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中國宗教評論

Religions & Christianity in Today's China

Vol. XIV 2024 No. 4

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

Today we present to you the forth issue 2024 of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* (中国宗教评论). As usual it starts with the regular series of News Updates on recent events and general trends with regard to religions and especially Christianity in today's China.

We continue with a number of contributions to the 11th European Catholic China Colloquium which was organized by the China-Zentrum and took place from 22 to 25 August 2024 in the Catholic-Social Institute in Siegburg/Germany. The topic of the colloquium was "Future Perspectives of the Catholic Church in China" with special focus on "Youth in China." Over 100 participants from 13 countries and regions took part in the conference. In issue 3/2024 of *RCTC* we had already published a conference report as well as the address of Monsignor Mirosław S. Wachowski, Undersecretary for Relations with States in the Secretariat of State of the Holy See. In this issue you will find three more contributions: A PPT by Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., Bishop of Hong Kong, on the vivid and manifold youth work in the Church of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong. Fr. Dr. Bruno Lepeu, M.E.P., researcher at the Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong, analyzes his findings of interviews with young Catholics in Mainland China. He presents a process of renewal of the life of the Church with the young people playing a decisive role. Dr. Antoine Ren, S.J., Centre for Catholic Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong / Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy of the Hong Kong Diocese, on the other hand interviewed Catholic students from Mainland China who are studying in Europe. He shows how the European society and Church and the "outgoing experience" of these Chinese students have influenced their faith or affected the construction of their Christian identity. Ren says that this pastoral action can be considered as the "fourth revolution in mission" to Chinese Catholic overseas lay students, which will bring about a turning point in the destiny of the Church in China.

This number furthermore contains a very interesting article by Dr. Bibiana Wong, Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica / Fu Jen Faculty of Theology of St. Robert Bellarmine in Taiwan. After the First Chinese Council in 1924 in Shanghai, for the first time in the history of Catholic Christianity in modern China, a national and cross-congregational organization called *Commissio Synodalis in Sinis* (Synodal Commission in China) was set up. The paper gives a historical sketch of the Synodal Commission and its role in developing Catholic education under the leadership of the first Apostolic Delegate to China, Archbishop Celso Costantini (1876–1958, tenure 1922–1933).

The final contribution by Dr. Dirk Kuhlmann and Dr. Barbara Hoster, both Monumenta Serica Institute, Sankt Augustin, presents the Institute's new publication *Bibliotheca Sinica Christiana: Annotated Catalog of Divine Word Missionaries' (S.V.D.) Publications*

in Shandong (1882–1950). The catalog with its over 450 entries offers a comprehensive research guide to the Society's publishing enterprise in China at that time. The book project was started by the late Fr. Roman Malek, S.V.D. (1951–2019), the long-time director and editor-in-chief of the Monumenta Serica Institute – and also founding director of the China-Zentrum –, and posthumously completed by the Institute's editorial team.

Religions & Christianity in Today's China is freely available on the website of the China-Zentrum, www.china-zentrum.de. Additionally, readers who subscribe to *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* will regularly receive e-mail updates providing web links to the contents of each newly published issue. – The China-Zentrum is a non-profit organization. For the publication of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* we are dependent on the generosity of our friends and readers. In order to help us cover inevitable costs, we would be very grateful if you could consider sending a voluntary contribution.

Sankt Augustin, November 2024 *The Editors*

News Update on Religion and Church in China June 21 – October 27, 2024

Compiled by Katharina Feith, Isabel Friemann (China InfoStelle) and Katharina Wenzel-Teuber
Translated by David Streit SVD

The "News Update on Religion and Church in China" appears regularly in each issue of Religions & Christianity in Today's China (RCTC). *Since the editorial staff learns of some items only later, it can happen that there are chronological overlaps between "News Updates" of two consecutive issues of* RCTC. *In these cases stories referred to in earlier "News Updates" will not be repeated. All "News Updates" can be found online at the website of the China-Zentrum (www.china-zentrum.de). – The last "News Update"* (RCTC *2024, No. 3, pp. 4-24) covered the period April 8 – June 29, 2024.*

General

September 2024:

New course on marriage issues begins

As reported by state broadcaster *CCTV*, according to the online magazine *Sixth Tone* published by the Shanghai United Media Group, the Vocational University of Civil Affairs in Beijing will begin its first marriage-related course in September. The new course, "Marriage Services and Management," is a response to the government's efforts to "construct harmonious families." The new university is directly under the Ministry of Civil Affairs. "According to the university, the course won't solely focus on wedding planning and matchmaking, but train students to provide services 'across the entire marriage cycle'," said *Sixth Tone*. "The program, set to enroll 70 undergraduate students from 12 provinces in 2024, is focusing on the marriage industry to cultivate students with comprehensive abilities," Zhao Honggang, the university's vice president, told *CCTV*. Academic subjects, which make up 45% of the curriculum, include management, sociology, family culture, ethics and economics. The remaining 55% goes to practical training in the areas of family counseling, wedding planning and matchmaking services. In addition, there are aspects such as premarital counseling and pre-divorce counseling, as well as internships in registry offices and matchmaking agencies. Students would also, for example, participate in wedding ceremonies on campus. After graduation, they would have the opportunity to work at matchmaking agencies, wedding service providers and marriage and family counseling organizations. The marriage rate has fallen sharply in recent years, according to the report, with the exception of 2023 after the end of the Covid pandemic. At the same time, it is estimated that the Chinese online dating and matchmaking market almost tripled between 2014 and 2023. In addition to the marriage services and management program, the university also offers the first degree program in Modern Funeral Management in China. More than 100 students will start this course in September (*Sixth Tone* July 30). *kf*

September 13, 2024:

China passes draft law to increase retirement age

From January 2025, China will gradually increase the retirement age. Within 15 years, the retirement age for women will be increased from the current 50 to 55 years to 55 to 58 years and for men from the current 55 to 60 years to 63 years. This is the first adjustment since 1955, although the average life expectancy has doubled since then and is now just under 80 years, according to the *NZZ*. Pensions can be drawn if you have paid social security contributions for at least 15 years. However, pension payments are low and the differences between urban and rural areas are large. Migrant workers in particular fare poorly because they usually pay very little. The Chinese government hesitated for a long time before taking this step because resistance was repeatedly spreading among the population. However, it was necessary due to China's aging population and low birth rate. According to the *NZZ* report, pension insurance accounts for five percent of gross domestic product. According to a calculation by the state-funded Academy of Sciences in Beijing, the country is at risk of bankruptcy by 2035. 300 million Chinese would retire in the next decade. The declining proportion of the working-age population is putting pressure on the economy. At the same time, the potential for frustration among younger people could increase. Unemployment is high and competition on the job market is fierce. "However, it is unlikely that young people will take to the streets because of this. A kind of fatalism has taken hold among them," says the report (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung NZZ* Sep. 13). *kf*

Religious Policy

June 26, 2024:

High-level meeting: Sinicization is the only way to adapt religions to socialist society

Speakers at the meeting in Beijing on "Advancing the Sinicization of Our Country's Religions in Depth" were Shi Taifeng, head of the Central United Front Department of the Party and member of the Politburo, and eight other representatives of central party organs and state ministries. Cadres from the United Front departments and religious authorities at the provincial level, as well as representatives of academia also attended the meeting. According to a report on the United Front website, Shi Taifeng stated: "Adhering to the orientation of our country's religions toward Sinicization is the only viable way to actively guide religions to adapt to socialist society." – According to Shi Taifeng's definition, Sinicization clearly has a sociopolitical (not cultural) meaning. This was also reflected in his further statements, as far as they can be taken from the report (*Tongzhan xinyu* according to www.sara.gov.cn June 28). *kwt*

October 1, 2024:

75 years of the People's Republic of China

All five religions were encouraged to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the state. There are many photos on the Internet showing the ceremonial raising of the national flag in front of religious buildings, congratulatory banners or prayer events for the fatherland. Some examples from the Catholic Church in Hebei Province can be seen here: www.xinde.org/show/55703. *kwt*

Daoism

August 3, 2024:

Comrade Li Wencheng, former Secretary General of the Chinese Daoist Association, dies at the age of 97

The party man described his path to the Chinese Daoist Association (CDA) and his contribution to the resumption of the ordination of Quanzhen priests in 1989 in an interview conducted in 2021. Li Wencheng 李文成 was born in Gaoyang, Shanxi Province, in 1927. He joined the CCP in 1946. After 1949, he worked in local propaganda departments of the CCP and for a newspaper. In 1952, he came to Beijing and was selected to work in the Department of Religious Affairs of the Cultural and Educational Commission of the State Council, later the Bureau of Religious Affairs. There, he was trained in religion and religious policy for six months. He then took part – as he said in an interview – in a "study class" for Catholic religious clergy in the North Church of Beijing, in which over 100 priests and bishops mainly studied patriotism and anti-imperialism.

According to the CDA's obituary, he started to work as office director in the CDA as early as 1958. There is no information about the following decades. When Li was preparing for retirement at the age of almost 60, he was transferred (again?) to the CDA in 1986 as its general secretary, a position he held until 1999. There, according to his own statements, his task was to "implement the party's religious policy since the 3rd Plenum of the 11th Central Committee [in 1982]," which mainly involved the restoration of Daoist religious activities, the reopening of Daoist sites, the founding of the Chinese Daoist Academy and the CDA magazine *Zhongguo daojiao*. Of particular importance was the first ordination of priests of the Quanzhen tradition of Daoism since the 1940s, which took place in the Baiyun Temple in Beijing in 1989. In the interview, Li Wencheng describes how difficult it was to find old priests in China who could reconstruct the ordination ritual after such a long time.

As Stephen Jones commented in his Daoism blog, Li himself was certainly not religious, but "a typical example of the bureaucrats the CCP selects for the five authorised religions. Many of them do not believe in God or religion. They are there just to control religion on behalf of the Party" (www.taoist.org.cn/showInfoContent.do?id=10112&p='p' [Interview]; www.taoist.org.cn Aug. 3 [Obituary]; https://stephenjones.blog/category/li-family/ Sept. 3). *kwt*

October 12, 2024:

World Federation of Daoism receives a visit from the Green Climate Fund

Malfada Duarte, the executive director of the Green Climate Fund, visited the World Federation of Daoism (WFD, 世界道教联合会) at its headquarters in the Baiyun Temple in Beijing. There she met, among others, the Daoist priest Meng Zhiling, Secretary General of the WFD and Vice Chairman of the Chinese Daoist Association (CDA), other representatives of the WFD and CDA, and the Daoist priest Wang Shiqing from the Youth Committee of the Chinese Committee on Religion and Peace. It is the first time since its founding that the World Federation of Daoism has interacted with an international organization, according to the report on the CDA website. Both sides discussed possible areas for cooperation and put forward proposals for cooperation in the areas of environmental protection, clean energy, sustainable development and the Belt and Road Initiative, the report said. It further says that the WFD will strengthen its relations with the Green Climate Fund, declaring that they want to jointly look for ways to combine the ecological wisdom of Daoism with the goals of the climate fund (www.taoist.org.cn Oct. 22).

The Green Climate Fund was created by the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The WFD was founded in 2023 at the 5th International Daoism Forum and has 52 Daoist organizations from 20 countries as members. The chairman of the CDA, Li Guangfu, is also chairman of the WFD. *kwt*

Buddhism

July 3–5, 2024:

"2024 Buddhist English Training Course" in Zhuhai

80 participants from all over China came to the course at the Putuo Temple in Zhuhai in Guangdong Province, not far from Macau. The course was organized by the official umbrella organization of Buddhism in China, the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA). The Putuo Temple is home to the "English Base for Buddhist Exchange" (佛教英语交流基地), approved in 2017 by the National Administration for Religious Affairs and the CBA.

As Dharma Master Mingsheng explained in a speech at the "Buddhist English Training Course" in 2021, the Base trains bilingual and multilingual elites who are used at the World Buddhist Forums and other international Buddhist conferences. In addition to English, working languages are also Japanese, German, Korean, Russian, Thai, Pali and Sanskrit. "With full confidence in Chinese culture, we are making Chinese Buddhism global," said Mingsheng in 2021, while stressing also the adherence to the path of Sinicization. Another goal of the Base is "telling the story of Chinese Buddhism well," this is the duty of the bilingually trained monks. The Base has translated numerous Buddhist scriptures and is helping to produce *The Voice of Dharma*, the new English edition of the CBA magazine *Fayin* 法音, Mingsheng said. He is the chairman of the Guangdong Buddhist Association (www.chinabuddhism.com.cn July 5; www.xinchanfeng.com/1-1/16301.html Sept. 26, 2021). *kwt*

July 6, 2024:

The 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso turns 89

At the time of his birthday, the Dalai Lama was in the USA for knee surgery on June 28. In a video message on July 5, he said that "except for the issues with my knee, I am basically in good health." He thanked everyone and asked for their prayers. On August 28, he arrived back in Dharamsala – after a stopover in Zurich (see below).

A Tibetan author living in New York named Ugyen Gyalpo wrote in *Bitter Winter* that despite His Holiness's assurances that he would live up to the age of 113, the vulnerability of the Tibetan people without him is undeniable. The Chinese government, with its "long wait game," seeks to exploit this vulnerability. To counteract this, Tibetans should urge the Dalai Lama to consider self-emanation during his lifetime, said Ugyen Gyalpo. – In the statement on the question of his reincarnation from 2011, the Dalai Lama had pointed out the possibility of emanation during his lifetime (https://bitterwinter.org Sept. 27; www.buddhistdoor.net Aug. 7.; www.dalailama.com Aug. 28; www.dalailama.com/the-dalai-lama/biography-and-daily-life/reincarnation [Declaration of the Dalai Lama from 2011]). *kwt*

Approx. August 28, 2024:

Meeting of the 14th Dalai Lama with the 17th Karmapa Lama Ogyen Trinley Dorje in Zurich

It was the first meeting of the two high Tibetan lamas since 2017. The opportunity arose during a stopover by the Dalai Lama on his return journey from the USA to India. The Karmapa Lama reported on

the meeting in a message dated August 28. At the meeting, he felt a mixture of joy and sadness, wrote the Karmapa. "He seemed to have aged considerably, and [...] his voice has grown weak. It was so different from how he used to be that I could hardly bear it. His Holiness used all the strength of his body, speech and mind for our sake [...]. Given his physical condition and seeming exhaustion, I did not say much but expressed how there is nothing greater that he could do for Buddhism and sentient beings than to live long. [... W]e must accomplish all his wishes for what he would like to accomplish in this lifetime soon; there is no time for delay or distraction." In particular, according to the Karmapa, it is the hope of all Tibetans and the Dalai Lama's own wish that he can return to Tibet once again in this life. Finally, the Karmapa called on the Tibetans to work together for the Dalai Lama, the Dharma and the Tibetan people (https://kagyuoffice.org/gyalwang-karmapas-message-on-meeting-his-holiness-the-dalai-lama).

The Dalai Lamas and the Karmapas are the highest-ranking lamas of their respective schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the Gelug school and the Karma Kagyu school. However, there are two reincarnations for the current 17th Karmapa. The Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje, born in 1985, is also recognized by the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government. He was trained in the People's Republic of China under government supervision and fled to India at the end of December 1999. The Karmapa Trinley Thaye Dorje (born 1983) was trained in India. Both Karmapas have stated several times since 2018 that they want to overcome the split in the Karma Kagyu lineage. *kwt*

September 2, 2024:

Inauguration of the "Xizang International Communication Center" in Lhasa

"Xizang" is the Chinese name for Tibet, which is now used by all official foreign-language media in China and, since the end of 2023, also by Chinese diplomacy and in the translations of texts from the Foreign Ministry (with which Beijing is trying to linguistically internationalize its claim to Tibet again, according to Johnny Erling in *China.Table*). "Through innovation, diverse channels and profound content," the Xizang International Communication Center "will build a more effective international communication system for Xizang-related contents, so as to present a true, stereoscopic and comprehensive Xizang to the world, and well tell Xizang stories in the new era," according to an official English-language report.

The inauguration took place at a meeting organized by the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration. The Chinese name of the new center is 西藏国际传播中心. Its initiation "marks a significant step in China's ongoing campaign to reshape international public opinion on Tibet," wrote the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) in a commentary. ICT predicted a "significant escalation in China's efforts to dominate the global conversation on Tibet" (https://bitterwinter.org Sept. 13; www.chinanews.com.cn Sept. 3; *China.Table* March 14; https://savetibet.org Sept. 11; https://english.xzxw.com Sept. 5). *kwt*

September 3, 2024:

Conference on "Reincarnation of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism: Historical Establishment of the System, Policies and Legal Norms" in Lanzhou

The conference in the provincial capital of Gansu on the issue of the reincarnation of Tibetan religious teachers (Tibetan *tulku*, Chinese *huofo* 活佛, "Living Buddha") was attended by over 50 people, including Living Buddhas, Khenpos and other representatives of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as experts. Among those speaking were Master Changzang, a vice chairman of the Chinese Buddhist As-

sociation (CBA), and Living Buddha Jamyang, rector of the High Level Tibetan Buddhism College of China, which hosted the conference. The aim of the conference – according to the official report on the CBA website – was to guide monks, nuns and believers to "understand the historical determination, religious rituals, political guidelines and legal norms of the reincarnation system of living Buddhas more objectively." They must fully understand that the important "historically determined" principles, namely "searching within the country, drawing lots from the Golden Urn and approval by the government," must be adhered to. In this way, a positive contribution will be made to the healthy transmission of Tibetan Buddhism and its adaptation to socialist society, the report said (www.chinabuddhism.com.cn Sept. 4). *kwt*

September 7, 2024:

Chinese Institute for Advanced Studies of Pali Buddhism opens in Xishuangbanna

With a celebration to mark the start of the studies of the first 20 students, the Chinese Institute for Advanced Studies of Pali Buddhism (中国巴利语系高级佛学院) began operations on September 7 – that is, of Theravada Buddhism, which is also known in China as "Southern Tradition Buddhism" (南传佛教). Pali is the language of the canonical texts of Theravada Buddhism. The importance that the central government attaches to the new institute was demonstrated by the participation of Cheng Ruifeng, vice minister of the Central United Front Department and director of the National Religious Affairs Administration. He said the institute will become a training base, research center and exchange platform for China's Theravada Buddhism. The new institute is a national-level facility operated by the Yunnan Buddhist Association on behalf of the Chinese Buddhist Association, according to *Buddhistdoor*. At the provincial level, the Yunnan Buddhist Academy has existed for decades, with branches for Theravada Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism. The new institute is located in the General Temple of Xishuangbanna in Jinghong City, Yunnan Province. A campus for 500 students and teachers is under construction. Theravada Buddhism is widespread in Southeast Asia. In China, it is only found in Yunnan. According to official figures, there are about 1,700 Theravada Buddhist temples there, but only 2,000 registered monks, which is not enough to look after the temples and believers. According to a field study by anthropologist Ma Zhen in 2018, monks from Myanmar and Laos resided in 296 of the 589 Buddhist temples in the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, and 100 temples had no resident monk. These – often well-educated – "migrant monks" have had problems with their residency status since the end of 2018 due to stricter regulations, Ma said in *Sixth Tone*. At the same time, according to *Buddhistdoor*, students from Yunnan have been sent to Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka to study Buddhism in recent years. Researcher Yang Zi wrote in *The Diplomat* in 2017 that "Chinese Theravada Buddhism is in no position to serve as a soft power agent given its underdevelopment." This is now apparently about to change (https://thediplomat.com Aug. 15, 2017; www.buddhistdoor.org Sept. 10; www.sara.gov.cn Sept. 7; www.sixthtone.com June 27, 2022; www.worldjournal.com Sept. 7). *kwt*

September 20, 2024:

Meeting on "Guidance and Education of Lay Buddhist Communities"

The "Five-Year Plan for Advancing the Sinicization of Our Country's Buddhism in Depth (2023–2027)," which was adopted in October 2023, in its section on "Comprehensive and strict governance of religion" contains a paragraph on "Strengthening the guidance and education of lay Buddhist communities [*jushi qunti* 居士群体]." At its meeting in Zibo (Shandong) on September 20, the Commission for Lay Buddhists of the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA) discussed how this should be implemented

and how the "lay Buddhist work" should be designed in the future. The Buddhist clergy should be a role model in guiding and educating lay Buddhist communities with regard to the active adaptation of Buddhism to socialist society – according to the report on the meeting on the CBA website. It was said at the meeting that more management of the affairs of lay Buddhists is necessary for the healthy transmission of Buddhism and for the development of society. In particular, lay Buddhist communities must be guided to hold religious activities in accordance with the law and regulations, according to the report. The meeting of the Commission for Lay Buddhists was chaired by its chairman, Master Huaifan (www.chinabuddhism.com.cn Sept. 20).

Lay Buddhists have made a formal commitment to Buddhism by accepting the threefold refuge (in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) and the five precepts (not killing living beings, not stealing, not sexual misconduct, not lying, not drinking alcohol). Lay Buddhists and their communities are generally less in the focus of religious-political regulation than the Buddhist clergy. *kwt*

October 15–17, 2024:

6th World Buddhist Forum meets in Ningbo

According to Chinese state media, around 800 participants from 72 nations came to the event in the coastal province of Zhejiang. Like the previous five World Buddhist Forums (世界佛教论坛) in 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018, it was organized by the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA) and the China Religious Culture Communication Association. The theme was "Hand in Hand for Coexistence."

