978, Lamb set up Guangzhou's largest house church. In recent years, the church was allowed to operate largely without state interference, but only after enduring two decades of constant raids and the arrest of church leaders.



Pastor Samuel Lamb, in prison and out,
faithful to the Lord

Weekly attendance at the church's main service, held in a privately owned building in Yuexiu district, had risen to **5,000 people** at the time of his death.

*"Even representatives from the officially approved church came to pay tribute, **his faith influenced us so much**,"* said a Lamb church employee.

* This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as **House Church Leader Mourned**.
[South China Morning Post]

Bishop Jin's Remains Buried at Sea

Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian of Shanghai died on April 27 at the age of 96, and is the first Chinese clergyman to opt for **burial at sea**. His ashes were scattered at the Wusong Port, which sits at the intersection of the Huangpu and Yangtze rivers.

A memorial Mass followed at the downtown Xujiahui Cathedral, attended by 200 priests, nuns, laypeople and government officials. Earlier in August, another elderly priest, Father **Francis Xavier Yao Jingxing**, a prolific translator and former publisher of Guangqi Press in Shanghai diocese, died at the age of 97.

A Catholic blogger using the name Petrus Zou wrote that Fr Yao's death on August 6 had raised concerns about the future of the diocese and that it was **"a sign that an era has ended"**.

[UCA News]

Religious Issues

What Does the Chinese Constitution Say About Religion?

Misconceptions abound regarding what the Constitution of the People's Republic of China has to say about religion. The government trumpets the fact that the **freedom of religious belief** is enshrined in the Constitution. And we often hear about the constitution **forbidding the teaching of religion** to those under 18.

It would be interesting to take a look at what the constitution has to say about religion and religious freedom. Since its founding in 1949, the People's Republic of China has had **four different constitutions**. The first one was ratified in 1954. The second constitution was ratified in 1975, with a third, amended version being ratified in 1978. The current Constitution was ratified in 1985. **Each constitution has an article that references religious belief.**

Article 88 of the 1954 constitution states: "Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief." During the **Cultural Revolution**, the constitution was cast aside and Mao ruled by decree. Towards the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Constitution was revived and revised. **Article 28 of the 1975 constitution** states: "Citizens enjoy freedom of speech, correspondence, the press, assembly, association, procession, demonstration and the freedom to strike, and enjoy freedom to believe in religion and freedom not to believe in religion and to propagate atheism."

Article 46 of the 1978 constitution states: "Citizens enjoy freedom to believe in religion and freedom not to believe in religion and to propagate atheism."

Article 36 of the 1982 constitution states: "Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The state protects **normal religious activities.** No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that **disrupt public order**, impair the **health of citizens** or interfere with the **educational system** of the state. **Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.**"

The provisions in the second half of article 36 seem to nullify, or at least place limits on, the freedom promised in the first half. After stating what freedoms citizens have, it basically says "**but the state can set the boundaries around religion**" (regulate). The state gets to define what religious activities are considered to be "normal." The state gets to decide what activities are considered "disruptive" to social order, impair the health of society, and interfere with the educational system. According to some Mainland legal scholars, then, the first half of the article **protects** religious freedom, while the second half **restricts** it.

It doesn't really matter all that much what the constitution says or doesn't say because in the Chinese legal system **courts do not have the power of judicial review.** In other words, they cannot consider the constitution when deciding cases. It's just not relevant.

As mentioned earlier, for years we have often heard that the Chinese Constitution forbids the teaching of religion to children under the age of 18. The good news, as we can see, is that it isn't true. The Chinese Constitution does not say such thing.

The bad news, however, is that such a stipulation does exist in "**Document No. 19 The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period,**" which was promulgated by the State Council (cabinet) in 1982. This was a document detailing how religion could/could not function in Chinese society. In other words, people can believe what they want, but the state reserves the right to set the boundaries within which their beliefs can be practiced.