At the end, the "Declaration of Mount Xuedou" was adopted (English text at www.chinabuddhism.com.cn/web/details/76259). In the face of unprecedented global changes, Buddhism must play a role as a cultural bridge connecting hearts and minds, the declaration states. Participants call on Buddhists around the world to preserve the healthy heritage of Buddhism, including through contemporary translations and interpretations of Buddhist scriptures, their digitization, and a simple, eco-friendly lifestyle. Research on contemporary Buddhist thought and practice should be encouraged, including "comparative studies between Han Buddhism's Humanistic Buddhism tradition and important ideas that emerged in response to modern developments in Zang [i.e., Tibetan] Buddhism and Theravada." The role of the World Buddhist Forums, as well as "the role of sacred Buddhist relics, root temples, and patriarchal Dharma lineages" for international Buddhist exchange and as bonds of faith should be strengthened, according to the statement.

Claire Vidal of the Université Lumière Lyon 2 said in an interview with *La Croix* that for Beijing, the World Buddhist Forums "serve both as a showcase for its domestic policy of 'sinicizing religions' and as a diplomatic platform on an Asian scale." For Carsten Krause from the University of Hamburg, they also show "the increased self-confidence of Chinese Buddhists since the beginning of the 21st century" (*Global Times* Oct. 15; *La Croix* Oct. 17; *Tongzhan xinyu* according to www.sara.gov.cn Oct. 14; *Xinhua* Oct. 17; *Zhongguo xinwenwang* according to www.chinabuddhism.com.cn Oct. 18; C. Krause, "Auf Spurensuche 1978–2018: Zur Entwicklung des chinesischen Buddhismus in der Gegenwart," in: *China heute* 2018, No. 3, pp. 176-188, here p. 181 [in German]). *kwt*

Islam

June 26–27, 2024:

5th International Congress "China and the Islamic World: Cultural Encounters and Mutual Learning" in Beijing

According to IRCICA, the conference was organized by the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and the IRCICA (Research Center For Islamic His-

tory, Art and Culture), an institution under the Organization of Islamic Cooperation based in Istanbul. In their opening speeches, Zhao Zhimin (CASS) and Mahmud Erol Kılıç (IRCICA) emphasized the long history of encounters between Chinese and Islamic civilizations; both have played an important role in the cultural history of humanity and influenced each other, said Kılıç. Chinese Special Envoy for Middle East Affairs Zhai Jun said that China is ready to work with the Islamic side to implement the Global Civilization Initiative, strengthen the exchange of experience in the field of governance, and promote the common values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom.
According to IRCICA, the main topics of the conference were the historical contacts between China and the Muslim world; encounters and influences in the arts and sciences (e.g. calligraphy, porcelain and painting); encounters in literature and philosophy (including religious traditions and Sufism); China and the Muslim world in today's global system (including peace promotion, new Silk Roads, energy issues). Previous conferences took place in 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2019 (www.globaltimes.cn June 27; www.ircica.org June 27; http://iwr.cssn.cn July 2). *kwt*

By July 8, 2024:

Over 10,000 Muslims from the People's Republic of China have returned home from the 2024 Hajj

This number is slightly lower than the last figure announced by the Chinese side of 12,000 Hajjis in 2017. Saudi Arabia sets pilgrimage quotas for each country every year. According to a report on the website of the Chinese Islamic Association (CIA) – the only state-authorized organizer of pilgrimages to Mecca by Chinese citizens – the Chinese management team received an award for excellent organization and another award for environmental hygiene from the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah. "Our pilgrims performed the Hajj obligatory acts smoothly and successfully under the unified organization of the Hajj group, adhered to the Sinicization of Islam, practiced the core socialist values, maintained the fine tradition of patriotism [...] and thus presented an all-round good image of Chinese Muslims," says the report (www.chinaislam.net.cn July 14). *kwt*

Protestant Churches

July 2024:

Reprisals against Zion Church in Beijing

In 2018, the Beijing Zion Church 北京锡安教会, one of China's largest house churches with 1,500 members, was closed by the authorities. Its head pastor Ezra Jin 金明日 was placed under house arrest and is still not allowed to leave the country. His wife and children now live in the USA. On July 5, Pastor Jin was prevented from leaving mainland China at the Macau border crossing, although the travel ban against him officially ended in March of this year. On July 7, the following Sunday, at 10 a.m., a gathering of a smaller subgroup of the Zion Church with predominantly young believers in the Haidian district to celebrate a church service was interrupted by 20 officials. The personal details of all those present were recorded, and some people had to undergo questioning at the police station. Ms. Zhou Sirui 周思叡 was arrested and taken into administrative detention for activities on behalf of an unregistered association. She was released on July 22 (https://bitterwinter.org July 10; www.chinaaid.net July 6). *Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle*

August 6, 2024:

Celebration of 70 years of the Patriotic Three-Self Movement

On August 6, 80 delegates, composed of representatives of the China Christian Council (CCC), the Shanghai Christian Council, the Shanghai Religious Affairs Administration, the YMCA and the academic world, gathered to celebrate the founding of the Patriotic Three-Self Movement as an organization. (The publication of the Christian Manifesto in the *People's Daily* on September 23, 1950 is also seen as the beginning of the Patriotic Three-Self Movement and is even named in the new catechism as a special commemoration day of the CCC. See report on the anniversary celebration of 70 years of the Patriotic Three-Self Movement in *RCTC* 2020, No. 4, p. 12). After singing the national anthem at 9 a.m., CCC President Wu Wei opened the conference with a speech in which he described the Three-Self Organization as a tool that serves to further integrate Christianity into Chinese socialism. In all Christian communities, it is necessary to spread enthusiasm for the party and its core principles, he said. Xu Xiaohong, Chairman of the Patriotic Three-Self Movement, called for the most important documents from the last Central Committee meeting of the CCP to be brought to the attention of believers in sermons. – After the conference, some participants visited the former home of the mastermind of the Three-Self Movement, Y.T. Wu, which has been converted into a memorial (www.ccctspm.org/newsinfo/18109). *Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle*

August 26, 2024:

Sculptor Gao Shen imprisoned

Gao Shen 高焱, born in 1956, the older of the two Christian artists known as the Gao brothers 高氏弟兄, was arrested near Beijing during a visit to China on August 26 and has been in custody since then. He is accused of violating the Law on the Protection of Heroes and Martyrs, which came into force in 2018 and prohibits the defamation of historical martyrs and heroes. However, the works in question are works that were created more than ten years ago. If convicted, Gao Shen could face up to three years in prison.

The brothers Gao Shen and Gao Qiang 高强 (born 1962), both from Shandong, have been working together artistically since the 1980s. They became known through publications such as "Chinese Avant-Garde Art" 中国前街艺术状况, with performance art on the subject of hugging and with a series of bronze sculptures critical of Mao. In addition to "Miss Mao," a monstrous feminine comic figure (2006), this also includes "Execution of Christ" (2009), in which seven life-size statues of Mao Zedong aim guns at a defenseless Christ in a loincloth. Many of their works addressed the unresolved excesses of the Cultural Revolution. Their father was classified as a class enemy at the time and committed suicide in prison. Since 2003, the Gao brothers have maintained a gallery in Beijing's 798 artists' district, where they also lived until 2019. Their main residence is now New York. Other well-known Christian artists such as Dao Zi 岛子 and Zhu Jiuyang 朱久洋 have also left China in recent years. Works by the Gao brothers can be found in private collections and museums around the world, e.g. in the Centre Pompidou and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (https://news.artnet.com/art-world/artist-gao-zhen-detained-2530305). *Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle*

September 29, 2024:

Christian author and school founder Zhu Bin in custody

On September 29, Zhu Bin 朱斌, born in 1973, a well-known activist, writer and professed Christian, was arrested for "inciting disturbances" in Beijing's Haidian district. The "Deep breath learning center" (深呼吸学习中心), a private Christian all-day school for students in grades 1 to 9 with spe-

cial needs, which is linked to the house church movement, which he co-founded in 2017, has been searched several times by the police. A specific reason for the current arrest is currently unclear. In 2019, Zhu Bin supported the protests in Hong Kong on social media channels and wrote a poem entitled "The light is a sin" for the detained students. In 2021, he was critical of the arrest of investigative journalist Zhang Zhan, who was researching the mismanagement of the Covid19 pandemic in Wuhan. A year later, Zhu Bin launched a petition to clarify the case of a woman who was found in chains in Jiangsu Province. She had previously been sold by a human trafficker to a man who held her captive for years, during which she gave birth to a total of eight children. By writing this petition, Zhu Bin became more well-known in China (https://bitterwinter.org Oct. 08;https//youtu.be/u871fYGW6xE). *Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle*

Catholic Church

August 17, 2024:

Inner Mongolia: Church of Niansiqingdi solemnly blesses the "Apostles Cemetery"

The blessing was presided over by the Bishop of Hohhot, Meng Qinglu, the Bishop of Jining, Yao Shun, and Bishop Du Jiang of Bameng. 18 priests from different dioceses, religious sisters and about 1,000 believers took part in the ceremony. The church of Niansiqingdi was built in 1902. 84 Belgian and Dutch missionaries of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM, also known as "Scheut Missionaries," after the name of the Belgian town where the congregation was founded) were active in pastoral work and evangelization, in schools and in charitable institutions. According to the report from *Xinde*, 35 bishops, priests, brothers and sisters are buried in Niansiqingdi. Most of their remains were transferred to the now consecrated cemetery thanks to the efforts of the former pastor Fr. Yang Fuxi and believers. The village was founded in 1880. A CICM priest had acquired "24 hectares of land" (*niansi qing di* 廿四顷地) and donated it to refugee farmers from Shanxi and Shaanxi. They thanked the Church and many were baptized. In the following period, the number of believers increased rapidly. Soon after, the large church was built and Catholic villages were established in the area (*Xinde* Aug. 21). *kf*

August 27, 2024:

94-year-old "underground" Bishop Shi Hongzhen is officially installed as Bishop of Tianjin

"The Holy See has learned with satisfaction that today, 27 August 2024, Bishop Melchior Shi Hongzhen has been officially recognized under civil law as bishop of Tianjin (Municipality of Tianjin, People's Republic of China). This measure is a positive fruit of the dialogue established over the years between the Holy See and the Chinese Government," said a communiqué from the Holy See Press Office published on the same day. The ceremony took place in a hotel, which Bishop Shi is said to have requested in order to emphasize its civil character, since he was already Bishop of Tianjin under canon law, *AsiaNews* reported. According to a report on the website of the official Catholic governing bodies, Fr. Yang Yu, Secretary General of the Chinese Bishops' Conference, read out the latter's letter of approval. Bishop Li Shan of Beijing gave a speech. The report also states the contents of the oath the bishop took, including compliance with the law, patriotism, sinicization, etc., but not the principle of independence.

Bishop Shi Hongzhen 石鸿祯 was born in 1929, ordained a priest in 1954 and secretly ordained coadjutor bishop in 1982 by Bishop Li Side, whom he succeeded as bishop of Tianjin after his death in 2019. The last official ordinary bishop of Tianjin (not recognized by the Pope as such) died in 2005. Bishop Melchior Shi was under house arrest for years because of his refusal to join the Patriotic Association. Vatican diplomat Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli was able to meet Bishop Shi in 2022 when he was in Tianjin with a delegation for negotiations. The question of a successor for the elderly bishop has apparently not yet been resolved. According to Vatican information, the diocese of Tianjin has around 56,000 believers, 62 priests and "a good number" of nuns (www.chinacatholic.cn/html/report/24081418-1.htm; https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/08/27/240827a.html; *AsiaNews* Aug. 27). *kwt*

August 28 to September 8, 2024:

Paolo Dongdong Camanni: Former orphan from a Catholic home in China takes 6th place in judo at the Paralympics in Paris

The young judo athlete, born in 2003, was abandoned on the street at the age of two and taken in by Chinese nuns in the diocese of Zhaoxian, Hebei Province. The boy suffered from bilateral retinoblastoma, a cancer of the eyes in infancy and childhood that left Dongdong blind. Dongdong is the name the sisters gave to the child they had saved. Thanks to them and the help of an Italian journalist, Dongdong then met his adoptive family in Italy. Dongdong was one of over six hundred abandoned disabled children who found a new home with the Sisters of the Congregation of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. The children's home "House of Dawn" run by the Sisters was founded in the late 1980s by Bishop Raimundus Wang Chonglin, then bishop of the diocese of Zhaoxian. Today the Sisters are also active in the rehabilitation sector. In recent years, however, the Sisters have been subjected to increasing pressure from the state, so that they have had to give up certain areas of work. – Dongdong represented Italy at the Games. He came sixth in the lightweight category up to 73 kg. Paralympic judo is exclusively for athletes with visual impairments (*Fides* Sep. 3; *sempre news* Sep. 7). *kf*

September 2024:

Start of the new academic year at the Catholic theological seminaries

The Sheshan Seminary in Shanghai welcomed 25 seminarians for the new academic year, including 10 first-year students. In addition, there are the 14 Sisters in the first sister training course at the Sheshan Seminary and 3 Sisters for trial studies (修女初试生). At the National Seminary in Beijing, Bishop Li Shan welcomed 17 new seminarians. He admonished them with words from Pope Francis about the importance of Holy Mass, prayer and listening to God's word for the spiritual life, as well as reading good books and giving up what is superfluous.

At the Beijing Diocese's seminary, a five-day military training for the seminarians began on October 1. There were also reports of a week-long military training for first-year students at the Chinese Koran Institute in early September. Military training is compulsory at Chinese universities (www.chinacatholic.cn Oct. 10; www.chinaislam.net.cn Sept. 2; www.xinde.org Sept. 12). *kwt*

October 1 / 7, 2024:

Jiujiang parish in Jiangxi celebrates 75th anniversary of the founding of the State / follows the Pope's call for prayer for peace

The two reports were posted on the *Xinde* website on the same day; they are an example of how communities seek to maintain a balance between state-required patriotism and loyalty to the Pope and the

Church and combine the two. On October 1, the national flag was ceremoniously raised in the churchyard of Jiujiang. The pastor, Fr. Pang Rui, explained that the ceremony was intended to strengthen the national consciousness and national pride of the believers so that they understand that faith and patriotism are not contradictions, but complement and promote each other. The report on the event notes that October 1 is also the day of Little Saint Therese for the Church and the beginning of the month of the Rosary.

For October 7, Pope Francis had called for a day of prayer and fasting for peace in the world. According to the second report, Fr. Pang Rui immediately sent the appeal to all parishioners and led prayer, fasting and the rosary in the parish church on October 7. The report said that during the communal prayer, everyone felt that the power of religion could move people's hearts. The Pope's appeal encourages people to be synodal and to contribute to world peace across ethnic, cultural and religious boundaries, according to the report (www.xinde.org Oct. 8). *kwt*

October 16, 2024:

Commission for Liturgy, Sacred Music and Art unveils the new nationwide "Book of Hours"

The plan decided two years ago to create nationwide uniform prayer and hymn books for the Catholic Church in China is apparently making progress. At its meeting in Anhui, the Commission for Liturgy, Sacred Music and Art of the official Catholic governing bodies unveiled the first copies of the new uniform "Book of Hours of the Holy Church" (圣教日课). A promotional video for the "Book of Hours" and pre-order options were presented. The uniform "Hymn Book" (圣歌本) does not seem to be completely finished yet, follow-up work has been discussed. The heads of the commission are the bishops Liu Xinhong of Anhui and Cui Qingqi of Wuhan (www.xinde.org Oct. 18; cf. *RCTC* 2024, No. 1, p. 12). *kwt*

October 25, 2024:

Matthew Zhen Xuebin 甄雪斌 is consecrated as coadjutor bishop of the Diocese of Beijing

It was the fourth episcopal ordination in 2024 under the provisional Sino-Vatican agreement. It was announced on the day of the ordination on the website of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association CCPA and the Bishops' Conference as well as in the Bulletin of the Holy See Press Office (following the pattern of the announcements of the ordinations in January of this year in Zhengzhou and Minbei, cf. *China heute* 2024, No. 1, pp. 24, 26 [in German]). The consecrating bishops were Li Shan (Beijing), Guo Jincai (Chengde) and Li Suguang (Jiangxi), and the bishops Ding Lingbin (Changzhi) and Yao Shun (Jining) concelebrated. Fr. Yang Yu read the letter of approval from the Chinese Bishops' Conference, which – as *Fides* confirmed – contained the sentence "The Pope has approved this candidate" (此人选已经教宗同意).

Coadjutor Bishop Zhen was born on May 10, 1970 in Changzhi, in Shanxi Province. From 1988 to 1993 he studied at the seminary of the Diocese of Beijing and from 1993 to 1997 at St. John's University in New York, where he obtained a licentiate in liturgical studies (according to *AsiaNews* he also obtained a second degree in theology on the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council. The Chinese announcement does not mention Zhen's studies abroad). In 1998 he was ordained a priest and incardinated in the Diocese of Beijing. From 1998 to 2007 he was vice-rector of the diocesan seminary, and since 2007 chancellor of the diocese. From 2014 to June 2024 he was also vice-chairman of the Catholic Patriotic Association of the City of Beijing, and has been its chairman since June 2024. On March 21, 2024, he was elected coadjutor-designate of the Diocese of Beijing. On August 28, 2024, Pope Francis appointed him coadjutor of Beijing.

Commentators have puzzled over why Archbishop Li Shan of Beijing, born in 1965, needs a coadjutor who is only slightly younger and has the right to succeed him. *AsiaNews* reported, citing sources, that Bishop Li Shan asked for a coadjutor for health reasons, but also because of his many commitments outside Beijing as chairman of the CCPA. Matthew Zhen is known to many visitors from the world Church because he was often involved in welcoming foreign guests due to his knowledge of English (www.chinacatholic.cn/ccic/report/2410/0263-1.htm; https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2024/10/25/0827/01648.html; *AsiaNews* Oct. 18; *Fides* Oct. 25 [English and Chinese]). *kwt*

Sino-Vatican Relations

July 2, 2024:

Vatican "Foreign Minister" urges respect for international law in the South China Sea

During a visit to the Philippines, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, the Vatican's Secretary for Relations with States and International Organizations, held a joint press conference with Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Enrique Manalo. Gallagher was asked about the Vatican's position on the conflicts between China and various Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines, in the South China Sea. "The position of the Holy See is quite clear," Archbishop Gallagher said in his response, according to *AsiaNews*. "In such situations of conflict, whatever they are, first of all, that every effort must be made, that any differences, conflict, are resolved peacefully. We would encourage parties in conflict to abide by international law, and to pursue [...] that as a way of resolving difficulties and problems with the best interests of all involved." (*AsiaNews* July 2; *LICAS* July 2). *kwt*

August 9, 2024:

Fides: Pope Francis in an interview about his desire to meet bishops and the people of God in China

The Vatican news service *Fides* published in August excerpts from an interview that Pope Francis gave in May to the head of the press office of the Jesuit China Province, Fr. Pedro Chia. According to *Fides*, Pope Francis said he would like to visit the Marian shrine on Mount Sheshan near Shanghai. "I would like to meet with local bishops and the people of God who are so faithful. They have gone through many things and remained faithful." When asked what message he wanted to send to young Chinese Catholics today, he said: "Hope," but added: "It seems tautological to me to give a message of hope to a people who are masters of hope and of patience in waiting." This is a very beautiful thing, said the Pope. The people of China are a great people who must not waste their heritage, on the contrary, they must carry it forward patiently (*Fides* Aug. 9). *kwt*

August 14, 2024:

Papal peace envoy for Ukraine, Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, speaks on the phone with the Chinese government's special envoy for Eurasian affairs, Li Hui

A note about the phone call appeared in the Bulletin of the Holy See and on the website of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. The phone call took place (according to the Chinese account) at the request

of Cardinal Zuppi and followed from the meeting between the two in Beijing in September 2023 (see *RCTC* 2023, No. 4, p. 16). During the phone call, "great concern was expressed about the situation and the need to foster dialogue between the parties, with adequate international guarantees for a just and lasting peace," according to the Vatican report. The Chinese Foreign Ministry report also reported that Li Hui had expressed his appreciation for the Vatican's mediation efforts and humanitarian aid in the "Ukraine crisis." Zuppi, in turn, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry report, thanked the Chinese government on behalf of the Pope for its tireless efforts to promote peace and expressed his appreciation for the Chinese-Brazilian six-point plan to resolve the Ukraine crisis (https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2024/08/15/0614/01250.html; www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/wjbxw/202408/t20240815_11472913.html; *Global Times* Aug. 15; *Vatican News* Aug. 15). *kwt*

September 13, 2024:

Pope Francis on the return flight from Singapore: "China is a promise and a hope for the Church"

During the press conference on the plane, Pope Francis was asked if there was room for cooperation for peace between the Holy See and China and if he was satisfied with the results so far of the Sino-Vatican agreement on episcopal appointments. The Pope replied: "I am satisfied with the dialogue with China, the result is good, work is also being done with good will regarding the appointment of bishops. I asked the Secretariat of State how things are going: I am satisfied." He continued: "Another question is China: China is an *ilusión* [a longing] for me, in the sense that I would like to visit China because it is a great country; I admire China, I respect China. It is a country with a millennial culture, with a capacity for dialogue and mutual understanding that transcends the various systems of government it has had. I believe that China is a promise and a hope for the Church." To the first question, he said: "We can work together, and certainly in the face of conflict. At the moment, Cardinal Zuppi is working in this sense and also has relations with China" (www.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/speeches/2024/september/documents/20240913-singapore-voloritorno.html). *kwt*

October 2–27, 2024:

Two bishops from Mainland China participate – for the first time in full – in the second session of the World Synod in Rome

Two bishops from Mainland China had participated in the first round of the World Synod "For a Synodal Church – Communion, Participation, Mission" in October 2023, but they left again after 12 days. The full participation of two bishops from Mainland China – for the first time ever since the Synods of Bishops were begun – was seen as an important step forward for the Chinese Church and Sino-Vatican relations. One of this year's two participants was Bishop Yang Yongqiang, who already participated (partly) last year. Since his transfer in June 2024 he is Bishop of Hangzhou. The second was Bishop Zhan Silu of Mindong in Fujian Province, who – unusually – replaced Bishop Anton Yao Shun of Jining, who had participated in 2023. Bishop Zhan was ordained without papal approval in 2000 and only subsequently recognized by the Pope in 2018 as part of the provisional agreement on bishop appointments.

The two bishops spoke to the Synod, as Andrea Tornielli reported in *Vatican News* (Oct. 17). "The Church in China is the same as the Catholic Church in other countries of the world: we belong to the same faith, share the same baptism, and we are all faithful to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church," Bishop Yang told the assembly, according to *Vatican News*. He also said, "We follow the evangelical spirit of 'becoming all things to all people' [...]. We effectively adapt to society, serve it, adhere to the direction of the sinicization of Catholicism, and preach the Good News." He welcomed Catholic communities and religious groups from all countries to visit China.

Bishop Zhan explained to the Synod that the cause of the historic setback in the Rites Controversy was that the Church had ignored the differences and complementarity of human cultures. Being a synodal Church means "respecting and listening to the voices of different stories, cultures, and traditions in the journey of seeking humanity's ultimate goal, which is God," Bishop Zhan said according to *Vatican News*. He then named some current problems of the Chinese Church.

As last year, Cardinal Stephen Chow SJ and Vanessa Cheng Siu Wai, a lay representative, took part from Hong Kong. Bishop Norbert Pu Ying-hsiung of Chiayi came again from Taiwan (*CNA* Oct. 8; *Fides* Sept. 16; *Kung Kao Po* Oct. 10 according to *Xinde* Oct. 12; *Vatican News* Oct. 17 [English and Chinese]; see also *RCTC* 2023, No. 4, p. 16). *kwt*

October 22, 2024:

The Sino-Vatican Provisional Agreement on the Appointment of Bishops is renewed again – this time for four years

The extension was announced on the same day in the Bulletin of the Holy See Press Office and by the spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

"In light of the consensus reached for an effective application of the Provisional Agreement regarding the Appointment of Bishops, after appropriate consultation and assessment, the Holy See and the People's Republic of China have agreed to extend further its validity for four years from the present date. The Vatican Party remains dedicated to furthering the respectful and constructive dialogue with the Chinese Party, in view of the further development of bilateral relations for the benefit of the Catholic Church in China and the Chinese people as a whole," the Holy See's Bulletin said.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said that both sides had positively assessed the implementation of the agreement and, through friendly consultation, had agreed to extend it for another four years. He also announced that the talks would continue in a constructive spirit.

According to *AsiaNews*, the extension to four years was probably a compromise, as China wanted to make the agreement permanent, but the Vatican insisted on its provisional nature and the need to clarify some points. The agreement was signed on September 22, 2018, and extended for two years in 2020 and 2022. Most observers assumed that the content of the agreement had not been changed this time either; however, Cardinal Chow said in an interview with *America* that he presumed that this time some additions had been made. *America*'s interviewer Gerard O'Connell confirmed that "America understands from other informed sources in Rome that some changes asked for by the Vatican have been made." The text of the agreement remains secret.

After a low point in the implementation of the agreement in April 2023 with the unilateral transfer of Bishop Shen Bin to Shanghai, which was only approved by the Pope three months later, there were a number of positive results in 2024: in particular four episcopal ordinations (including that of coadjutor Zhen Xuebin in Beijing on October 25), the official recognition of "underground" Bishop Shi Hongzhen on August 27 and the full participation of the two bishops in the World Synod. Since the agreement was signed in 2018, a total of 10 bishops (including Zhen Xuebin) have been ordained within its framework. Around 30 bishoprics in Mainland China are still vacant (https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2024/10/22/0813/01615.html; www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/lxjzh/202410/t20241022_11511374.html; *America* Oct. 24; *AsiaNews* Oct. 22, 23). *kwt*

Hong Kong

July 1, 2024:

England: Catholic Bishops' Conference sets up coordinating group for Catholic migrants from Hong Kong

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales set up the Hong Kong Catholic Migrants Pastoral Coordination Group on July 1 to support the growing number of Hong Kong Catholic migrants in Great Britain. The group will initially operate for a year under the leadership of Bishop Paul McAleenan, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster and responsible for migrant and refugee issues within the Bishops' Conference. The coordinating group consists of a team of seven Hong Kongers who have relocated to England, including the recently ordained Deacon James Shin. At a meeting on July 10, Bishop McAleenan emphasized the four principles of welcoming newly arrived migrants from Pope Francis' message for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees in 2018: "welcome, protect, promote and integrate." Deacon Shin said the group's fourfold mission is in line with the Pope's principles: "to liaise between Hong Kong Catholic migrant communities in England and Wales and the bishops' conference to ensure effective communication and collaboration; to ensure the local communities receive pastoral support by liaising with local groups and facilitate social and faith-based gatherings; to act as the first point of contact for visiting Cantonese-speaking priests when needed," writes the *Sunday Examiner*. In addition, the group offers various services at the national and local levels to promote the faith of migrants with the support of local communities. In July, Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha OFM of Hong Kong visited England and welcomed the work of the coordinating group. The group's logo symbolizes Catholic, British and Hong Kong elements (*Sunday Examiner* Aug. 2; www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=455501323938195&set=a.125492450272419; www.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20170815_world-migrants-day-2018.html; see also *RCTC* 2024, No. 3, p. 20f.). *kf*

July 25-28, 2024:

Spain / Hong Kong: "3rd World Encounter of Teresian Mysticism and Interreligious Dialogue: Tibetan Buddhism and Carmelite Spirituality. Orientations for the Visualization, Contemplation and Perception of the Sacred"

The conference was organized from July 25 to 28 in Ávila by the Catholic Order of Discalced Carmelites and the International Centre of Teresian and Sanjuanist Studies (CITeS) of Ávila, Spain, in collaboration with the Centre of Buddhist Studies (CBS) at the University of Hong Kong and the Spanish Fundación Dharma-Gaia. According to the report by *Buddhistdoor Global*, "50-100 participants" took part in the in-person and online event. It was the third cooperation between CITeS and CBS. The "1st World Encounter of Teresian Mysticism and Interreligious Dialogue: Theravāda Buddhism and Teresian Mysticism" took place from 27–30 July 2017. A second conference on Discalced Carmelites and Zen Buddhism, which was planned for July 2020, had to be cancelled due to the Covid pandemic. The aim of the third conference, according to the report, was to "explore shared elements and differences in Carmelite and Tibetan Buddhist practices." Both traditions emphasized the importance of morality, prayer and contemplation "as means of attaining union with the ultimate." In addition to lectures on the topic, the participants also engaged in religious practices and rites of both traditions. The conference concluded with a renewed commitment to interfaith dialogue, "fostering understanding and respect among dif-

ferent religious traditions," thus the report (*Buddhistdoor Global* Aug. 1; for the program see www.academia.edu/105639638/programm_3rd_world_encounter_teresian_mysticism_and_interreligous_dialogue_Tibetan_Buddhism_and_Carmelite_spirituality_orientations_to_visualize_contemplate_and_find_the_sacred). *kf*

August 25, 2024:

Hong Kong: Seminar on Preventive Protection – Establishment of a dedicated diocesan office

During the seminar hosted by the Diocesan Catechetical Centre at St. Jude's Parish in North Point, new measures to protect children and vulnerable persons in the Diocese of Hong Kong were discussed. The seminar was aimed at Sunday school teachers and catechists. – The diocese is taking an important step towards improving child protection mechanisms with the establishment of the Diocesan Safeguarding Minors and Vulnerable Persons Office – St. Goretti's Centre. The office is scheduled to begin operations in 2025. The aim of the office, according to *LICAS*, is "to develop a more robust protection system within the diocese, involving training, guideline drafting, and complaint management" (*LICAS* Aug. 29). *kf*

August 30, 2024:

Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., in Hong Kong: "Go, meet and see"

In reflections on the theme of "Time to rest and reflect," which were published on August 30 in the Hong Kong diocesan newspaper *Sunday Examiner*, the cardinal meditates, in view of his own vacation days, on the importance of preserving nature in the urban environment in order to ensure people's quality of life. "Of course, quality of life is not just about a better natural environment or having a larger living space. It also entails a living culture that conscientiously cultivates respectful human relationships and embraces religions that promote psycho-spiritual health as well as social well-being. It is also about honouring plurality while encouraging unity, cherishing civil freedoms with a legal system that dwells not on fears but positive incentives, and giving its people – especially the younger generations – a positive outlook on life with a hope-filled future," the Cardinal writes. "There is certainly room for our personal and collective improvements. However, Hong Kong is still, by and large, a safe and livable city with its own charms." At this point the Cardinal notes: "Sadly, according to friends and acquaintances living in foreign countries, they are informed that Hong Kong is unstable and unsafe for visitors and civil freedom in Hong Kong is seriously restricted. Indeed, I have clearly encountered these negative publicities during my travels over the past two years until just recently. I am unsure of the exact reasons behind the forming of international community's current perception of Hong Kong. But it certainly does not accurately represent Hong Kong." The Cardinal says to those friends and acquaintances, including leaders and lay people of the Catholic Church, who are worrying about Hong Kong: "Please come to see for yourselves what Hong Kong really is like" (*Sunday Examiner*, Aug. 30). *kf*

September 1, 2024:

Hong Kong: Church people, scholars and medical experts discuss gender theory

The Catholic Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy, together with the Bioethics Resource Centre of its Theological Faculty, founded in 2011, held a symposium on gender theory at the Catholic Diocesan Centre in Hong Kong on September 1. Over 80 scholars, medical experts and religious leaders from mainland China, Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong discussed the impact of gender

theory on society and the Church. Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing OFM opened the symposium, addressing the conflict between Catholic teaching and contemporary gender theory. Deacon Thomas Lam Chiu-wan discussed the challenges posed by the increasing acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities for the traditional Christian perspectives on marriage and family. Dr. Hong Kwai-wah, a psychiatrist and founder of the Hong Kong Psychosexual Education Association, warned of the risks of irreversible medical treatments for transgender people. Professor Kwan Kai-man of Hong Kong Baptist University discussed the societal impact of transgender identity. Kwan also examined the tension between individual legal rights and social norms. Dr Charon Cheang Teng-fong, chairperson of the Association of Catholic Health Service Personnel of Macau, discussed the challenges of treating gender dysphoria in Macau. A representative from China reported on the experiences and challenges of LGBTQ+ Christians in China, particularly within churches. He wished for a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ people within the Christian community. Dr Andrew Yeh Wei-chiang of E-da Dachang Hospital in Taiwan spoke about the experiences of transgender people in Taiwanese society (*Sunday Examiner* Sept. 13) *kf*

June 21-28 / August 18-25, 2024:

Catholic youth exchange between young people from Hong Kong and Berlin

Ten Catholic young people from Hong Kong took part in a week-long cultural and journalistic exchange in Berlin in June under the aegis of the Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend [BDKJ] [German Catholic Youth] and the Hong Kong Diocesan Youth Commission. They were accompanied by Fr. Tito Martin, the chairman of the Youth Commission, and some staff members. The journalism initiative in Berlin enabled an intercultural youth exchange between the young people. The program offered the participants the opportunity to acquire various media skills, including writing, video production and audio editing, and involved them in group discussions on various topics. On one day, the participants visited the public broadcaster Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg RBB. According to Fr. Martin, the program came about through the diocesan partnership between Hong Kong and Essen. The initiative came from a former member of the Youth Commission of the Diocese of Essen who moved to Berlin. Among the young people from Berlin were also a Muslim and several atheists. From August 18 to 25, the young people from Berlin paid a return visit to the diocese of Hong Kong. The program included visits to various Catholic institutions such as Mercy HK, the Missionaries of Charity in Nam Cheong and the Caritas Community Centre in Tsuen Wan. The focus was mainly on charitable institutions and the treatment of social problems in Hong Kong, such as homelessness and drug addiction. On August 20, Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., met with the young people and celebrated a Holy Mass with them in the cathedral (*Sunday Examiner* Aug. 9). *kf*

Taiwan

August 1, 2024:

Mainland Chinese becomes rector of the Catholic theological faculty at Fu Jen University in Taiwan

On August 1, Fr. Cui Baochen 崔寶臣 was appointed the new rector of the Faculty of Theology of St Robert Bellarmine at the Catholic Fu Jen University in Taipei. He comes from mainland China and has a doctorate in biblical studies from the University of Fribourg. He previously earned a mas-

ter's degree in biblical studies in France. He is an expert on the Old Testament. Fr. Cui Baochen succeeds Fr. Jeffrey Chang SJ 鄭家樂 (www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=957119056215737&set=pb.100057529542977.-2207520000 Aug. 1). *kf*

September 20, 2024:

Taiwan: Death penalty remains – albeit limited

The Taiwanese Constitutional Court ruled in a groundbreaking and eagerly awaited ruling that although the death penalty does not contradict the constitution, it may only be applied for the most serious crimes, especially murder. The court stated that the right to life is protected by the Taiwanese constitution, but this protection is not absolute. 37 people sentenced to death had brought the lawsuit. Individual complainants can now request a reassessment of their case. Activists who campaign for the abolition of the death penalty were disappointed. There are currently 45 people on death row. According to surveys, a majority of the Taiwanese population is in favor of the death penalty (*China.Table* Sept. 23; *Deutsche Welle* Sept. 20; *NZZ* Sept. 22; *taz* Sep. 21). *kf*

October 2, 2024:

Rome: Reception of Taiwan's Ambassador to the Vatican

On the occasion of the celebrations for Taiwan's national holiday on October 10, Matthew Lee, Taiwan's Ambassador to the Holy See, hosted a reception in Rome on October 2. "Taiwan has enjoyed diplomatic relations with the Holy See for 82 years. That's very important because it means the Holy See recognizes Taiwan as a country that values religious freedom and its communion with the universal Church," Lee told *CNA*. The reception was attended by Cardinals Giovanni Battista Re, Óscar Rodríguez Maradiaga and Silvano Tomasi, as well as Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio and other Vatican representatives and diplomats accredited to the Holy See. The Vatican is one of the remaining 12 nations in the world that maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Taiwanese Catholics make up 3% of the population but are very powerful, the ambassador said. According to Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, over 10,000 people attended Taiwan's National Eucharistic Congress on October 5. Bishop Norbert Pu of Chiayi, a participant in the Vatican synod, spoke to CNA at the reception about the significance of the Vatican's recognition for Taiwanese Catholics. "We hope we can always maintain this formal and good relationship with the Vatican. Because for Taiwan, this is very important. We hope that the world will see this because Taiwan is a democratic and free country, respected by other nations," Pu said (*Catholic News Agency* Oct. 11; www.licas.news/2024/10/11/taiwans-ambassador-to-vatican-highlights-partnership-in-charity-and-peace/). *kf*

October 5, 2024:

Cardinal John Tong of Hong Kong as papal envoy to the Fifth National Eucharistic Congress in Taiwan

The congress in Kaoshiung on the theme "Fraternity Heals All" was attended by over 13,000 believers from all over Taiwan, including cardinals, bishops, priests, nuns and lay people from Taiwan's seven dioceses, representatives of the government, various religious organizations, charities and schools. The Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, Cardinal John Tong, held the closing Mass, which was attended by 300 clergy. At the beginning of the Mass, an apostolic blessing from Pope Francis was read by Archbishop Stefano Mazzotti, Chargé d'affairs of the Apostolic Nunciature in Taipei. In a letter dated August 15, the Pope invited Cardinal Tong as his envoy to speak about the need for true fraternity to heal the world in the light of the gospel. The congress was the conclusion of a year of catechisms and liturgical cel-

ebrations in the various dioceses of Taiwan and was linked to the 53rd International Eucharistic Congress in Quito, Ecuador, in September. The congress in Taiwan was opened by Archbishop Peter Lau Cheng-chung of Kaohsiung. The congress began with an opening procession with the relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis, who died at the age of 15. During the day there were various performances and catechetical teachings, among other things. The congress center also hosted a large exhibition on Eucharistic miracles. The next congress will take place in the diocese of Tainan in 2028 (*AsiaNews* Oct. 6; *Sunday Examiner* Oct. 18). *kf*

Authors' Abbreviations:

Katharina Feith (*kf*)
Katharina Wenzel-Teuber (*kwt*)

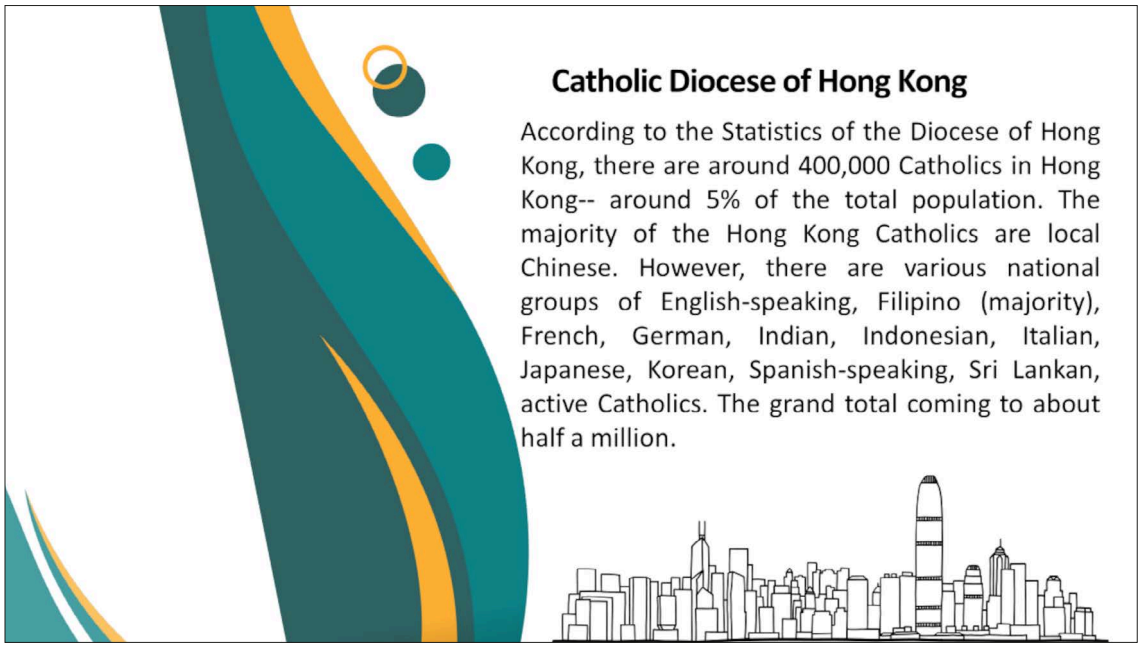
This "News Update" was first published in *China heute* 2024, No. 3, pp. 155-164 (in German).

Unless otherwise indicated, all source references in the "News Update" refer to the year 2024.

Church Ministry for Young People in Hong Kong

Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J.





Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong gave the following PowerPoint presentation at the 11th European Catholic China Colloquium on the topic "Future Perspectives of the Catholic Church in China. Special focus: Youth in China" which took place from August 22–25, 2024 in Siegburg/Germany.

Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong

Along with its apostolic work, one of the prime concerns of the diocese is the well-being of the community as a whole. The diocese has over 240 Catholic schools and kindergartens catering to about 134,000 pupils. Medical and social services are provided to at least 6 hospitals, 10 clinics, 46 social and family service centres, 17 hostels, 15 homes for the aged, 33 rehabilitation service centres and many self-help clubs and associations. Caritas — Hong Kong is the official social welfare arm of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong.

These services are offered to everyone and, indeed, 95 per cent of those who have benefited from them are not Catholics.



Mission

With an overview on demographic and mission of the Hong Kong Diocese, it may easy to notice the key mission of the church.

Dialogue

...with friends in different cultures, religions and generations.

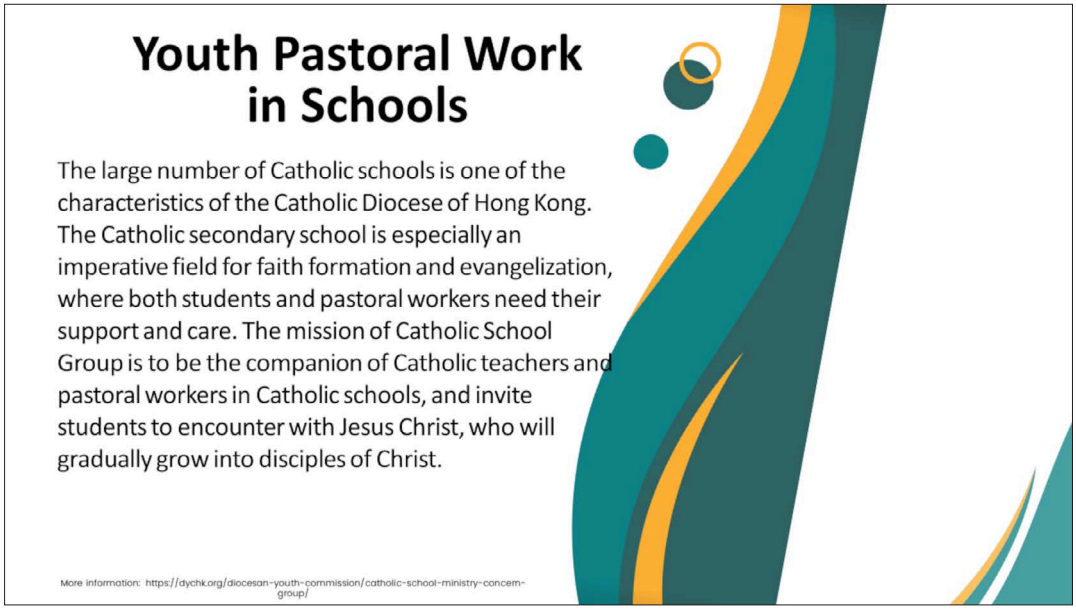
Evangelization

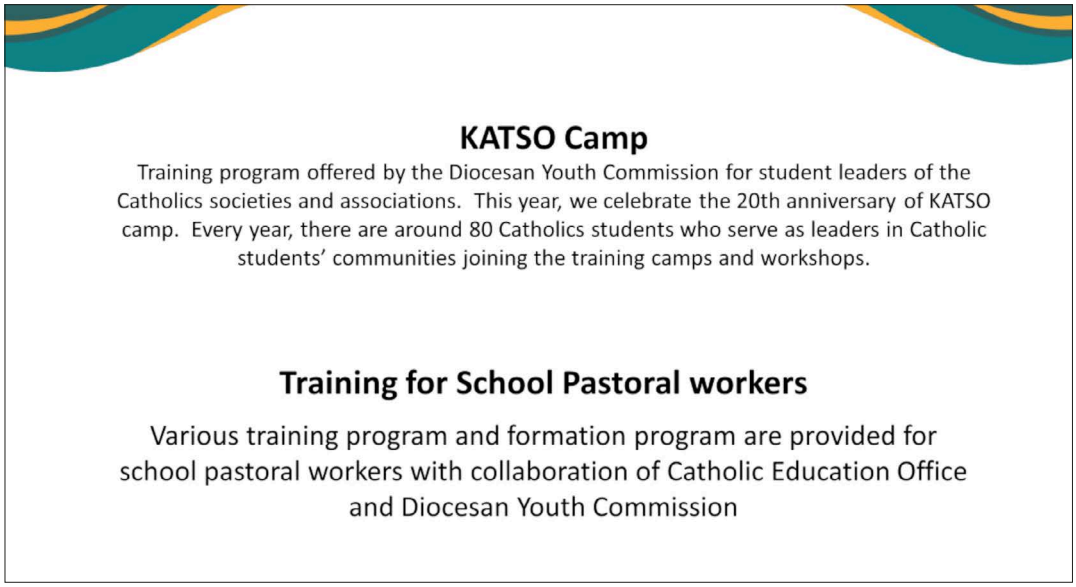
...by Catholic schools and new media

Target Audience

With the same mission, dialogue and evangelization, Diocesan Youth Commission works in collaborations with different youth groups and organization, for providing support and formation program for Cantonese speaking youth and English speaking youth (Diocesan English Youth).