[China Source]



UN Panel on Religious Freedom Asked to Check China's Record

The **Justice and Peace Commission of Hong Kong diocese** is requesting the Universal Periodic Review Regarding Religious Freedom in the People's Republic of China from the United Nations (UN) to urge Beijing to adhere to the requirements of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to both of which it is a signatory.

The Justice and Peace Commission reported in early September that **four priests from unofficial Catholic communities** in China were detained during August, which adds to the list of those who are still being held in various parts of the country. In its contribution to the submission to the UN, the commission says, "**The Chinese authorities have imposed political and religious policies that have been against the principles and practices of the Catholic faith and have gravely violated human rights.**"

It says that these policies lie at the basis of the split in the Catholic Church in China into groups that have registered with the government's Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and those which have refused. "**This brings pain and suffering within the Church,**" the submission from the commission states.

It points out that both the registered, or official communities, and the unregistered, or unofficial communities, have suffered as a result of these policies which it labels a violation of human rights. It points to **priests who have been placed under illegal surveillance, house arrest, detention, abducted without trace, illegally confined in hotel rooms, forced to attend political classes, conferences or religious activities** that are contrary to Church teaching, and even tortured as having their rights to religious freedom abused.

It is also claiming that Catholic people are denied the right of freedom of association, as they are sometimes forced to join government-registered groups and, consequently, their religious freedom is being distorted. "**Therefore, the faithful in China have not only their religious freedom distorted, but also their personal liberty and freedom of association being violated,**" the statement says.

The commission points out that this is in direct conflict with Article 18 of the Declaration on Human Rights and also Article 18 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The commission says that the Chinese authorities have acted in a manner that has split communion within the Church in China, quoting the 2005 letter penned to Chinese Catholics by Pope Benedict XVI as saying, "**Communion and unity are essential and integral elements of the Catholic Church.**" He also points out that Beijing's push for a Church independent of the Holy See is a religious aberration that denies its very nature, saying, "**Therefore the proposal for a Church that is independent of the Holy See in the religious sphere is incompatible with Catholic doctrine.**"

The commission points out to the UN body that the policy of the Chinese government to create an independent and autonomous Church is a violation of the freedom of conscience of the Catholic people and the essential properties of the Catholic Church, in direct contravention of the two Article 18s.

It also accuses the **Patriotic Association of manipulating Church issues** in a manner that is contrary to Church doctrine under the guise of safeguarding the autonomy of the Chinese self-managed Catholic Church. It points out that it does this by placing its own authority above that of the bishops, which violates the autonomy and normal operation of the Church.

The submission from the commission says that Catholic people in China are frustrated with the way they are being manipulated by **the Patriotic Association and the National Assembly of Catholic Representatives**, which are little more than puppet organizations enforcing or rubber stamping government decisions.

The submission lists **eight priests or bishops who have been illegally detained, some for years or even decades.** Others have been tortured by sleep deprivation and physical beatings. Two at least are suffering long term illness and disability from their maltreatment.

The Justice and Peace Commission is requesting the UN review panel to urge the Chinese government to seriously investigate ill-treatment and torture of Church people, compensate and apologize to the injured, and stop such torture and inhumane acts. It is also asking it to urge the Chinese authorities to stop violating religious rights, respect Church authority and allow it to freely exercise its mandate and carry out normal religious practices and activities without interference. [Hong Kong Sunday Examiner]

Social Issues

Ma Defends China Policy

NO, NO, NO: Deepening cross-strait ties is not pushing a unification agenda, the president said.

In Taiwan, President Ma Ying-jeou said he did not rule out meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, but insisted that his administration would ensure the nation's dignity is maintained during such a meeting if one takes place.

"With the support of the Taiwanese people and ensuring that no harm is done to the nation's dignity, we do not exclude the possibility of holding a meeting with Xi to further develop cross-strait relations," he said.

In discussing his cross-strait policies, Ma brushed aside concerns about closer cross-strait cooperation in economy and other aspects pushing Taiwan closer to unification with China. He reiterated his **"three noes" policy: no unification, no independence and no use of force**, in handling cross-strait relations, which he said were the public's consensus.