The target audience of the youth pastoral work in Hong Kong from 12 to 35 years old, includes secondary students, university students and working youth in various settings.


Youth Pastoral Work in Schools
The large number of Catholic schools is one of the characteristics of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong. The Catholic secondary school is especially an imperative field for faith formation and evangelization, where both students and pastoral workers need their support and care. The mission of Catholic School Group is to be the companion of Catholic teachers and pastoral workers in Catholic schools, and invite students to encounter with Jesus Christ, who will gradually grow into disciples of Christ.
More information: https://dychk.org/diocesan-youth-commission/catholic-school-ministry-concern-group/


KATSO Camp
Training program offered by the Diocesan Youth Commission for student leaders of the Catholics societies and associations. This year, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of KATSO camp. Every year, there are around 80 Catholics students who serve as leaders in Catholic students' communities joining the training camps and workshops.
Training for School Pastoral workers
Various training program and formation program are provided for school pastoral workers with collaboration of Catholic Education Office and Diocesan Youth Commission


Formation programs for University Students
Hong Kong has 22 higher education institutions, including 12 university and other institutions. There is only one (Catholics) University in Hong Kong with an official Chaplaincy office, the Saint Francis University.
For some institutions, Catholics students may organized students' community in the campus. Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students and the Diocesan Youth Commission offer various support for those Catholic communities and formation programs for students.

Formation programs for University Students —Catholics Society (Katso)–

Hoppie,
leadership training camp for University students

Collaboration of three organizations--Chaplaincy office of Saint Francis University, Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students and Diocesan Youth Commission

Formation programs for University Students —Catholics Society–

Summer camp

Program offered by the Diocesan Youth Commission for DSE students (secondary school graduates)

Formation programs for University Students —Catholics Society –

Overseas exchange and exposure

program offered by the Diocesan Youth Commission

Catechism class for university students

Partnering with St. Francis of Assisi Church to offer a Youth Catechism Class

Various activities for Catholics youth

Youth events and activities play an important role in Youth Ministry. The mountaintop experience in the festival aroused the enthusiasm of the participants to the Lord and has left beautiful and indelible mark on people's hearts. One of the missions of our youth commission is to provide immersive community experience through different youth festive events

In fact, the growth of faith of the youth often happens within a Christ-centered community. With the accompany by their companions, the youth identify and respond to the call of the Lord. Besides supporting evangelization in school and pastoral care in parish, Youth Ministry also needs to build up various platforms to connect people with different proficiencies, from different age group, with different interests, to contribute to the young Christian formation.

Various activities for Catholics youth

Samuel camp

Formation camp for post-confirmation teenagers, organized by the Diocesan Youth Commission

Asian Youth Day
and
World Youth Day

Joining Catholics youth programs in local, Asian and International level

Various activities for Catholics youth

Diocesan Youth Day

organized by the Diocesan Youth Commission, in collaboration with different youth group in the Church.

Youth Monthly Retreat

New Media

"Youth Boiling Point"— A new media initiative for Hong Kong Catholic youth; a platform to share about faith, creativity, formation and evangelisation.
Create interesting and lively content that attracts and engages young people, create online-to-offline initiatives, and empower the youth through collaborations.



Repackaging online content on Catholic Faith:
Bible podcast, music prayer, vocation & boardgames?……

Social media and content creation as a pastoral bridge:
"Cardinal's parish tour", "Fr. Mak's got questions", youth's voice podcast…

New Media as a tool for youth ministry

Engagement and Empowerment, a platform for young people to express their talents and thoughts. Encourage them to involve in social service and evangelization.

Newly baptised Catholic youth's testimonies

Illustrations, photography, writing and design



Catholic Vlog

Street evangelization, busking…



Background

- New challenges and needs of incarcerated youth
- Greater willingness to continue higher education
- Need different aspects of career counseling and employment support

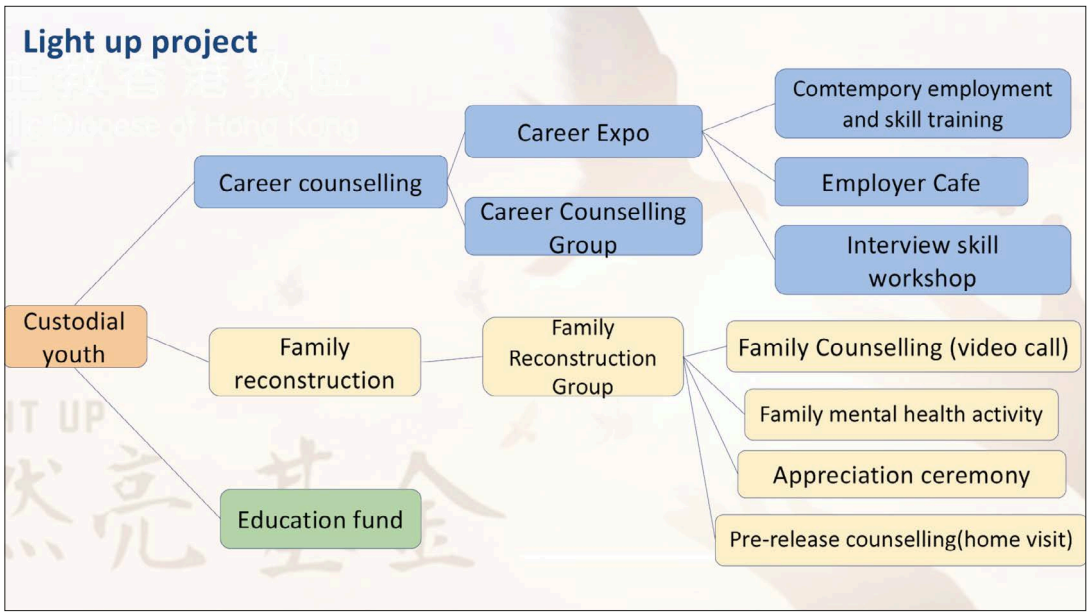
Purpose of project

- Provide continuous support for incarcerated and rehabilitated youth (35 years old or below)
- Seize the opportunity for education
- Equip themselves before re-entering society
- Enhance ability to change their fate
- Help them feel loved
- Repair relationships with family members
- Reduce chances of reoffending

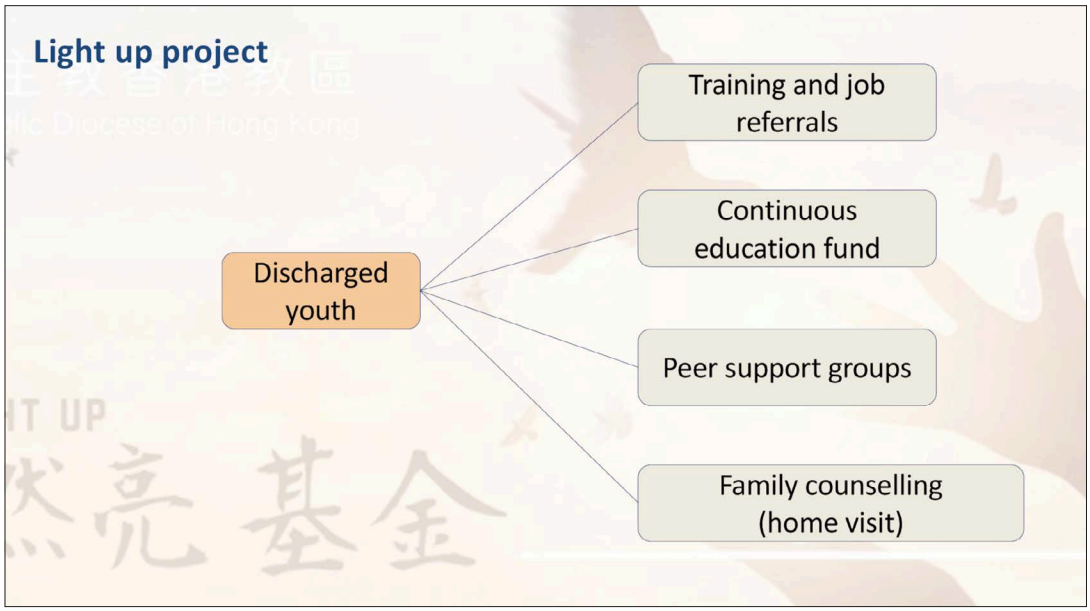
Service Scope

- Continuous education in the community and in prison
- Career development
- Internship opportunities
- Job matching
- Emotional supports
- Family support

Light up project



Light up project



First World Children's Day – What We Have Learned

- Children were connected with other children of the local Church and for some, the universal Church
- They came to know the different missions and institutions in the Church, learn about themselves being the agents of blessings and hope for others
- Through experiences of Prayer methods and the Adoration of the Holy Eucharist, children participants have come to appreciate spirituality and their spiritual relationship with God
- Through Conversation in the Spirit and the Children Synod, children can provide their perspectives to their faith communities, so that learning becomes synodal
- Provided opportunities for parents to receive formation on their marriage and family life

First World Children's Day -- How We Would Like To Develop The Ministry

- We can see how children can give hope to the Church through their passion for their Church
- We are setting up a "Children Pastoral Concern Group" to develop pastoral ministry for children so that they can grow up in their Church and contributing to our mission



The Youth in China Renew the Church

Bruno Lepeu MEP

When I discovered the theme of this year's ECCC, "Future Perspectives of the Catholic Church in China" with a special focus on the "Youth in China," I got very excited to join as it looked so similar to the subject of my thesis defended in 2023 at the Catholic Institute of Paris, entitled "Emergence of a Fraternal and Synodal Church in China – Theological Analysis of a Survey of Young Chinese Catholics."

The purpose of my research was to understand what is emerging in the Church in China. The understanding of the Church in mainland China is often partial and biased, focusing mainly on the control of civil authorities and the negative consequences for the life of the Church. But what is the daily life of the People of God like? My thirty years of contacts with local communities have made me aware of the work of the Holy Spirit, especially in the lives of young people in China. While the functioning of the ecclesial institution in China is still very clerical, the process of appropriating faith by young people renews the life of the Church, highlighting the fundamental role of fraternal communities, in which essential elements of synodality are lived out, opening onto intimacy with the Lord, Brother and Friend. My sharing will present this process of renewal of the Church in China, being aware that it is only a trend that cannot be generalized, yet with a prophetic dimension.

My methodology is based on the principle of an ecclesiology which has its starting point from the action of the Church, which is always in progress, emerging, under construction. This approach involves listening to the People of God. For this, I interviewed 50 young Chinese Catholics in 14 different locations in mainland China. Choosing to listen to the narratives of young Catholics actively engaged in the Church as a gateway to understand what is being built in the Church in China, is based on the premise that young people are somewhat a laboratory of what emerges in the Church. The corpus of these contemporary narratives was put into perspective with a biblical source, the *Acts of the Apostles*, "manifesto of the Christian identity in formation,"[1] to resonate with the hypotheses elaborated

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Fr. Dr. Bruno Lepeu MEP is researcher at the Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong. The following lecture was presented at the 11th European Catholic China Colloquium on the topic "Future Perspectives of the Catholic Church in China. Special focus: Youth in China" which took place from August 22–25, 2024 in Siegburg/Germany.

1 For studying the *Acts of the Apostles*, Daniel Marguerat has been a major reference for this study. For a translation in English of his extensive work on the Acts, see Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles'*, SNTS 121, New York: Cambridge University Press 2002. xii + 299 pp. (translated by Ken McKinney, Gregory J. Laughery, and Richard Bauckham).

from the narratives of the young people and to construct theological discourse.[2] I will not be able to present the results in detail, but will insist on four points to better understand how the youth renew the Church: 1. The process of appropriating faith by young people; 2. The fundamental role of fraternal ecclesial communities; 3. A new intimacy with the Lord, Brother and Friend; 4. A new way of being Church, more fraternal and therefore more synodal.

1. A Process of Inner Transformation: A Before and an After

The narratives present a *before* and an *after*, a characteristic that highlights a process of inner transformation. Before, faith transmitted by family and through rote memorization of the Catechism's Questions and Answers is reduced to a religion of obligations, consisting of truths to believe in, commandments to obey, sacraments to receive, and many prayers to recite. John-Baptist, a young pastoral worker, reports that when he was a child, for him Christian life was limited to prayers and prohibitions, which remained external to him. This teaching is ineffective in establishing a personal relationship with God: faith remains in a "frozen" state, at the stage of seed. This faith is perceived by children as a burden and a constraint, which they are unable to justify in the face of an educational system that promotes scientific atheism. The analysis of young people's testimonies leads to a diagnosis of a double deficit of the Word of God and of the Holy Spirit in the religious education received in their childhood.

In China, the local Church has not yet emerged from the clerical system, shaped by the mandarin political model of officials who "make the law" and disrupted by their interference in the Church's affairs, and the official positions that they give to prominent priests, like delegate to the local Political Consultative Conference (Zhengxie 政协). The strong clerics/lay bipolarity still present in China leads to a conception of the Church which belongs to the clergy: as religious education taught the children, they have no active part in the Church's mission and they have only to obey to the clergy in a pyramidal model.[3] This corporate ecclesial model does not leave room for the expression of various charisms, a sign of a pneumatological deficit in ecclesial life: everything is concentrated on the hierarchical ministry, religious women, and community leaders (*huizhang* 会长).

What triggers the process of "defrosting" the faith of these young people is a fraternal ecclesial experience, usually incited by a personal invitation. These ecclesial experiences, often characterized in the narratives by the joy of being together, whether participating in a youth camp, a Bible sharing group, a student community, a training session or a simple fellowship around a meal, show that the "Love one another" instilled by the catechism is

2 To understand the process of resonance between contemporary narratives and a biblical source to construct theological discourse, see Etienne Grieu, "Referring to the Bible in Practical Theology", in: François Moog (dir.), *Recherches en théologie des pratiques pastorales II*: *La Bible en théologie des pratiques. Groupe de Santiago,* Cahiers Internationaux de Théologie Pratique, Série Actes no. 18, Paris – Louvain – Québec 2019, pp. 261-270 (online).

3 The answer to the question 82 of the Catechism Questions and Answers stipulates that the laity has to listen to the priests, the priests to the bishops and the bishops to the pope (82问: 圣教会各级的人, 彼此有什么本分? 答: 教友该听神父的教训, 神父该听主教的教训, 主教该听教宗的教训, 这样彼此连合, 按吾主耶稣的话, 同归一栈, 共属一牧).

possible and attractive, transforming life deeply and opening onto a close relationship with a God of love. This process of transformation is experienced as a happy experience of liberation, forgiveness and self-expression, through the acceptance and recognition by brothers and sisters, which allows for a path of personal unification and appropriation of faith. It is sometimes even experienced as a process of recreation, as expressed by Magdalena, still a catechumen:

> *Originally, I was like a puddle of mud, I didn't know where to flow and how to move forward, and suddenly, I was molded like a whole person, and thus totally built together with who I originally was; then there was this link with God: my originally limited life is associated with the life of God, and thus ... I find that very wonderful.*

This process of transformation highlights God's care, the role of the community, and the generosity of these young people's responses. It needs many steps of human and spiritual training, where the community plays a key role.

2. The Importance of a Fraternal Community

The "hierarchological" pastoral model[4] in which the interviewed youth grew up, especially in villages, did not prepare them to live as believing subjects in today's society, marked by atheism, numerous changes (urbanization, digital revolution, consumerism …), and a process of individualization. But a fraternal ecclesial community is crucial in helping the youth to develop a living faith and to face the challenges of modern life. Such a community is an environment where the Word takes flesh and where the believing subject who participates in it comes into being. It provides young people with a path of personalization and intimacy with God, producing a performative faith that leads to an attractive new way of life. Personalized support, for, with, and by the youth, values the subject by recognizing his/her dignity, training him/her, and actively involving him/her in the community life.

The proposals of these communities bring contact with the Word of God, which is shared, taught, and/or "simply" lived. The youth are deeply touched by this good news of a God who loves them. The fraternal community is therefore the environment where the truth of the relationship with God and with humans is realized, a family of genuine brothers and sisters who discover themselves as children of the same Father, which founds equality within the community: "You have only one Master and you are all brothers" (*Mt* 23:8).

Fraternal ecclesial experiences stand out from Chinese society, marked by a quest for power, honor, and self-interest, through networks of relationships, the famous *guanxi* 关系. The youth narratives are very negative about the society. But as Luke, a community leader, says: "Among us, it's not the same." Through these fraternal ecclesial experiences, what touches the young people resonates with the ideal of primitive ecclesial communities

4 "The *De Ecclesia* was principally, sometimes almost exclusively, a defence and affirmation of the reality of the Church as machinery of hierarchical mediation, of the powers and primacy of the Roman see, in a word, a 'hierarchology,'" Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church – A Study for a Theology of the Laity*, Westminster Maryland: The Newman Press 1965, p. 45 (translated by Donald Attwater).

described in the *Acts of the Apostles*, the great biblical narrative of the spread of the Word of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. The ideal of fraternal communion, *koinônia*,[5] which is expressed as "one heart and one soul" and as a "communal sharing" where no one is left out in the community, is reflected in the descriptions that young people give of their community. They emphasize love among brothers and sisters as of the same family, in which everyone gives generously, with relationships marked by unconditional acceptance, gratuitousness, mutual care, equality, fraternity, harmony, love, forgiveness ... allowing young people to truly be themselves, to be free. This ideal, which contrasts with usual relationships in society, attracts the young people, just as it was in the times of the early Church (*Acts* 2:47), to the point of making them "falling in love with the community" (爱上这个团体), "a group where one is loved," while being realistic about its limitations, deviations from the Gospel ideal, and the deep suffering that these deviations can cause.

They emphasize the participation of everyone, shared responsibility within the group, teamwork, the importance of valuing different charisms, the specific role of the priest, fraternal companionship ... All these elements indirectly refer to the concept of synodality and can help the universal Church to better understand how to live out synodality in a fraternal manner. Active participation within the community is one of the essential elements of the transformation of believing subjects. The involvement of young people in the community begins with a simple being-with and gradually develops into a strong commitment of the whole person. The community becomes a place to "express one's zeal" and to implement a personal response to God's gift. As Peter, a newly baptized student, asserts, the possibility of investing oneself in the service of the community is the condition for becoming a full member and making one with the group, to the point of proudly affirming: "I am the team and the team is me!" The fraternal community thus provides the conducive environment for young people to broadly experience the grace of their baptism and to express the gifts received from the Spirit. Young people fully participate in the life and mission of the Church: even if their participation may seem limited, yet it is essential, as in the feeding of the multitude (*Jn* 6), a boy with five loaves and two fish was needed by Jesus to perform his miracle.

The young people are also well aware that this ideal functioning of the community requires a process in which everyone learns and is formed, that there is a risk of easily leaving people aside, especially newcomers, and that some leaders may be tempted to decide alone. They note the importance of the accompaniment and support of Church workers (especially a priest, but also a nun or a lay worker, who play the role of an elder brother or sister 哥哥姐姐). Their search to correspond to the will of God leads to an openness to the Holy Spirit, with whom nothing is impossible, as Francis expresses while reflecting of his willingness to serve other young people:

> *When I had this desire, I didn't see the direction to take, but I felt that God would certainly enable me to accomplish it. In fact, at that time, at each step, I thought like this. I told myself: when my aspiration corresponds to that of God, God will*

5 This ideal is particularly expressed in *Acts* 2:42-47; 4:32-35.

certainly enable me to accomplish it. If God wants this ... I want it and God wants it, why wouldn't it be fulfilled?