"We continue to adhere to the principles of **handling economic issues before political ones**, and setting **easy agenda before difficult ones**. Taiwan's national interests remain our top priority and we will not stop promoting cross-strait relations because of some people's misconception that this will lead the nation towards unification," he said.

When asked to comment on Beijing pushing for cross-strait political negotiations, Ma acknowledged that China's unification propaganda never stops, but said that his administration will continue to insist on **the sovereignty of the Republic of China**. "We've been dealing with mainland governments for more than 20 years, no one should underestimate Taiwan's strength and the conviction of Taiwanese," he said.

Promoting peace across the Taiwan Strait while pursuing foreign relations with other countries are the policy priorities this term, Ma said, adding that he would continue the effort to push for cross-strait development and reviving the economy.

[Taipei Times]

Bao Urges Repudiate Crackdown

Bao Tong, the most senior party official jailed over the Tiananmen pro-democracy movement, said the crackdown must be "completely repudiated" if China is to move forward. The former top aide of **reformist leader Zhao Ziyang** said all Chinese people should stop protecting the legacy of Deng Xiaoping and Mao Zedong and reflect on the events of June 4, 1989.

"Like the Cultural Revolution must be totally repudiated, June 4 must be completely repudiated," Bao said in a telephone interview. "Like Mao was the symbol for the Cultural Revolution, Deng was the symbol of the June 4 [crackdown]."

Bao was **director of the party's Political Reform Office and a member of the Central Committee** when the government used armed troops and tanks to crush the student-led movement on June 4, killing hundreds, maybe thousands, of **civilians**.

He said he was **impressed** by President Xi Jinping's emphasis on the importance of constitutional rule, but was **"perplexed"** it was followed by what appeared to be a tightening of ideological control in recent weeks. A **People's Liberation Army Daily** editorial proclaimed the Communist doctrine as "the truth of the universe". It was also reported university staff have been ordered to steer clear of seven taboo topics in lessons, including press freedom and civil rights.

Bao's house arrest makes it difficult for friends to visit as they are routinely harassed. He said he had **no regrets about his fate, but he grieved for his countrymen, who had been deprived of free speech** for more than two decades. The silencing of dissident voices had disastrous consequences, he said. "If you cover the mouths of a hundred people, there could still be hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of mouths still speaking. "But if they silence 1.3 billion people, that's frightening."

"If all these mouths were still talking, I think [our society] wouldn't be as depraved as it is now," he said. **"Corruption, exploitation, the lack of respect for law**, these had the support of tanks and machine guns."

[South China Morning Post]



China Takes Aim at Western Ideas

Communist Party cadres have filled meeting halls around China to hear a somber, secretive warning issued by senior leaders. Power could escape their grip, they have been told, unless the party eradicates **seven subversive currents** coursing through Chinese society.

These seven perils were enumerated in a memo, referred to as **Document No. 9**, that bears the unmistakable imprimatur of **Xi Jinping**, China's new top leader. The first was "Western constitutional democracy"; others included promoting "universal values" of human rights, Western-inspired notions of media independence and civic participation, ardently pro-market "neo-liberalism," and "nihilist" criticisms of the party's traumatic past.

"**Western forces hostile to China and dissidents within the country** are still constantly infiltrating the ideological sphere," says Document No. 9. **Opponents of one-party rule**, it says, "have stirred up trouble about disclosing officials' assets, using the Internet to **fight corruption, media controls and other sensitive topics**, to provoke discontent with the party and government."

The warnings were not idle. Since the circular was issued, party-run publications and Web sites have **vehemently denounced constitutionalism and civil society**, notions that were not considered off limits in recent years. Officials have intensified efforts to **block access to critical views on the Internet**. Two prominent rights advocates have been detained in the past few weeks.

Mr. Xi's hard line has disappointed Chinese liberals, some of whom once hailed his rise to power as an opportunity to push for political change after a long period of stagnation. Instead, Mr. Xi has signaled a shift to a **more conservative, traditional leftist stance** with his "rectification" campaign to ensure **discipline** and conspicuous attempts to **defend the legacy of Mao Zedong**.