3. A New Intimacy with the Lord, Brother and Friend

A Loving God

The essential element of the process of "defrosting" the faith of young people is the transformation of their relationship with God. They gradually (or sometimes suddenly) discover that the distant and frightening God of their childhood is in fact a close God, a friend, a brother who loves us infinitely, with whom we can speak in the second person and confide in. Catherine describes her relationship with God in terms of a union with God: "I truly believe that God is in me and that I am in God," while fixing her gaze on Jesus, "the most perfect person," with whom she shares an "intimate relationship." The same Louise, who as a child was ashamed of her faith which she felt as a constraint, discovers great intimacy with Jesus, "like in a pot of honey," which she joyfully testifies to those around her; Jesus is no more the God of her parents but hers. Francis-Xavier, an only child, likes to see God as an "elder brother ... someone who takes care of me." The young people easily call the Lord "Elder Brother Jesus," "*suge*" (稣哥), as confirmed by Cecilia, a youth pastoral worker:

Very often, I don't say God, Jesus and all that ... we say to him: "Elder Brother Jesus" ... He is like my elder brother, you know that he will never abandon you, that he will be by your side.

A Theology of Christ the Brother: Antique and Chinese!

The fraternity experienced within the community that strongly attracts young people, as well as the intimacy with the Lord as an "elder brother," refer back to the origins of the Church. As Michel Dujarier has shown in his numerous works on the subject,[6] in the early centuries, the common appellation for the Church is the Fraternity *adelphotès* (ἡ ἀδελφότης), a neologism of the New Testament (*1P* 2:17; 5:9) built on the word "brother" *adelphos*. This vision of the Church as Fraternity goes with a theology of Christ the Brother, widespread among the Fathers of the Church, based on the writings of St. Paul which present Christ as the "Firstborn among many brothers" (*Rm* 8:29), "co-heirs with Him" (*Rm* 8:17) and whom He "is not ashamed to call His brothers" (*Heb* 2:11; Jn 20:17). This theological approach shows that on the one hand, Christ became our brother in humanity through his incarnation and on the other hand, through his death and resurrection, he opens us to divine life, adopting us into divine Fraternity, making us, through baptism in the Spirit, his "little brothers" and "little sisters." With him, our Elder Brother, we become

6 Michel Dujarier, *Église-Fraternité. L'ecclésiologie du Christ-Frère aux huit premiers siècles* [Church-Fraternity. The Ecclesiology of Christ the Brother in the First Eight Centuries], Paris: Cerf 2013 (vol. 1) & 2016 (vol. 2). For a short introduction, see his last article: Michel Dujarier, "Redécouvrons la théologie du Christ-frère," in: Marie-Jo Thiel – Marc Feix (eds.), *Le défi de la fraternité – The Challenge of Fraternity*, Zürich: LIT Verlag 2018, pp. 281-292. See also a book written by the young Ratzinger (1960): Joseph Ratzinger, *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood* [translated from German by W.A. Glen-Doepel], San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1993^{2}, 93 pp.

children of God the Father. When the young people in China today call the Lord "Elder Brother Jesus," they are going back to the roots of our relationship with Christ in baptism, following, probably without knowing, the Fathers of the Church.

This fraternity[7] in Christ that the young Chinese people treasure is also very much rooted in Chinese culture.[8] From Confucian's emphasis on friendship among brothers *youti* 友悌 and on brotherhood on the path to virtue *shixiong* 师兄 / *renxiong* 仁兄, to the status of sworn brothers *jiebai xiongdi* 结拜兄弟, especially developed in the martial arts novels *wuxia xiaoshuo* 武侠小说, like *Water Margin* (*Shuihuzhuan* 水浒传) where all men are considered as brothers (*si hai zhi nei jie xiongdi* 四海之内皆兄弟), the Chinese culture reserves a special place for brotherhood within all the relationships, with emphasis on friendship and companionship, and feelings as strong as the connections between hand and foot (*shou-zu zhi qing* 手足之情).

The theology of Christ the Brother reminds us of the fundamental equality among brothers and sisters within the Fraternity, not on a moral level (we must love others) but on a theological level: since God the Son adopts us into divine Fraternity, the only identity that matters is that of brothers and sisters in the Brother. This approach revolutionizes relationships within the Church-Fraternity and theologically grounds synodality, this "walking with" among brothers and sisters.

4. A Revolution in Church Relationships

By focusing on the figure of Christ the Brother, the young people help the whole Church moving away from the clergy/laity dualism to freshly hear the Master's warning: "You have only one master, and you are all brothers" (*Mt* 23:8). However, it seems easier to name Jesus as Christ and Lord than to call him Elder Brother and Friend. The former appellation can justify a certain "hierarchology," with a distant and all-powerful God, a paternalistic clergy, and passive faithful. The latter explodes human patterns and establishes a radical equality among all: since the Master, God himself, chose to manifest himself as a Brother among his brothers and sisters, the disciple of the Master can only be a brother/sister like the Brother, loving as he loved us (*Jn* 13:34). Moreover, referring to Christ as a friend (*Jn* 15:15) also invites the development of a spiritual friendship both with Christ, as did "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and with the brothers and sisters of the ecclesial community.

When asking the young people what they are bringing to the Church, the first answer is "dynamism" (*huoli* 活力), to renew the local Church. The narratives of the youth show that the generous commitment of young people in the life and mission of the community opens up new perspectives for other age groups' Catholics to become more participatory themselves. The active participation of young people in the life of the ecclesial community, sometimes even in full-time mission, renews the entire community. Older lay people

7 Although the word "fraternity" does not exist as such in Chinese, the concept of brotherhood is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. For a Chinese translation of the "Christian fraternity," I would suggest the expression *xiongdi qingyi* 兄弟情谊, which literally means love and friendship among brothers.

8 For more development on this topic, see Bruno Lepeu, "Synodality with Chinese Characteristics," in: *Tripod* 204 (Spring 2024), pp. 57-87.

discover that mission is not only for priests and nuns, but that they also have a place for active participation in the life of the community. Other possibilities open up for them. With young people, they also experience new ways of praying, they seek to deepen their faith, and to give more space to the Bible. The faith experiences of the young people can also renew the Christian life of the families, both their original family and the new ones that they start.

The priests themselves are transformed in the school of the young. Having mostly been accustomed to deciding and ultimately doing everything alone, they discover with the young people the richness and beauty of teamwork, the importance of involving lay people in the life of the community, including in the decision-making process: the role of the lay people is not of helping the priests but to participate in the mission of the Church. This paradigm shift greatly enriches the life of the Church and renews priests in their own vocation, as testified by a young priest serving young people, providing them with formation programs:

> *Before, I always did everything by myself ... and I was very tired. Now I am able to share tasks with others and then myself to rely on God. In this process, it is first of all not about what they received, but that I have received a lot: since I entered the seminary, I have evolved a lot, the Lord has given me many lessons ... And in terms of accompaniment, it is not me who accompanies the young people, it is them who accompany me. Sometimes, when I supervise them, their changes also invite me to change. This kind of change comes from within, and not from an external or other change ... For my vocation path, it is very good ... Every training batch is for me a place of renewal.*

Martha, a young person in charge of a parish Bible youth group, while praising their chaplain, provides many elements on the figure of the priest suitable for the community: a person "with a strong capacity for adaptation," "particularly gifted for relationships with people," "a confidant ... a good friend ... a father ... an elder brother ...," "particularly good with each member of the community," in whom she places tremendous trust. This figure resembles those of Barnabas and Paul in their relationships with the early Christian communities they founded and accompanied. They visit them, rejoice in the work of the Spirit among them, encourage them, exhort them, invite them to perseverance, institute elders, give thanks with them. They set out new actors and work together in the Church (*Acts* 11:25-26) with many companions, men and women. The loneliness of young leaders and the lack of appropriate accompaniment, mentioned in the narratives, point to the need for a ministry of comfort and encouragement, in the vein of the *paraklesis* (παράκλησις) in the *Acts of the Apostles*, the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit (*Acts* 9:31), the Paraclete. In this view, the figure of Barnabas, the "Son of Encouragement" (*Acts* 4:36), a good man, filled with the Holy Spirit and faith, reminds us of the mission of comfort and consolation that also characterizes the apostles.[9]

Since Jesus warned his disciples not to be called master or father (*Mt* 23:8-9), it is necessary to draw practical consequences and not to be like the scribes who say but do not

9 See the occurences of παρακαλέω in the *Acts of the Apostles* 2:40; 11:23; 14:22; 15:32; 16:40; 20:1; 20:12; 27:33.34.

do (*Mt* 23:3). Concerning priests, brothers among their brothers and sisters, as Vatican II says (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* 9,1), they are called to exercise pastoral service configured to Christ the Brother and to love their brothers and sisters as Christ loves them. Confusion often occurs when the priest says "brothers and sisters" to the faithful and they respond to him, "Father." However, for the priest, acting in persona Christi, refers to the figure of the elder brother and not to that of the father. A true reform of the Church requires accepting to be deprogrammed; for this, a change of vocabulary is necessary to no longer call priests "father." The same young people who call Christ "Elder Brother Jesus" also call their priest "elder brother So-and-so." In Chinese, the appellation *shenfu* 神父 coined by Catholics to designate priests, literally "sacred-father," could advantageously be replaced by a new expression *muxiong* 牧兄,[10] literally "brother-shepherd," which both values the common identity of brothers in the Brother and the specific function of shepherd in the name of the Good Shepherd, for the service of the community. Such an evolution also encourages moving from the concept of accompaniment (guide) to that of companionship following the example of Jesus walking with his two disciples on the road to Emmaus (*Lk* 24:13-35). Rather than emphasizing the figure of the guide, which can refer to the teacher/student dialectic, the concept of "companions on the road" (*tongluren* 同路人, σύνοδοι) emphasizes "walking with," on the same level, being ready to be mutually moved by this companionship, which is the spirit of synodality.[11]

Conclusion: Towards a More Fraternal and Synodal Church

The process of appropriating faith by young people, the love they return to the community of brothers and sisters, their assumption of responsibilities in the community and in the world, are helping the Church to build and renew itself, while questioning its highly hierarchical and pyramidal functioning, the weakness of its accompaniment of believing subjects, and its lack of openness to the world.

Since the Master and Lord became Servant, Brother, and Friend, the companions on the road within the community become beloved brothers and sisters "in the flesh and in the Lord" (*Phlm* 16), in humanity and in divine life. No other title suits better the disciples of Christ the Brother. Within the community, depending on the charisms of the Holy Spirit, some ensure a pastoral ministry of unity, supported and advised by a few, to allow everyone to exercise the common priesthood of the baptized and to build up the Church-Fraternity. By excluding any form of clerical paternalism, according to a dynamic circularity between the different polarities of the People of God, all brothers and sisters are called to walk together, to listen to each other, to listen together to the Spirit, and to persevere in

10 The first step could be to use more often the word "sacerdotes" (*siduo* 司铎), instead of *shenfu* 神父; another solution could be to use the Vietnamese vocabulary for priest: *lingmu* 灵牧, literally "pastor of the souls."

11 It is interesting to note that Ireaneus talks of the Church in a dynamic way as a "Caravan of brothers" or "Convoy of the brethren" *tōn adelphōn sunodia* τῶν ἀδελφῶν συνοδίᾳ (*AH* III,4,3); see Michel Dujarier, "L'Église 'caravane' de frères et de sœurs," in: Guillaume Bady – Marie Chaieb (eds.), *Irénée de Lyon – Théologien de l'unité*, Théologie historique 132, Paris: Beauchesne/Cerf 2022, pp. 86-95.

the harmonious exercise of the four tasks of the Church: testimony, worship, and service, all rooted in fraternal communion.[12]

Such is the fraternal and synodal figure of the Church that young people in China are helping to gradually emerge and which refers to the theology of Christ the Brother of the early centuries of the Church.

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12 See the tasks of the first community: *martyria*, *leitourgia*, and *diakonia*, rooted in *koinônia* (*Acts* 2-6, especially 2:42).

中国宗教评论

The Fourth Revolution in Mission to Chinese Overseas Students: A Theology of "Outgoing" in the Light of a Survey of Chinese Catholic Youths in Europe

Antoine Ren SJ

Abstract: China is the world's largest source of international students, with 1.021 million students studying abroad in 2021. According to my preliminary estimation, among these students, there are only about 206 Chinese Catholic youths in Europe. This paper is a theological reflection based on my interviews with 13 of them, aged 22-35. The main question of this reflection is how the European society and Church, and the "outgoing experience" of these Chinese students have influenced their faith or affected the construction of their Christian identity. My methodology is partly inspired by Étienne Grieu's concept of "resonance" which highlights the resonance between the life story of the poor, the Bible, and the inner movement of the listener-theologian.

Based on the analysis of my interviews with these Chinese students, and by distinguishing between theological or theoretical (Bible and theology) resonance and pastoral or practical (pastoral action) resonance, and associating the latter with historical resonance, this paper concludes that the "outgoing" experience, as the very life dynamism of the Holy Trinity and of Jesus, is the only way for Christians and the Church to construct their Christian identity. And the Christian identity construction of the Chinese overseas students, as an outgoing experience, can help reconstructing the identity of the Church in China. Therefore, the pastoral resonance is to help these Chinese overseas students to deepen their faith. For me, following the footsteps of Matteo Ripa (1682–1746), Vincent Lebbe (1877–1940), and the missionary congregations (since 1990s), this pastoral action can be considered as the fourth revolution in mission to Chinese Catholic overseas lay students, which will bring about a turning point in the destiny of the Church in China.

Introduction: A Methodology in Practical Theology

According to the "Blue Book of the Report on the Development of Chinese Overseas Students (2023–2024)," "since the reform and opening up of China, the total number of students studying abroad has surpassed 8 million, with over 6 million returning to China

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after their studies abroad."[1] At the present time, "China remains the world's largest source of international students, with 1.021 million students studying abroad in 2021, more than double that of India, the second largest country in this regard."[2] In Europe,

> *China has been the predominant source of international students in Germany in recent years* […]. *In the 2021/22 academic year, 40,055 Chinese students studied in Germany. The number of Chinese international students pursuing studies in France has remained relatively consistent over the past decade, with an average of approximately 29,000 students enrolled each year* […]. *In the 2021/22 academic year, Chinese students constituted 7.00% of the total number of students enrolled in French universities, ranking as the third largest group of international students* (*the first two countries are Morocco with 11.81% and Algeria with 7.90%*) […]. *There are 5,674 Chinese students in Italy, 3,222 in Spain and 2,820 in Switzerland.*[3]

These students include Chinese Catholic youths studying philosophy, theology, and other ecclesiastical disciplines. There are not many Chinese Catholic youths above the undergraduate level actively engaged in Chinese Catholic communities in European countries. According to our preliminary estimation, there are about 206 of them, as shown in the following chart.[4]

Italy	Germany	Spain	France	Portugal	Netherlands	Austria	Poland	Belgium	Hungary
62	42	30	25	20	7	7	6	6	1

My report is based on interviews with 13 of them (5 males and 8 females). Each interview lasted approximately 1 to 1.5 hours. The participants hailed from 9 provinces and municipalities in China and studied in 8 countries in Europe. Their ages ranged from 22-35 years old, with 3 undergraduates, 5 graduate students, and 5 doctoral students; including 7 "born Catholics" (baptized as infants), 5 neophytes (baptized within 10 years, one of whom was baptized abroad), and 1 former Protestant who converted to Catholicism. The majority of Chinese students in Europe are graduate and doctoral students, and thus, this study places emphasis on these latter two categories. Among the 13 individuals, 4 of them specialized in theology, Church history, and other ecclesiastical disciplines.

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1 Centre for China & Globalization (CCG), "Blue Book of the Report on the Development of Chinese Overseas Students (2023–2024)," http://www.ccg.org.cn/archives/84288 (accessed July 1, 2024).

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 The data were provided by the priests responsible for Chinese Catholic communities in each European country. They are limited to the Chinese Catholic students these priests know and have heard of. It is worth noting that the number of young Chinese Catholic students from the United Kingdom and Ireland has not been included in this data, because the English speaking countries, like the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, form one cultural system which is different from continental European countries that are regarded as belonging to another cultural system. Additionally, although the United Kingdom and Ireland are both located in Europe, they are not part of the Schengen Agreement, and the United Kingdom is no longer part of the European Union. As a consequence of the complexity of visa applications, the Chinese Catholic communities and Chinese Catholic youths in the aforementioned two countries rarely engage with those in continental countries. I interviewed one student from Ireland as she is the sole young Catholic person in Ireland who has interactions with Chinese Catholic youths in the continental countries. She has never had any contact with a Chinese Catholic community in Ireland. Moreover, her understanding of and stance towards the Irish Church were analogous to those of the Catholic youths in the continental countries, probably because both the Irish and the continental churches are facing similar crises of de-Christianization and secularization.

Despite the diversity of their backgrounds, it is impossible to provide a comprehensive account of the situation of all Chinese Catholic youths in Europe. Although they share certain common characteristics, it would be inaccurate to suggest that they are "representative" of all Chinese Catholic youths in Europe, as each youth's situation is unique. However, insights can be gained into the state of faith of some Chinese Catholic youths studying in Europe by examining the experiences of these 13 young people.

My interviews mainly focused on how the European society and Church, and their "outgoing experience"[5] influenced their faith. I define "faith" as the awareness of Christian identity and the way of expressing and living it in mission. This is because the "living faith" consists in the unity of what Christians are (identity) and what they do (mission). Therefore, my interview questions include the following five dimensions: 1. What is the way you express your Christian identity and live out your faith? 2. Have the European societies and churches helped you to deepen your faith? 3. Have the European societies and churches presented challenges or disturbances to your faith? 4. Has your awareness of the Chinese Christian identity and mission changed or been enhanced since your arrival in Europe for studies? 5. What would you like the Chinese Catholic communities in Europe or other Catholic organizations which can serve the Chinese in Europe to do in order to help you deepen your faith?

The last question concerns the methodology of this paper. It is not just a survey, but a reflection on practical theology based on this survey. The methodology of this paper is partly inspired by Étienne Grieu's concept of "resonance." Grieu is a French Jesuit and former rector of Facultés Loyola Paris. He initiated a practical theology for listening to the poor. His methodological innovation consists in highlighting the "resonance" or "vibration" between the life story of the poor, the Bible, and the inner movement of the listener-theologian. This resonance has the potential to prompt the theologian listening to the narratives of the poor to rethink and reinterpret the traditional doctrinal issues. Convinced that there is a deep faith and theological significance in the narratives of the poor and the simple people, Grieu emphasizes that we should listen without preconceptions and allow the narratives to unfold naturally under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in order to ensure as much as possible that what is being heard is the narrator's own "theology."[6]

However, I think that Grieu's methodology has its limitations in two ways: Firstly, it is limited to listening to the life story; secondly, its goal is only to reformulate traditional doctrines[7] rather than to be directed toward pastoral practice. But in my opinion, on the one hand, there are various ways of listening, and different ways of listening are needed to achieve different purposes of the practical theology; on the other hand, pastoral practice is important and necessary. For this reason, I started the interviews with some specific questions to find out the resonance between the interviewee's answers and the Bible and

5 By "outgoing experience" I mean that of leaving one's familiar cultural, social, and linguistic environment and coming to a new situation. This kind of experience is not only confined to immigrants and students, but also occurs in different regions and social structures within the same country.

6 Cf. Étienne Grieu, *Nés de Dieu. Itinéraires de chrétiens engagés. Essai de lecture théologique*, Cogitatio Fidei 231, Paris : Cerf 2007.

7 Cf. Étienne Grieu, "Méthodes biographiques et théologie pratique," in: *Didaskalia* 39 (2009) 2, pp. 136-137; "Quelle place pour la Bible dans l'élaboration du discours en théologie pratique?," in: Luca Bressan – Gilles Routhier (eds.), *Le travail de la Parole*, Théologie pastorale 8, Bruxelles: Lumen Vitae 2011, p. 110.

the interviewer, who is both a theological scholar and a pastor. I distinguish two kinds of resonance related to the interviewee's answers: one is theological or theoretical (Bible and theology), and the other is pastoral or practical (pastoral action). If I add the latter resonance it is because if one really resonates with the narratives of those being listened to, one cannot stand by. After all, neither the poor nor anyone in need is first and foremost an object to be analyzed and abstracted from theological thinking, but rather a person to be cared for. Christian faith comes from the experience of the apostles' encounter with Jesus and is orientated to the same experience of people today.[8] Although doctrinal or theological interpretation is a necessary path to enable people to encounter Christ today, it is not an end in itself. That is why I asked the interviewees the fifth question.

Having been away from home and studying abroad for almost 18 years myself, a question that resonates with the interviewees and the Bible is: How does the experience of being away from home affect the construction of a Christian's identity? What would be the correlation between this construction of identity and the development of an ecclesial community to which the Christian belongs? Both the people of Israel in the Old Testament and the early Christians in the New Testament had the experience of being away from home: the exodus of Israel from Egypt and their exile to Babylon as well as the journey of the early Christians from Jerusalem to Antioch were the most important experiences that shaped both of them in terms of their sense of identity and mission. I will focus on a specific similarity between the interviewees and a biblical story, that is the reconstruction of their identity as believers by rethinking the relationship between the universal and the local based on their outgoing experience. The theological resonance this fact evoked in me is related to the outgoing ecclesiology of Pope Francis.

Regarding the mission to Chinese international students, for me, a corresponding pastoral resonance is also a historical resonance, because in the history of the Church in China, Matteo Ripa (1682–1746), Vincent Lebbe (1877–1940), and the various missionary congregations have accompanied, cared for, and formed the Chinese students in Europe. Their examples compel me to reflect on how we can follow their footsteps today to respond to the needs of Chinese students in Europe with practical and appropriate pastoral actions. I think this is the fourth revolution in mission to Chinese overseas students, which is of important historical significance for the Church in China. To this end, this paper will first analyze the interviews about the five questions mentioned above; then follow the footsteps of Matteo Ripa, Vincent Lebbe, and the missionary congregations to express my pastoral and missionary resonance; and finally find the corresponding theological resonance in the Bible and Pope Francis' outgoing ecclesiology. This theological resonance is an overall reflection on the faith of Chinese Catholic youths studying abroad and the corresponding pastoral response, as well as on the relevance of both to the current situation of the Church in China.

8 Speaking of the task of the theologian, Claude Geffré says: "From the long tradition of Christianity, the theologian will seek to rediscover the fundamental experience of salvation offered by God in Jesus Christ, and his task will be to resituate this fundamental experience to which the texts of primitive Christianity bear witness, dissociating them from the representations and interpretations that belong to a world of experience that is now past" (Claude Geffré, *Croire et interpréter. Le tournant herméneutique de la théologie*, Paris: Cerf 2001, p. 17). What Geffré calls the "fundamental Christian experience" is the experience of the apostles' encounter with Jesus; to rediscover and resituate this fundamental experience is to allow people today to encounter the living Christ as the apostles did.

I. The Influence of European Society and Church on the Faith of Chinese Catholic Overseas Students

In order to ascertain whether and how European societies and churches have influenced the faith of Chinese Catholic students, it is necessary first to see the ways in which these Chinese Catholic students originally lived out their faith and expressed their Christian identity, then invite them to answer the above-mentioned question both positively and negatively. Finally they will be invited to reflect on whether such influences have altered or deepened their sense of Christian identity and mission.

1.1 The Ways by Which Chinese Catholic Overseas Students Live Out the Faith

Eight of the interviewees explicitly stated that their faith is not merely about attending mass or participating in religious activities such as public prayers. Rather, it is about integrating Christian principles into every aspect of their daily lives, and results in "subtle change of their life" (Paul), such as the way they get along with their friends. Sophia, a born Catholic said: "I express my faith through my daily life, and I talk to God about both positive and negative occurrences in my life." Emma, also a born Catholic, does not go to church regularly, but she often reflects on whether her life has strayed far from God. John and Paul, two neophytes, said that their preferred method of expressing their faith is to serve and engage in dialogue with non-believers about their faith: "In serving and evangelizing others, I have a greater sense of Church, and I can improve myself both intellectually and spiritually." (John)

It is noteworthy that four of the eight students were born in the 1990s, and were baptized as infants. One of them, Lucia, even deliberately avoids attending weekday masses, concerned that this might lead to a habit that would detract from the precious character of the Sunday liturgy – though her motivation is worthy of further discernment. Nevertheless, most Catholics, both those who were baptized at birth and neophytes, attend Sunday mass. Some neophytes have a profound appreciation for the liturgy. John, for instance, asserts that the mass, expressing sacrifice and resurrection, encapsulates the essence of the Christian faith, and it also immerses him into the history of Jesus as a participant rather than an observer.

We can distinguish two cases in terms of the way by which they deepen their faith.

Firstly, born Catholics who have devoted themselves to serve the Church by studying ecclesiastical disciplines are similar to neophytes in that, on the one hand, they understand the faith rationally by reading books and the Bible, and some of them even study theology for this purpose; on the other hand, they approach God through personal prayer, such as Katrina's statement that she "desires to communicate with God interiorly." In general, born Catholics are more familiar with the Church's diverse prayer traditions, such as worship with songs, the breviary, contemplation, and adoration. But it is worth noting that they have almost completely eschewed the prayer tradition of the Church in China, namely the recitation of prayers, like the Litany of Saints. Mary, for instance, says: "I have been going to church with my family since I was a child, but I prefer to pray and communicate with God alone."

Most of the neophytes are not familiar with the prayer traditions of the Church and had not learned and practiced any particular method of prayer. But this has allowed them to be more creative in their prayers. For example, Agnes says she does not have a set way or time to pray, but she engages in prayer according to her circumstances, discerning how God responds to her in different situations. For example, following a quarrel with a friend, she seeks guidance from God on the best course of action for reconciliation. She also enjoys short stays at various monasteries for doing retreat. John's method of prayer involves reading the Bible or theological texts; he tries to understand them in relation to his own experience, then attempting to apply their teachings to his own life. Subsequently, should he perceive an invitation to take action, he will endeavor to implement it. This, he says, "has constituted 60 percent of my life." Peter's experience is similar to that of John, yet it is articulated with greater depth. He elucidates his conversion in the following manner:

> *Before my baptism, I was just a sympathizer of Catholicism, agreeing with it on a philosophical and rational level. If I may use an analogy to illustrate, it is as if I had been on a mountain road, and even though I often passed by "God," I had always thought that it was just a gravestone, or at best the remains of a tall and imposing building from which I had only gleaned some intellectual insights from time to time. But after I asked myself if I wanted to become a Christian, the question suddenly became less of a question and more of an answer, because I suddenly realized that what God was showing me through everything that was happening in my life was not just letters in books written in ink, but a personal God who had feelings, who spoke to me, and who cared for me. Since then, I have often entered into prayer with fervor and have become very close to God, even though sometimes I find it difficult to overcome the deep darkness in each one's heart when interacting with people.*

Peter does not describe a specific method of prayer, but when he says that God is a personal God who is "closely involved" in his life, who cares for him and loves him, it suggests that what he means by "prayer" is not constrained by a particular time or method of prayer, but rather a relationship with God throughout his life.

The second case concerns the born Catholics who are basically content with participation in the Sunday mass; their prayer is more mechanical. Sophia, for example, just recites a few prayers in the morning and evening; while some others do not pray personally, and their religious life is only limited to attending Sunday mass.

In summary, the younger generation of Chinese Catholic laypeople, born after the 1990s, both those baptized as infants and neophytes, is more aware of the interconnection between faith and life, and does not restrict their faith to solely religious activities. They show a growing emphasis on the personal dimension of faith, i.e., the personal relationship with God. In addition, they have basically broken away from the Church's tradition of reciting prayers in China, and have become more proactive and creative in their prayers. In conclusion, the faith of these young Chinese Catholics is more closely tied to daily life, is more personal, and is expressed in more creative ways. Only a few born Catholics, who are less active in deepening their understanding of and the way they live out their faith,

are still maintaining the traditional practices or relying on the tradition to maintain their faith.

1.2 The Positive Influence of European Society and Church on the Faith of Chinese Catholic Overseas Students

In this regard, the most common responses indicated that the free environment of European societies, its religious and cultural traditions, as well as the plurality within the Church helped to deepen their faith. The impact of freedom in European societies on their Christian identity can be considered from both subjective and objective perspectives. I will present just a few illustrative examples. Joseph, a born Catholic, speaking of subjective freedom, said that he became a "free-standing" or autonomous believer in Europe because he had been freed from the constraints of his family's faith tradition. Paulina, another born Catholic, said:

> *The greater number of churches and Church activities in Europe has afforded me more opportunities to participate in such activities, which has increased my enthusiasm for faith. I feel that I have matured in my faith, listening to the sermons carefully, experiencing my relationship with Jesus, and I am more active and positive in my faith.*

Whether one participates in Church activities freely or actively, it is a sign of maturity to personalize one's faith. With regard to objective freedom, the students have two experiences. Firstly, they have freedom to participate in Church activities as mentioned by Paulina. Additionally, Emma observed that churches in Europe are conspicuous, mostly in the city centers, and easily accessible. John expressed his gratitude for being able to have confession at any time. Secondly, the religious freedom is respected. Joseph stated:

> *In Europe, the religious identity is not a source of concern, you do not perceive a threat to your identity when interacting with non-Christians, and thus, there is no need to worry about it. But this is not the case in China.*

Agnes also said that in Europe, as a Christian, she feels that she is not an alien and does not need to justify the legitimacy of her faith. For Sophia, "Westerners are more open to religious diversity and rarely discriminate against believers of different religions."

The positive impact of the Church in Europe on the faith of the Chinese Catholic overseas students was mainly due to the plurality of its forms. Joseph's statement is more representative:

> *In Europe, there are many opportunities to come into contact with a variety of expressions of faith that are different from those of the Church in China, and especially with different ecclesial communities.*

It is noteworthy that Joseph's final point was also referenced by the other five young people. James was struck by the diverse ways in which the various religious orders and new communities live out their faith and fulfill their apostolic missions. In particular, the priests of these religious congregations make themselves available to communicate and interact with the youth individually. For example, a priest from the Emmanuel community helped

James a lot in his spiritual life. He feels that these religious congregations and new communities have created a spiritual culture, and through their mission of evangelization and service, he gains a deeper understanding of the Church.

However, three young people also said that they had no or very little contact with European churches; they are involved more in Chinese Catholic communities in Europe. Thus, Sophia, a born Catholic, said that she is unaware of the influence of the European Church on her way of believing; while Teresa, a neophyte, feels that "the Chinese Catholic communities in Europe are more approachable and can understand better her concerns than the European Churches."

1.3 The Negative Influence of European Society and Church on the Faith of Chinese Catholic Overseas Students

The young people expressed three main concerns that cause difficulties and distress with regard to their faith: The first one pertains to language and culture; the second relates to the problems in European churches; and the third concerns the challenges brought by the Chinese Catholic communities and Chinese pastors in Europe. The difficulties encountered by some young people in integrating themselves into local churches are due to language and cultural barriers. Paulina, for instance, stated that she is "less interested in the activities of the local parish because she could not understand the local language and could not attend mass in depth." James and Teresa, on the other hand, felt isolated, unable to find people and organizations that care about them and understand them.

In the eyes of these young Chinese Catholics, there are two main problems in European Churches. Firstly, they perceive a tendency towards excessive institutionalization. Secondly, they identify a strong alignment between the Church and political ideologies. They feel that the organizational structure of the Church in Europe is too mechanical and rigid, exhibiting a notable absence of human warmth. Angeles provided the example of numerous churches that are frequently closed and where the priests appear to be merely going to work, as though their work is akin to any other profession. Lucia observed that some remunerated personnel within the ecclesial institutions lack an attitude of service and evangelization.

Three young people expressed their regret that the Church in Europe is generally dominated by strong political ideologies: religious conservatives are often on the far right of the political spectrum, while religious progressives or reformers frequently appear to be on the far left. They pointed out that significant ideological conflicts are present within the various ecclesial media outlets, websites, publications, etc. One of them used to study theology in a certain European country, but because he could not tolerate the pervasive atmosphere of ideological disputes with his faculty of theology, and felt that the Catholicism in Europe is unduly politicized and secularized, he finally chose to continue his studies in another country.

The interviewed students identified two main challenges that the Chinese Catholic communities in Europe bring to them. Firstly, most of them said that the majority of the Chinese Catholic communities in Europe are far from providing adequate services for both Catholic and non-Christian Chinese students. They feel that the Chinese priests in general do not speak the same language as the students, especially the more highly edu-

cated ones. Most of the Chinese Catholic communities have devoted their efforts to taking care of the small Chinese traders, mainly from Wenzhou and Fujian, who are generally poorly educated. These small traders are basically traditional Catholics, and have maintained the Chinese Catholic tradition. The younger generation of overseas students cannot appreciate and integrate into their culture. Another challenge is that in one place where there are many Chinese priests, nuns, and lay students, several lay women have experienced verbal and emotional sexual harassment by some Chinese priests.

It is somewhat surprising that all the interviewees, regardless of whether they had direct experience with the Church scandals or merely heard about them, had not been driven away from the Church or cooled down in their faith. This is probably related to their attitude of personalizing their faith, as mentioned earlier, as well as to Confucius' teaching: "When you meet a good man, try to become his equal; when you see something bad in others, try to do self-reflection."[9] Paulina, for instance, said: "The scandals perpetrated by clergy do not affect my personal faith, as my faith is my personal relationship with God." Mary also stated that she does not like to make moral judgments about others and prefers to focus on her own issues. Lucia and Katrina had the experience of "demystifying" the clergy. They felt that by recognizing their weaknesses, they could treat the clergy as ordinary human beings. This allowed them to learn to forgive and to discern God's will in history, particularly in challenging circumstances. Initially, John was skeptical about the truthfulness of the Church due to a scandal that had occurred in the diocese where he studied, but a spiritual experience released him: Once he passed a church where Eucharistic adoration and confessions were taking place, he expressed his anguish over the scandal to the priest who was hearing confessions. In response, the priest, pointing to the ostensorium, said to him: "The Church is of Christ." This prompted a profound shift in John's view of the Church' scandals, as he felt his eyes open and his heart at peace.

1.4 The Chinese Catholic Overseas Students' Awareness of Their Chinese Christian Identity and Mission

Based on the answers to the previous two questions, the majority of the students stated that while Europe has greater religious freedom, it is more pluralistic and secularized, and that Christians constitute a minority tolerated more or less by the European society. Consequently, as Christians in China and Europe, these Chinese students recognized their distinct position within the majority. In Europe, their sense of Christian identity is stronger because of their reinforced "double" minority identity – member of the universal Church and Chinese Catholic – as Sophia put it in a more representative way:

> *I was very proud to be a Chinese Catholic in Europe. Since my arrival in Europe, I have become acutely aware of my identity as a Chinese Christian, and I feel that I am a "representative" of the Church in China. Therefore, I especially realized that I have a strong desire to speak out for the Church in China in Europe; and it was a very special feeling to hold the Chinese flag at the World Youth Day.*

9 Wu Guozhen, *A New Annotated English Version of the Analects of Confucius*, Fuzhou: Fujian Education Publishing House 2015, chapter 4: "Neighborhood," p. 119.

In addition to the fact that the recognition of their minority status within the society serves to reinforce their sense of identity as Christians, the positive and negative influence of European society and the Church on their faith is another factor that strengthens their sense of Christian identity. This sense of identity is mainly manifested in a more profound personalization of the faith. For the born Catholics, having distanced themselves from their family's faith tradition and the Chinese model of the Church, they have made their faith a free choice. The neophytes, whether baptized in China or abroad, are able to express their faith more freely in an environment where the religious identity is more respected. This freedom to choose and express one's own faith implies an inner and authentic personal recognition of the faith. Such recognition enables students to discern what is true and what is wrong in the Church. Consequently, they are able to untie the substance of faith from political ideologies and the human frailty of the ecclesiastics. Once the substance and the ideal of the faith are grasped, students can readily create their own ways of practicing the faith. This ability to complement one's personal faith by learning from others and to renew one's faith is the consequence of the interplay between the local and the universal, between traditions and new things. It is also a witness to the catholicity of the Church.

It follows that the outgoing experience as an encounter with a different way of seeing and living faith in a new environment can prompt a reevaluation of one's existing ways of believing. Following this reevaluation, one may choose to make adjustments to his or her faith in order to reorient oneself or reestablish his or her Christian identity and create appropriate personal ways of believing.

The reconstruction of Christian identity is accompanied by a reappraisal of mission, for the reconstruction of identity is not only a rediscovery of oneself, but also a renewal of the way of living one's faith, of which mission is a part. It is important to note that these students' increased sense of Christian mission is also related to the integration of their faith and life. James, for instance, said: "Life is about bearing witness to Christ, that is, showing others what Christ means to me, especially in the Chinese context." Emma aspires to make God better known through her life. And John's sense of mission motivates him to talk about God with those around him. The students enrolled in ecclesiastical disciplines are learning to live their faith more fully or to lead more meaningful lives through their studies. Additionally, they have articulated a desire to utilize their learning to serve the Church, especially the Church in China. To this end, some of them took advantage of their vacation time to offer services to the Church of their hometown. Others expressed their willingness to use their respective specialities, such as philosophy and literature, to spread the Christian faith. Paul, for example, has a plan to compose a novel on the subject of faith. For this purpose, he traveled to Japan to gather material. His intention is to mitigate the current Chinese people's animosity through the introduction of the faith of Japanese Catholics, particularly their experience of forgiveness. It is interesting to note that when it comes to the Christian mission, their primary focus is the contribution that they can make as Chinese to the Church in China and to Chinese society. Their willingness to contribute to the Church in China and the manner in which they do so are shaped by their interactions with European societies and churches, as well as the specialization they gained from their studies. This illustrates the consistency of their sense of Chinese Christian identity

and mission, which reflects the catholicity and the oneness between the universal and the local in the ecclesiological sense.

II. A Pastoral Response: The Fourth Revolution in Mission to Chinese Overseas Students

2.1 The Needs of Chinese Catholic Students in Europe

The negative impact of European society and Church on Chinese overseas students shows that the reconstruction of the Christian identity is accompanied by doubts, struggles, and challenges. Therefore, in this process they need accompaniment and help. The fifth question of my interview with them manifests this need:

> *What would you like the Chinese Catholic communities in Europe or other Catholic organizations which can serve the Chinese in Europe to do in order to help you to deepen your faith?*

There were twelve students who mentioned that they need a Catholic youth group so as to find partners in the faith who are of the same age, and in order to deepen their faith through sharing and friendship. They suggested three concrete activities: first, to learn and know the faith better (4 people), and to learn spirituality and prayer (another 4 people); second, to have a retreat – all the young people said a retreat would be necessary; third, a summer camp for creating friendship (suggested by 2 people).

Besides this, there were two who felt a need for spiritual accompaniment or a spiritual director. Three wished that Chinese pastors could accompany them, but they hope that they could communicate with these pastors in a congenial way, in equality (and not in the spirit of clericalism), and in a non-institutionalised relationship.

Finally there were another three who hoped that the Chinese Catholic communities could interact more with the local churches, so as to help the youth to integrate themselves into the European society and Church.

To sum up, these needs of the students address the twofold results of "interculturation,"[10] namely the inculturation of the gospel and the evangelization of the culture, as well as the twofold integration of local and foreign cultures. The wish to establish Catholic youth groups shows that these overseas students have a sense of belonging to the Church of their home, and it also manifests their efforts to evangelize the culture – to deepen their faith by learning more about the faith and spirituality and through spiritual accompaniment. Their effort to integrate into European society and the European Church is at the same time a process of integrating their already culturally shaped (Sinicized) faith in a new culture, and of re-expressing their faith though this new culture – inculturation of the gospel.

10 See my forthcoming book, *Interculturation: A Theology of Mission in A Synodal Perspective* (*Wenhua huhua – gongyi tongxing shiye xia de shiming shenxue* 文化互化—共議同行視野下的使命神學), Center for Philosophical and Theological Studies, Department of Philosophy, Fu Jen Catholic University, "Disputationes de antiquis et modernis" book series, no. 5, Taipei: Chinese Christian Literature 2025.

2.2 The First Three Revolutions in Mission to Chinese Overseas Students

What should we do, and what can we do in response to the faith situation and needs of these Catholic Chinese overseas students? Or what kind of pastoral "resonance" could we develop? Before talking about the pastoral "resonance," I feel the need to discuss a kind of historical "resonance," because in the history of the Catholic Church in China there were already three periods when overseas students in Europe received help. I think that these helps can be called "revolutions in mission to Chinese overseas students." By "revolutions" I mean that the three periods were marked by dramatic changes within the Church in China, and these missionary actions transformed the fate of the Church in China in a profound way, as they had a huge impact on its development.

The first revolution was the Collegium Sinicum founded in Naples in 1732 by Matteo Ripa, where he strove to educate Chinese missionaries for China. The second revolution was launched by Vincent Lebbe who in the years from 1920–1927 cared for the Chinese overseas students in Belgium and France. The third revolution have been the efforts of various missionary congregations to help and support overseas studies of Chinese sisters, seminarians, and priests in the years since the 1990s. I think that the calling in our new age is to help lay Catholics studying in Europe. This fourth missionary revolution is the task of the overseas churches and of those communities who can help in overseas regions. This article is not a historical study, thus I will not give a detailed account of the first three missionary revolutions; they are only a way to highlight the special features and the historical meaning of the fourth missionary revolution regarding the Chinese overseas students.

Matteo Ripa belonged to the missionary congregation of Mary the Pure (Congregazione di Maria della Purità dei Preti secolari Missionari).[11] He reached China in 1710 and left in 1723. He served as painter at the court in Beijing. While he was in China, he realized that "the vast regions of China need more workers, and Europe cannot provide enough people."[12] Therefore he felt the need to educate local Chinese missionaries who could evangelize the population of the lower classes. In the year 1723 he took four Chinese seminarians (Gu Wenyao, aged 23, Yin Ruowang, aged 19, Huang Batong, aged 12, and Wu Lujue, aged 13) and their Chinese teacher Wang Yajing back to Italy, where he began to found the Collegium Sinicum. In the proposal letter he wrote to Pope Benedict XIII, he gave these reasons for establishing the seminary: native missionaries would better understand Chinese culture, thus they could better enter the society, easily communicate with the people, and in times of persecution they would not be as easily discovered as the

11 Some scholars (Li Tiangang 李天綱, "'Liyi zhi zheng': Kang Qian shidai de shijieshi yiyi" "禮儀之爭": 康乾時代的世界史意義, in: Li Tiangang 李天綱, *Ta wenhua quanshi: jingchang yu shenxue de xiangyu* 跨文化詮釋: 經常與神學的相遇, Beijing: Xinxing chubanshe 新星出版社 2007, p. 213; Liu Yaxuan 劉亞軒, "Qing chu lai Hua chuanjiaoshe Ma Guoxian yanjiu" 清初來華傳教士馬國賢研究, doctoral dissertation, Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue Zhongguo gudaishi yanjiusuo 浙江大學中國古代史研究所 2009, p. 7) say that he belonged to the Order of Pious Workers (Ordine dei Pii Lavoratori), but according to the research done by Shi Yani, Ripa never joined the order founded by his spiritual advisor, see Shi Yani 施亞霓, "Ma Guoxian fu Hua: liyi zhi zheng yu tianzhujiao zai Hua weiji" 馬國賢赴華: 禮儀之爭與天主教在華危機, in: *Shizhe: Dongwu daxue Lishi xi yanjiusheng xuebao* 史轍: 東吳大學歷史系研究生學報, 2016, no. 12, p. 50.