Mr. Xi's edicts have been disseminated in a series of compulsory study sessions across the country. "Promotion of Western constitutional democracy is an attempt to **negate the party's leadership**," Cheng Xinping, a deputy head of propaganda for Hengyang, a city in Hunan, told a gathering of mining industry officials.

In China's tight but often contentious political circles, **proponents of deeper Western-style economic changes** are often allied with those pushing for rule of law and a more open political system, while **traditionalists** favor greater state control of both economic and political life. Mr. Xi's cherry picking of approaches from each of the rival camps, analysts say, could end up mirroring his own agenda in intraparty squabbling.

Condemnations of constitutional government have prompted dismayed opposition from liberal intellectuals and even some moderate-minded former officials. The campaign has also exhilarated leftist defenders of party orthodoxy, many of whom pointedly oppose the sort of market reforms that Mr. Xi and Prime Minister Li Keqiang have said are needed.

"Now the **leftists** feel very excited and elated, while the **liberals** feel very discouraged and discontented," said Professor Xiao, who said he was generally sympathetic to Mr. Xi's aims. "The ramifications are very serious, because this seriously hurts **the broad middle class and moderate reformers - entrepreneurs and intellectuals**. It's possible that this situation will get out of control, and that won't help the political stability that the central leadership stresses."

Mr. Xi will face another ideological test later in the year when the Communist Party celebrates the **120th anniversary of Mao's birth**. The scale of those celebrations has not been announced. But **Xiangtan**, the area in Hunan Province that encompasses Mao's hometown, is spending **\$1 billion** to spruce up commemorative sites and facilities for the occasion, according to the Xiangtan government Web site.

"You have to commemorate him, and because he's already passed away, you can only speak well of him, not ill," Professor Xiao, the historian, said of Mao's anniversary. "That's like pouring petrol on the leftists' fire."

[The New York Times]



Reading Notes

- ***The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History***
Jeremy Clarke, Hong Kong University Press, 2013. 312 pp.

As a study of the social and cultural histories of communities that have survived over many centuries, this book offers a new view of Catholicism in China. The author asks, "How are Chinese Catholic identities expressed through images?" In answering this, he skillfully interweaves the different ways in which **the Virgin Mary** has been depicted in Chinese iconography with the changing circumstances of the local church, China's tumultuous history, and how this relates to broader ecclesiastical, cultural and international developments.



- ***China's Saints: Catholic Martyrdom During the Qing (1644-1911)***
Anthony E. Clark, Lehigh University Press, 2013. 288pp.

Based on thorough archival studies, and a profound knowledge of Chinese culture, this book not only contributes substantially to the comparative study of Christian martyrdom but also to the understanding of enculturation. This pioneering study follows the trails of Western missionaries and Chinese converts as they negotiate the religious and cultural chasms that existed between the West and China, and it demonstrates that these differences resulted in two very different outcomes. Whereas **converts appear to have bridged the cultural divide, often to the point of self-sacrifice**, political and cultural tensions on the macro level sometimes ended with forceful conflicts.

- ***Corporate Social Responsibility in China: A Vision, an Assessment and a Blueprint***
Benoit Vermander, World Scientific Publishing Company (January 22, 2014) 356pp.

A Jesuit based in China has written a book aimed at helping companies to review and better exercise their **corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the Chinese context**. The book seeks first to answer two questions: (a) How to define CSR and make the notion fully relevant in Chinese context? (b) What are the resources and obstacles provided by China's socio-economic, cultural, and legal contexts that define the modus operandi of corporations being conscious of their social responsibilities? It then presents the most pressing challenges to be answered, and focuses on specifics. It also offers a blueprint to help corporations and other groups to make such insights and concerns, as they weigh the social, cultural and ecological impact of their strategies and practices.



Fr. Michel and some of our visiting scholars decorated a Christmas tree at the Friendship House.

The Staff at U.S. Catholic China Bureau
 wish you a

Blessed Christmas
 & *Happy New Year*