12 Matteo Ripa, *Storia Della Fondazione Della Congregazione E Del Collegio De Cinesi*, parte prima, Napoli 1832, p. 496.

foreigners. Thus they would enjoy better conditions for the work of evangelization.[13] After some negotiations and frustrations, Fr. Ripa finally established the Collegium Sinicum in Naples on 25 July 1732. It was a seminary dedicated to educate Chinese priests and missionaries. Until 1868, when it was confiscated by the unified Italian government, the college had educated 106 Chinese seminarians.[14] They made an immense contribution to the evangelization work in China and also to the intercultural exchange with the West (translation work, participation in the edition of bilingual dictionaries etc.). Especially during the persecution period of the reign of Yongzheng (1724–1735), when foreign missionaries were hardly able to do mission work in China, the college in Naples preserved and prepared native clergy resources for the Church in China.

Different from Matteo Ripa's education of Chinese clergy in a college was Vincent Lebbe's work in Europe. After the so-called "Laoxikai Incident,"[15] when Lebbe had a conflict with his Vincentian superiors and returned to Europe in 1920, he devoted himself to the care of lay Catholic overseas students in Europe and to the evangelization of non-believer Chinese overseas students. It was the time when the "movement to study and work in France" (Mouvement Travail-Études) was popular. Many young people from China studied in Europe. Thus the general superior of the MEP (Parisian missionaries), Archbishop Jean de Guébriant, asked Fr. Lebbe to serve as pastor of the Chinese overseas students in France and Belgium. Therefore in 1923 Lebbe established the "Catholic Action of Chinese Youth" (Actio Catholica Juventis Sinensis) and together with his assistant Fr. André Boland developed their work from France to Belgium (Louvain). In Louvain this youth group published the periodical *Bulletin de la jeunesse catholique chinoise*.

> *The obvious aim of this association was to make sure that Christianity could slowly but effectively influence the Chinese elite. In order to support this movement and to financially help the Chinese students in Europe, Fr. Vincent Lebbe also founded, with the collaboration of some priests[16] and with the support of Belgian and French traders, the associations called* Amitiés Belgo-Chinoises *and* Amitiés Franco-Chinoises.[17]

These two associations were not exclusively addressing Catholic youth. They were open to all Chinese students, mainly in order to help them with school fees, lodging, and other living needs.[18] Under the influence and inspiration of Fr. Lebbe, his friend Fr. Boland

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13 Matteo Ripa, *Storia Della Fondazione Della Congregazione E Del Collegio De Cinesi*, parte prima, Napoli 1832, pp. 207-209.

14 See Fang Hao 方豪, *Fang Hao wenlu* 方豪文錄, Beiping: Shangzhi bianyiguan 上智編譯館 1948, p. 185. As to the name list of the 106 men, see Gianni Criveller, "The Chinese Priests of the College of Naples and the Promotion of the Indigenous Clergy (18th–19th Century)," in: Philip Vanhaelemeersch – Rachel Lu Yan (eds.), *Silent Force: Native Converts in the Catholic China Mission*, Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute 2009, pp. 181-183.

15 Cf. Jacques Leclercq, *Thunder in the Distance: The Life of Père Lebbe*, translated by George Lamb, London: Sheed & Ward 1958, pp. 146-152.

16 It was mainly Fr. Boland.

17 Olivier Lardinois, "L'actualité du père Vincent Lebbe. Le point de vue d'un missionnaire belge à Taiwan," in: Arnaud Join-Lambert – Paul Servais – Chung Heng Shen – Eric De Payen (eds.), *Vincent Lebbe et son héritage*, Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain 2017, p. 203.

18 Cf. Pan Zhiyuan, "Inculturation at Home: The Belgian Catholic Project for Chinese Students (1920–1930s)," in: *Religions* 15 (2024) 3, p. 5: https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15030327 (accessed on July 17, 2024).

continued the service for Chinese overseas students after Lebbe had returned to China in 1927. In the same year Boland founded the "Foyer Catholique Chinois," with the aim to

> *establish in all Belgium and especially in Louvain centers for Chinese students and seminaries, and to offer basic philosophical and theological training in order to support the missionaries in China.*[19]

In order to realize Lebbe's dream of a native Church based on native missionaries in 1930 Fr. Boland founded the Société des Auxiliaires des Missions, S.A.M. Its special aim was to train and help foreign priests who could serve Chinese bishops in China, and to care for the Chinese students in Europe.[20] All in all, because of the efforts of Fr. Boland and of

> *Fr. Lebbe, around 400 or 500 Chinese students graduated from schools in France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Netherlands. These students later worked in different areas such as culture, industry and commerce, and the Catholic Church respectively where they were entrusted with important tasks and made an immense contribution to China.*[21]

The third missionary revolution regarding Chinese overseas students began in the 1990s. After the "Reform and Modernization Policy" (after 1978), seminaries in China were slowly reopened or established starting from the early 1980s. Bishop Joseph Gan Junqiu has divided the development of Chinese seminaries into three periods: "A period of pastoral praxis, a period of regular theological education, and a period of academic work."[22] The 1980s and 1990s were the period of pastoral praxis.[23] Because it was necessary to deal with a gamut of problems in those years,

> *the emphasis of theological education in the seminaries was on spirituality; the older generation could not properly transmit their knowledge to the younger generation; there was a great need of priests, thus practical education was the most important issue.*[24]

Therefore it was only in the early 1990s that the Church in China began to send young priests, seminarians, and sisters abroad for studies. They were helped by the missionary

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19 André Boland, *Rapport à l'Assemblée Générale du 24 Septembre 1929 et Status de l'Association*, Bruges: Des Presses de l'Abbaye de Saint André, September 24, 1929, in Leuven: Archief Sint Andriesabdij Zevenkerken. KADOC.

20 Cf. Gabriel Banyangira Rusagara, "La Société des Auxiliaires des Missions (S.A.M.), de 1926 à 1940: Des Prêtres Occidentaux au Service des Évêques Autochtones (Chinois)," thèse doctorale, Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain 2020.

21 See Lei Mingyuan shenfu congshu bianjizu 雷鳴遠神父叢書編輯組, *Lei Mingyuan shenfu shenghuo lüeying* 雷鳴遠神父生活掠影, Taizhong: Tianzhujiao Yao Han xiao xiongdi hui 天主教耀漢小兄弟會 1990, p. 31.

22 See Gan Junqiu 甘俊邱, "Dangdai Zhongguo tianzhujiao shenxue jiaoyu yu wenhua jiangou" 當代中國天主教神學教育與文化建構 (conference paper), Furen daxue Tianzhujiao xueshu yanjiuyuan di jiu jie tianzhujiao guoji xueshu yantaohui – Tianzhujiao daxue jingshen yu lixiang ji qi lishi fazhan yu xianshi 輔仁大學天主教學術研究院第九屆天主教國際學術研討會—天主教大學精神與理想及其歷史發展與現實, Taibei, May 4–5, 2018, p. 34: www.fuho.fju.edu.tw/sketch/writing/20180504-2.pdf (accessed on July 21, 2024).

23 Bishop Gan thinks that from the 1990s to the year 2013 was the period of regular theological training, and following the "two methods" in 2013, the period of academic work began. The "two methods" denotes the policies announced by the Bureau of Religious Affairs in November 2012, which were in effect since January 2013, namely the "Method of Ascertaining the Qualifications of Teachers in Religious Colleges and Seminaries," and the "Method of Bestowing Academic Degrees in Religious Colleges and Seminaries." See *ibid*., pp. 34-35.

24 *Ibid*., p. 34.

congregations of different nations, for example the MEP (Parisian Missions) in France, the SVD (Divine Word Missionaries) in Germany, the CICM (Scheut Fathers) in Belgium, the Columbans in Ireland, the Maryknollers in the USA, the Jesuits in Taiwan, and the Propaganda Fide in Italy. There are also many new communities and diocesan seminaries, for example the Neocatechumenate, the Opus Dei, the Mother of Life and several diocesan seminaries in France and Spain which have supported the studies and the life of Chinese overseas students. There are also many Chinese priests, seminarians, and sisters studying in the Philippines and in Korea. It is a pity that until today there is neither comprehensive statistical research concerning the Chinese priests, sisters, and seminarians who studied abroad,[25] nor research concerning the history of this period of study abroad. However, we can say with certainty that the number of Chinese priests, seminarians, and sisters,

25 In his conference paper Bp. Gan Junqiu provides two data: "According to a statistical survey in 2003, there were already more than one hundred priests who had studied in the USA, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Korea, and other countries" (Chen Jianming 陳建明, "Xiuyuan jiaoyu ershi nian jian ji" 修院教育二十年簡輯, in: *Zhongguo tianzhujiao* 中國天主教 2003, no. 5, p. 48); and "from 1991 to 2017 the Maryknollers in the USA have trained 138 Chinese priests, seminarians, and sisters coming from more than 40 dioceses" (Gan Junqiu, "Dangdai Zhongguo tianzhujiao shenxue jiaoyu yu wenhua jiangou," p. 43, note 15). According to my own preliminary survey on Doctors of Philosophy (PhDs) and Doctors of Sacred Theology (STDs) from China Mainland, there are today 71 PhDs/STDs, among them 17 lay Catholics (11 of them are teaching in Chinese universities or colleges). Of course, these are only the PhDs that I personally know; the actual number must be far higher, and there are many PhD students who will graduate in the near future.

Disciplines	PhD/STD		Total
Systematic theology (dogmatics, fundamental theology, religious science)	Priests	14	20
	Sisters	1	
	Lay Catholic men	1	
	Lay Catholic women	4	
Biblical exegesis, Biblical theology	Priests	12	16
	Sisters	1	
	Female Lay Catholics	3	
Canon law	Priests	6	7
	Sisters	1	
Moral theology	Priests	5	6
	Female lay Catholics	1	
Church history	Priests	2	6
	Sisters	2	
	Male lay Catholics	1	
	Female lay Catholics	1	
Practical theology (missiology, pastoral theology, catechesis, etc.)	Priests	2	5
	Sisters	3	
Liturgy	Priests	2	4
	Sisters	1	
	Female lay Catholics	1	
Spirituality	Priests	1	4
	Female lay Catholics	3	
Patristics	Priests	1	3
	Male lay Catholics	1	
	Female lay Catholics	1	

who received education abroad, run into thousands, and most of them obtained an MA, because most of them went directly for MA studies after leaving China, or they began as undergraduate students and pursued a Master's degree. These Chinese priests, seminarians, and sisters who returned from abroad are/were doubtless the core force which can/could develop the Church in China, and they reconnected the Church in China after 1978 with the universal Church.

2.3 The Fourth Revolution in Mission to Chinese Overseas Students

Now is the time to turn attention to the education of laypeople who study abroad, which would be the fourth revolution in mission to Chinese overseas students. There are four reasons for this: 1. The situation of priests and sisters who returned to China from abroad and have been engaging in the intellectual apostolate is far from ideal. 2. A rapid decline of vocations in China, and a younger generation who want to dedicate their lives often chose the way of "laying back and relaxing" (*tang ping* 躺平). 3. The significant influence of urbanization on the Church in China. 4. The role of the laity and their advantages.

As to the first reason: Although priests and sisters who studied abroad made a good contribution to the Church in China, their work in culture and academic apostolate is far from ideal. As our survey shows, about 65% (11 out of 17) of the lay Catholics who hold PhD/STD in ecclesiastical disciplines work in universities in China and do academic work, but most of the returned priests and sisters do pastoral work. Bishop Gan Junqiu divides them into the two patterns of pastoral model and academic model:

> *Most of the priests and sisters who returned from studies abroad belong to the pastoral model, after receiving an MA they have been serving in parishes or other institutions, and later they often lack an academic platform or lack the ability for studies, and so they limit themselves to pastoral work. There are only a few PhDs, and among them, there are even less belonging to the academic model. Most of those do academic work in seminaries or some other research institutions.*[26]

This phenomenon can be attributed to both subjective and objective factors. The subjective causes are lack of academic potential, intellectual horizons, interest, the intellectual climate and tradition of the college where they graduated, etc. In these last years I have cooperated with most of the Chinese Catholic PhDs in ecclesiastical disciplines due to publication work, and I have discovered that many priests and sisters do not have a good basic education, especially in terms of the Chinese literature – it is hard for most of them to intelligibly and correctly write in Chinese. Moreover, the academic horizon of priests and sisters who graduated from ecclesial colleges in certain regions is rather narrow, there is a large gap in their academic level and that of secular universities. It is very seldom that PhDs/STDs who graduated from these colleges would publish articles in high level academic journals which undergo the peer review system. The objective reasons are that there are only very few academic platforms in the Church in China. Because of their religious status, priests and sisters are forbidden to teach at secular universities, thus most of them

26 See Gan Junqiu, "Dangdai Zhongguo tianzhujiao shenxue jiaoyu yu wenhua jiangou," p. 43.

can only do pastoral work. Even so, I think that the subjective causes are the main causes, because there are several outstanding scholars who live under the same conditions and still managed to publish a considerable amount of academic works, such as Zhao Jianmin 趙建敏, Chen Kaihua 陳開華, Tian Weishuai 田煒帥, Liu Jinping 劉晉平, Cao Youchen 曹友臣, Rong Lina 戎利娜, Xiao Enhui 蕭恩慧, Xie Hua 謝華, etc. Among the Catholic scholars from Mainland China who managed to do academic work abroad are Jing Baolu 靖保祿, Sun Xuyi 孫旭義 from Li Madou Study Center, Geng Zhanhe 耿占河 from the Holy Spirit Seminary of Hong Kong and Cui Baochen 崔宝臣 from Fu Jen Faculty of Theology of St. Robert Bellarmine. Rev. Cui was recently nominated rector of this faculty – the first non-Jesuit rector.

It is noteworthy that the climax of interest among Chinese clergy, sisters, and seminarians in studying abroad has already passed; the number of students going to different countries for studies is dropping.[27] This is related to the second reason for supporting the fourth revolution in mission to Chinese overseas students: on the one hand, the number of vocations in mainland China is experiencing a precipitous decline;[28] and on the other hand, an attitude of "laying back and relaxing" (*tang ping*) prevails among those born in the 1990s or after 2000.[29]

The third reason is urbanization, a much debated topic, which has a deep impact on the Church in China.[30] The three characteristics of the Catholic Church in China have been "villages, women, and illiterates." But times are changing, economy and technology have developed rapidly, and only within a few decades, China has been transformed from isolated agricultural country into a modern, industrialized, urbanized, and open society. In 1980, China's urban population was only 19.39%, but in 2023 it was 66.2%.[31] This naturally

27 A comparison between the years 2013 and 2023 may show the difference a decade can make: In 2013 the MEP supported more than 10 priests and sisters to study in France, but in 2023 they were only 3. In 2013 there were more than 100 Chinese priests, seminarians, and sisters in Rome for studies, but in 2023 they were around 50. The situation in other places in Europe is similar.

28 According to a research by Dr. Anthony Lam from the Holy Spirit Study Centre in Hong Kong, "the overall number of seminarians in the different seminaries dropped from 2470 in 2002 to 485 in 2018." "The age distribution of sisters in China is not very different from the clergy: those born after the 1960s: 20%, after 1970s: 45%, after 1980s: 30%, after the 1990s: 5%. It is obvious that there are no more sisters born before the 1960s, that most are born from the period of the 'after 1960s' to the 'after 1980s', and only 5% are between 20 and 30 years old (born after the 1990s)." See Anthony Lam, "Prospects for the 'One-Generation Church' in Contemporary China," in: *Tripod* 39 (2019) 195, pp. 42-43.

29 According to a friend of mine who teaches in different seminaries in mainland China, in general the current study attitude and sense of mission of the younger seminarians are very different from those born in the 1970s and 1980s; the seminarians today are less enthusiastic. The older generation had experienced the reforms and beginning developments and came from a poorer condition, so they were used to accept challenges and difficulties; they had hard working spirit and longed to obtain knowledge abroad. The younger ones are afraid of suffering in foreign countries, and they fear that after returning to China they cannot do anything with what they have learned abroad. They have opportunities to go easily abroad as tourists, and can obtain knowledge through the internet. Consequently, their desire to go abroad for studies is not great.

30 The earliest discussion about the impact of urbanization on the Church in China was the conference "Urbanization and the Care for Migrants" organized by Xinde Culture Research Center (信德文化研究所) on September 10–12, 2013 in Shijiazhuang. The journal *Tripod* recently published some articles which discussed the same issue. See *Tripod* 2020, No. 197: https://hsstudyc.org.hk/product/tripod197/ (accessed on July 21, 2024).

31 Cf. C. Textor, "Urbanization in China 1980–2023," in: *Statista,* January 17, 2024: www.statista.com/statistics/270162/urbanization-in-china/ (accessed on July 21, 2024).

impacted on the rural Churches: Many Catholics in the villages left and migrated to the cities, for example

> *Er Quan Jing Parish in Zhangbei district, Hebei Province, had 1,500 Catholics, but today only 200 are left. Zhangzhuang parish in the Wei district, Hebei Province, has lost three fifths of the Catholics in the last three decades, since they all work in the cities and left their homes. Honggou Parish in Taiyuan Diocese, Shanxi Province, had several thousand believers, but today only several hundred are left. Nanchuan Parish in Chongqing Diocese is located in the suburbs of Chongqing, it had 2,000 Catholics before, but today fewer than 500 are left.*[32]

The loss of Catholics in the rural regions is serious, and there are structural problems when so many Catholics migrate to the cities. Moreover, the whole Church in China faces the enormous task of handling an urban culture centered on knowledge, progress, modernity, and openness, but it lacks pastoral skills and methods. We read in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes* (Second Vatican Council), that the Church should respond to the contemporary questions, she should be in dialogue with all humanistic and social sciences of the modern world, she should participate in social life, should enforce social projects, promote the progress of culture, should protect human rights, should preserve peace in the world, then the Catholic Church in China can only feel that with its conditions and scarce resources today, it can do very little despite its ambitious dreams.

In a sense, the three problems mentioned above are an "outgoing" or "displacement" (déplacement) experience of the Church in China: from returning home with dreams of academic success to facing the reality of being unable to unfold one's potential, this is an ideal displacement. From the abundance of vocations to the scarcity of vocations, from the opening of seminaries to the closing of seminaries, from the popularity of overseas studies to a lack of attraction, this is a historical displacement. From villages to cities, from concentrated crowds of Catholics to individuals living in a diaspora situation, this is a structural displacement. All these displacements, be it from the view of individual feelings, or be it from the point of society and history, they are all a kind of "outgoing" movement, and it is necessary that individual believers and the ecclesial community find their identity again.

We see that the experience of studying abroad as a kind of leaving home can accelerate the reconstruction of the identity of lay Catholics. What is the correlation between the process of reconstruction of Chinese overseas students' identity and the outgoing experience based on which the Church in China is reconstructing its identity? I think that the reconstruction of the identity of the Church in China and the formation of lay people, especially the formation of overseas lay students, has an important correlation. This correlation not only has a social and historical dimension, but also has a theological and ecclesial dimension. In the third part of this article I will give a more detailed account of the latter. The former is what I have defined as the fourth reason for the fourth revolution

32 See Zhang Wenxi, "Pastoral Reflection on the Impact of Urbanization on Chinese Christians," in: *Tripod* 33 (2013) 171, p. 6.

in mission to the Chinese overseas students, and this is also an overall response to the first three reasons.

As to the position of laypeople in the Church, from the Second Vatican Council to the synod of synodality, large amounts of relevant documents and studies have been published, which I do not need to repeat here. However, the advantages of laypeople should be emphasized once more, because it is a complementary element to the three questions mentioned above. In a time when the number of Chinese priests, seminarians, and sisters studying abroad is decreasing, the number of Chinese lay Catholics who pursue their studies in ecclesiastical disciplines abroad for the sake of faith and for serving the Church is increasing greatly. As far as I know, in 2024, there are around twenty Chinese laypeople who study dogmatic theology, biblical exegesis, moral theology, liturgy and Church history in Europe. It is worth noting that those Chinese Catholic students who study disciplines not related to the Church have scholarships or family support, thus they do not have financial problems. But almost all of those who study ecclesiastical disciplines have financial problems for studying and living. And the ecclesial communities and pastors very seldom show concern for them. Most of the ecclesiastical institutions in Europe give scholarships only to priests, seminarians and sisters, very few of them give scholarships to laypeople.[33] However, the potential and education level of these laypeople are generally higher than those of the priests and sisters. In order to deepen their faith and serve the Church, they have chosen to study ecclesiastical disciplines which do not have a great future in China, their motivation and spirit of dedicating themselves to God are not inferior to the religious people and the clergy. If they later can serve in society, for example in a university, it would be beneficial for the development of the Church in China. Also, they can use their professional knowledge to serve the Church. In a situation of lack of vocations and ever more serious urbanization, the Church in China must rely on young laypeople who received a good education and have a global vision. At the same time, the more free and resourceful ecclesial communities abroad are an ideal place to train and form them. Even the laypeople who do not learn ecclesiastical disciplines, if they can receive better formation in faith, can also assist the Church in many ways. For me, these are the signs of the times, and it is an opportunity for the future development of the Church in China.

Therefore, this fourth revolution in mission to Chinese overseas students needs the help of missionary congregations and of the other ecclesiastical communities and foundations in Europe. It also needs the concern and care of the Chinese priests in Europe, who should pay more attention to the above mentioned needs of these laypeople, so as to train them to be able to spread the faith to the non-Christian overseas students from China, and in the future become the mainstay in the service of the Church. If the help which different missionary congregations have extended to Chinese priests and sisters studying abroad

33 As far as I know, today (2024) the Parisian Missions (MEP) have supported one lay person to obtain brilliantly a PhD in biblical studies from the Catholic University of Paris. The Verbiest Foundation in Belgium is also helping one lay person in his PhD studies in patristics at the Catholic University of Louvain. Likewise, the Dominicans helped five or six Chinese lay Catholics studying at the Angelicum in Rome. And the Chinese Province of the Society of Jesus supported and continues to support laypeople in their studies at the Fu Jen Faculty of theology of St. Robert Bellarmine and MA or PhD studies at the Gregorian University. The Chinese Jesuits have also begun in 2023 to organize annual retreats for Chinese lay Catholics studying in Europe, in these two years altogether nearly 60 young people participated in the retreats.

has been a continuation of the mission strategy of Matteo Ripa, then the fourth revolution in mission to the Chinese overseas students can be seen as the continuation of Vincent Lebbe's strategy of evangelization. In fact, this is exactly what the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (*Lumen gentium*) teaches:

> *They* [*laypeople*] *live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity.* […] *Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth.* (31-33)

In order to live out laypeople's mission of evangelization, the Second Vatican Council says

> *it is to be hoped that many of the laity will receive a sufficient formation in the sacred sciences, and that some will dedicate themselves professionally to these studies, developing and deepening them by their own studies. In order that they may fulfill their function, let it be recognized that all the faithful, whether clerics or laity, possess a lawful freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought and of expressing their mind with humility and fortitude in those matters on which they enjoy competence.* (*Gaudium et spes*, 62).

III. A Theology of "Outgoing" in the Light of Peter's Acceptance of the Gentiles and the Establishment of the Catholicity of the Church

What resonance does the aforementioned faith situation of Chinese Catholic youth studying in Europe and the current situation of the Church in China have with the Bible and theology? We cannot stop at observing and solving the problems. We also need to explore the more fundamental theological significance of this phenomenon, including the whole pastoral response. This is because the issues of faith and the Church are not only social problems that can be dealt with in a human way, but also require discernment and compliance with God's vision. As a source of illumination, revelation, and guidance, His vision on all things has been revealed in the Bible. The universal and permanent significance of the Bible lies in the fact that God has always been able to use its content to speak realistically to people and events of today. The condition for resonance between current situations and the Bible is the homology of situations. In this regard, Marc Donzé says:

> *What we call the "homology of situations" can be summed up in a few words. The Word of God is always situated within a particular context, which it illuminates, interprets, or transforms. The relationship between the situation and the Word is crucial for understanding its depth, function, and effect. How, for example, can we understand the Passover rite without taking into account its relationship with the Exodus and its role in the history of the Jewish people? In order to make recourse*

> *to the Word relevant today, the relationship between the Word and today's situation must be the same as the relationship between the Word and the situation in which it was spoken or written.*[34]

In my opinion, the relationship between the experience of the Chinese Catholic overseas students and the Church in China and the construction of their identities can be compared to baptism of the Cornelius family by Peter and the transition of the early Church from Jerusalem to Antioch. This experience of the early Church allows us to look more deeply at the current problems of the Church in China in an ecclesiological perspective.

Prior to the martyrdom of Stephen, the early Christian community consisted only of Jewish believers centered in Jerusalem. Following the martyrdom of Stephen, due to generalized persecution, the followers of Jesus began to scatter to

> *Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus* […]. *The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.* (Ac 11:19-20, 26)

The designation "Christian" was initially given to the Christians in the Hellenistic city Antioch, because the Christian community and its way of living were markedly distinct in that city. Even though it was first a bantering term, it served to make Christians aware of their difference. Chinese Catholic Overseas youth have a similar sense of being minority both at home[35] and in Europe. But what makes them more similar to the early Christians who came to Antioch is the impact of the outgoing experience on the construction of their identity.

Antioch was one of the largest Greek cities at the time, with a diverse population of Romans, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews, and was a multicultural, commercial, and religious centre. Some scholars posit that the population of Jews in the city may have reached 220,000-450,000 during the early Christian era.[36] As a foreign land for the early Christians, Antioch was somewhat similar to the pluralistic and liberal Europe in the eyes of today's Chinese Catholic students.

Upon arriving in Antioch, Judeo-Christians, who had previously interacted with Greeks and other Gentiles in Cyprus and Cyrene, naturally proceeded to proclaim the Gospel to the Greeks there. Therefore, it was neither Paul nor Peter who first proclaimed the Gospel to the Gentiles, but these Judeo-Christians of Cyprus and Cyrene. Perhaps it was because Paul saw what they were doing, and because he was provoked by the Jews' rejection of the Gospel, that Paul decided to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles (cf. Ac 13:44-49).

Luke seems to have intended to utilize the narrative of Cornelius family's baptism by Peter as a means of justifying Paul's mission to the Gentiles.[37] He begins with the account

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34 Marc Donzé, "Objectifs et tâches de la théologie pratique," in: *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 69 (1995) 3, p. 299.

35 A generally atheistic country is like a foreign land for the Christians, even if it is their homeland.

36 Cf. Jerome Crowe, *From Jerusalem to Antioch: The Gospel Across Cultures*, Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press 1997, p. 91.

37 Cf. Ian J. Elmer, "Between Jerusalem and Antioch: The Advent of the Gentile Mission," in: *Australian eJournal of Theology,* February 2006, no. 6, pp. 2-3.

of Peter being guided by the Holy Spirit to baptize Cornelius' family (Ac 10); then describes Peter's defense of this act (Ac 11:1-18). Luke then goes on to tell the story of the Church of Antioch and Paul's mission towards the Gentiles (Ac 11:19-30; 13:1-52). Finally, he recounts a dispute between Judeo-Christians and Paul regarding this matter, followed by the Council of Jerusalem, during which Peter defends Paul based on his own experience (Ac 11:1-52).

In this structure, it is clear that, as the head of the Apostles and the leader of the early Church, Peter's role in baptizing the family of Cornelius is to pave the way for and justify Paul's mission towards the Gentiles. Nevertheless, this also reflects the authority and importance of Peter's act. For this reason, the biblical scholar Daniel Marguerat asserts that Peter's act was the summit of the entire *Acts of the Apostles*, as it opened the door of the Church to the Gentiles.[38] More precisely, it transformed the early Judeo-Christian community into the "Catholic" Church, which was a qualitative change in the identity of the Church.

It is worth noting that although Peter initially did not go out of Judaea to evangelize the Gentiles in places such as Antioch, his act of baptizing Cornelius' family and his authoritative defense of the mission of Paul and others during the Council of Jerusalem involved him in the wave of going out to evangelize the Gentiles. Consequently, he experienced a certain degree of "going out" for mission as well. The vision he had in Joppa (Ac 10:9-16) illustrates vividly his experience of encountering a foreign or different culture. The various "unclean" animals he had considered inedible according to Jewish tradition were not unclean in God's eyes. This vision meant that the Judeo-Christian community should be open to Gentiles and admit them into the Church. The subsequent baptism of Cornelius' family by Peter under the guidance of the Holy Spirit made the Church "Catholic" since then. It can be said, therefore, that the identity of the Catholic Church was established through the "outgoing experience." Similarly, the Chinese Catholic youth studying in Europe also had their identity as both Catholics of the universal Church and Chinese Catholics strengthened by their "outgoing experience." The Church in China, with its "outgoing experience" of diminishing vocations and urbanization, likewise needs to reposition itself in the new context and to reconstitute its identity as an ecclesial community.

This is not a social accident, but a theological necessity. Indeed, outgoing movement is not merely a condition for the construction of the Church and Christian identity; rather, it is the identity of the Church and of Christianity itself. In other words, the Church or Christians are essentially those who go out, establishing their identity in the process of going out. This is because God Himself is the One who goes out eternally. "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Based on Thomas Aquinas' definition of love – "going out of oneself"[39] – Pope Francis explains the relationship between love and outgoing movement as follows:

> *In the depths of every heart, love creates bonds and expands existence, for it draws people out of themselves and towards others. Since we were made for love, in each one of us "a law of* ekstasis*" seems to operate: "the lover 'goes outside' the self to*

38 Cf. Daniel Marguerat, *Les actes des apôtres* (*1-12*), Genève: Labor et Fides 2007, p. 363.

39 Thomas d'Aquin, *Scriptum super Sententiis*, lib. 3, dist. 27.7.1.a. ad 4 : "Dicitur amor extasim facere, et fervere, quia quod fervet extra se bullit et exhalat."

> *find a fuller existence in another". For this reason, "man always has to take up the challenge of moving beyond himself".* (*Fratelli Tutti*, 88)

The essence of love is not self-isolation, but the act of sharing and giving. This implies that the dynamic of love entails a process of "going out of self." The Father and the Son give themselves infinitely to each other in eternity, and the flow of this reciprocal self-giving is the Holy Spirit himself. Thus the existence of the Holy Trinity is a perpetual "out-of-self;" or rather, the love that is out-of-self is the very essence of the life of the Holy Trinity. Therefore, creation and redemption as gifts of divine life are not coincidences, but are necessary facts determined by the very nature of the life of the Holy Trinity. To go out of oneself is not merely to interact with others externally, but above all an inner attitude of decentralization and non-attachment, and thus a process of humbly learning from others. Paul describes the mystery of the Incarnation in this way:

> *Jesus Christ, who, being in the very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.* (Phil. 2:6-7)

According to Christoph Theobald, one of the main characteristics of Jesus Christ's lifestyle was his capacity to humbly learn from others. For instance, Jesus was reluctant to affirm his identity and refused to be prematurely given a title (cf. Mk. 9:11-13, 12:38-42).[40] This act of distancing himself from his own identity enabled him to maintain an open and receptive stance towards his disciples and towards all, thereby to learn and to discern in new circumstances.[41]

Given that the human person is the image of God and the Church is the People of God, it is incumbent upon both to go out of themselves and, as Christ did, to love others in the same way that God loves them. For this reason, Pope Francis, in *Evangelii gaudium* (nos. 20-24), while emphasizing that the Church "is" its mission itself, redefines the very nature of its existence with the term "outgoing."[42] The fact that the early church acquired its "Catholic" character through "outgoing" experience is a typical example. Therefore, Christians are by nature people who go out to meet others, and their identity and mission can only be defined in the movement of going out. This is why the experience of the Chinese Catholic students in Europe and Pope Francis' theology of "outgoing" corroborate or resonate with each other. Similarly, for the Church in China, what seems to be an "unpromising" situation today is not necessarily a "crisis" but also an "opportunity" – an opportunity to reconstruct its identity and to develop in a new way, in a new situation, and in a new direction.

The fact that the Gospel repositions itself and is accepted in any place and in any new situation is always an experience of departing from its original culture and traditions to

40 Cf. Christoph Theobald, *L'Europe, terre de mission. Vivre et penser la foi dans un espace d'hospitalité messianique*, Paris: Cerf 2019, p. 176.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

42 The official English version translates it by "going forth." In my opinion, this is a mistranslation, because the original meaning is not to go forth, but to go out. The French translation "en sortie" and the Italian translation of "in uscita," like the Chinese translation can better translate its original theological meaning.

meet and integrate with another culture. Conversely, it is also the process of another culture departing from some of its own inherent concepts, habits, and structures, etc., to meet and integrate with the Gospel, which is of a heterogeneous nature. The former movement is the inculturation of the Gospel, and the latter is the evangelization of culture. The process of the two departing from themselves and integrating into each other can be called "interculturation." It can be said that Christian identity is constantly being constructed and reshaped in the interactive and dialectical relationship between exodus and influx.

A complete process of interculturation and identity reconstruction is a dual process of departure and integration. If contact with the unfamiliar European society and Church is a departure from their own culture for the Chinese Catholic overseas youth, then their selective acceptance of the European society and Church's influence on them is integration into a new culture. This integration enables the Chinese students to keep a certain distance from the culture of the Church in China, to reflect on it and to choose the elements that are appropriate to their own faith, and thus to depart once again or further from the culture of the Church in China. It is also a new integration, because it is an integration of the newly adopted European social and ecclesial culture and their re-evaluated Chinese ecclesial culture.

This experience of integration of the Chinese Catholic overseas students is important for the development of the Church in China today, because their involvement and service will be like leaven affecting the Church in China, opening it up to the future. This is analogous to the experience of Peter's openness to the baptism of Cornelius' family which shaped the Catholicity of the Church. The reason why urbanization represents an opportunity for the Church in China is that, facing the globalization, the Church in China must adopt a universal vision, and urbanization can be seen precisely as a preparatory stage towards globalization. Therefore, as Chinese laypeople who have already "gone out," these students in Europe can help the Church in China that is "going out" to reposition itself in the new situation. It is for this reason that it is revolutionary to help and form them.

Conclusion

The "outgoing" movement discussed in this paper calls not only for decentralizing and learning from others, but also for stepping out of one's own mentality and habits. This entails the adaptation, innovation, and reformation in new contexts, as Pope Francis advocates: an outgoing missionary Church

> *seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: 'We have always done it this way'. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.* (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 33)

Since "going out" is the very life dynamism of the Holy Trinity and of Jesus, and since the Church and every person are the image of God, Christians and the Church can only construct their identity in a constant outgoing movement. It is in this sense that "the Church needs to be constantly reformed" (*Ecclesia semper reformanda*). The process of reform, as

an outgoing experience, is also a process of conversion. Therefore, quoting from the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 6, Pope Francis says:

> *The Second Vatican Council presented ecclesial conversion as openness to a constant self-renewal born of fidelity to Jesus Christ: "Every renewal of the Church essentially consists in an increase of fidelity to her own calling … Christ summons the Church as she goes her pilgrim way … to that continual reformation of which she always has need, in so far as she is a human institution here on earth".* (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 26)

This need for conversion as reform applies both to the ecclesial community and to the individual Christian – Chinese Catholic youth who have reconstructed their Christian identity thanks to their stay in Europe, like the Judeo-Christians of the Early Church or like Peter and Paul who went from Jerusalem to Antioch. With their experience of double outgoing and integration, they can revive the Church in China, which is experiencing various forms of "exodus". Herein lies the link between their reconstructed identity and sense of mission and the Church's destiny in China. At a time when vocations to the consecrated life are generally declining, and the number of Chinese priests, seminarians, and sisters studying abroad is dwindling, helping and forming young Chinese lay students in faith and life – for example, creating youth groups for them, helping them to deepen their spiritual life, and offering them scholarships – is a revolutionary missionary task. Matteo Ripa, Vincent Lebbe, and the missionary congregations have made important contributions to the survival, renewal, and development of the Church in China through similar missionary actions. I believe that, following the footsteps of these pioneers, today's fourth revolution in mission to Chinese Catholic overseas lay students will also bring about a turning point in the destiny of the Church in China.

中国宗教评论

The First Chinese Council, the Synodal Commission and the Promotion of Catholic Education in China

Bibiana Wong

Introduction

For the first time in the history of Catholic Christianity in modern China, a national and cross-congregational organization called *Commissio Synodalis in Sinis* (Synodal Commission in China) was set up in accordance with the resolution of *Primum Concilium Sinense* (First Chinese Council)[1] in 1924, of which we commemorate the centenary. Its existence from 1928 to 1946 paralleled with the period in which the Chinese Nationalist Government was solidifying its prestige and asserting dominion over a unified nation, only to be followed by the rise of Japanese aggression against China. Amidst the nationalist fervor, the control over educational institutions emerged as a contentious battleground that Chinese authorities sought to reclaim from Christian mission bodies. Against this backdrop, the paper presents a historical sketch of the Synodal Commission and its role in developing Catholic education under the leadership of the first Apostolic Delegate to China, Archbishop Celso Costantini (1876–1958, tenure 1922–1933).

Loose Sand and Strong Wind

Christian missionary activities flourished in a relatively peaceful environment with fewer persecutions and unrestrained freedom in the two decades following the devastating Boxer Uprising of 1900. With the influx of missionary priests and sisters and their diligent work, the number of Catholics doubled to approximately two million by 1920, in a popu-

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1 [This council is also known as the „Shanghai Council" or the „Shanghai Synod of Bischops." See also Leopold Leeb, „Die Bischofssynode von Shanghai im Jahr 1924. Vorgeschichte – Ablauf – Dokumente– Bedeutung", in: *China heute* 2024, no. 2, pp. 111-115, Eds. note.]

lation of 350 to 400 million. Many baptisms were reportedly given to infants near death in orphanages.[2]

Under the Holy See's traditional system, the extensive mission fields of China were distributed among different religious orders and mission societies. Vicars or prefects apostolic reported directly to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide) but often operated independently. Their protective nature hindered collaboration and the promotion of native priestly vocations, a key issue addressed in Pope Benedict XV's apostolic letter, *Maximum illud* (1919).

Similarly, the missions lacked coordination in their educational endeavors, an integral part of their work. Since the late 19th century, schools established alongside churches gradually evolved into catechetical schools (*jingtang* 經堂), offering religious instruction, and basic primary education with Western curricula and separate facilities for boys and girls.

The founding of the Republic of China and the introduction of a modern school system in 1912 presented opportunities for mission schools, which had been less attractive to non-Christian children due to their deviation from the imperial educational system, to address shortages of public schools, funding, and teachers. However, they faced serious challenges from the new socio-political environment, especially as calls for national sovereignty in education led to sweeping reforms by the Nationalist government after China's reunification.[3]

The 1929 Ordinance on Private Schools (*Sili xuexiao guichang* 私立學校規程) posed a dilemma for Catholic and Protestant missions, forcing them to accept government supervision, transferring administration to Chinese people, and integrating the Three Principles of the People [principle of nationalism, democracy, and welfarism of Sun Yat-sen] into the curriculum. The key issue was the mandated separation of religion from education, which banned compulsory religious instruction and propaganda. Elective religious courses were allowed at all levels, but only secondary and tertiary schools could hold religious ceremonies, with no compulsory attendance. This undermined the foundation of mission schools, hindering their role in shielding students from modern ideologies and disseminating Catholic teaching.[4]

"The great freedom and perfect autonomy of the past are over," Archbishop Costantini wrote in a report to Propaganda Fide in Rome, "Unfortunately, the new times hit us hard, because our private schools, in general, did not correspond to the needs of government programs." While the Protestants had formed a cross-denominational body, the Christian

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2 A Protestant survey reported that about 250,000 people in nine Chinese provinces were baptized as Catholics in one year (1919), among whom 117,701 were dying infants. As there were fewer than 100,000 adults in any given year, it cast doubt on "the voltage of real evangelism" within the Catholic Church in China. Milton T. Stauffer (ed.), *The Christian Occupation of China*, Shanghai: China Continuation Committee 1922, p. 461.

3 Jean-Paul Wiest, "Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools and China's Drive toward a Modern Educational System (1850–1950)," in: *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 33 (2011), pp. 92-95; Li Zhengfu 黎正甫, *Tianzhujiao jiaoyu shi* 天主教教育史 [History of Catholic Education], Taichung: Kuangchi 1960, pp. 360-361.

4 "Jiaoyubu gongbu sili xuexiao guicheng" 教育部公布私立學校規程 [The Ministry of Education Announces Ordinance on Private Schools], in: *Analecta Educationis* (*Jiaoyu yiwen lu* 教育益聞錄), 1 (1929) 4, pp. 47-52; Wiest, "Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools and China's Drive toward a Modern Educational System (1850–1950)," p. 100.

Educational Association of China, for the coordination of mission schools and textbook publishing as early as 1890, Catholic schools remained like loose sand in the face of the strong wind. Therefore, Costantini insisted that "we must unite our efforts to try to save what is possible, especially in the field of schools."[5]

Outcomes of the First Chinese Council

Sent by Pope Pius XI to implement the goal of *Maximum illud*,[6] Archbishop Costantini's first and foremost task was to convoke a plenary assembly of all mission heads in China. The *Primum Concilium Sinense* was held in Shanghai from May 15 to June 12, 1924. A total of 108 clergymen participated, including secretaries and assistants. Voting delegates comprised 42 vicars apostolic, five prefects apostolic, and one apostolic administrator, mostly European and American, with two Chinese prefects apostolic appointed by Costantini and seven Chinese priests as assistants. A Trappist abbot and 24 superiors of religious men's congregations (all non-Chinese) attended as observers.[7]

One of the Council Fathers, Bishop James E. Walsh, MM, Prefect Apostolic of Jiangmen (Guangdong province) and superior of the Maryknoll Mission in China, reflected that the Council's whole effort was "to coordinate and unify the work of the missions for the sake of mutual assistance and greater fruitfulness."[8] Its resolutions, titled *Acta-Decreta et Normae–Vota, etc.* (hereafter *Acta-Decreta*), consisted of 861 clauses concerning clergy, Catholic laity, sacraments, liturgy, missionary work, and its methods in light of the newly published Code of Canon Law of 1917 and the actual situations in the extensive missionary field of China. The Propaganda Fide gave its approval in 1928.

Titulus VII, Book IV of the *Acta-Decreta*, with its 59 clauses across seven chapters, addressed Catholic colleges and schools. It covered the objectives and spirit of Catholic education, the educational landscape in China, and the roles of bishops, missionaries, students, parents, teachers, curriculum, and financial management.[9] It highlighted the vital role of Catholic schools in both educating Chinese Catholics and enhancing the Church's standing with non-believers.[10] Despite suffering fewer assaults and disturbances compared

5 Letter from Celso Costantini to G.M. van Rossum, "Commissione Sinodale per le scuole, la gioventù e la stampa," March 9, 1928, the Propaganda Fide Historical Archives (hereafter referred to as APF), Nova Serie (hereafter referred to as N.S.) vol. 899, f. 165.

6 The epoch-making apostolic letter delineated the guiding principles and focal points of Catholic missions, marking a departure from Eurocentric and colonialist ideologies. It advocated respect for cultural diversity, keeping missionary activities separate from political affiliations, and nurturing local churches to ensure self-sufficiency when missionaries transition out, promoting the rise of indigenous clergy and episcopacy.

7 There were seven other Chinese priests attending the Council as staff and commission members. Anthony Sui-ki Lam, "Archbishop Costantini and The First Plenary Council of Shanghai (1924)," in: *Tripod* 28 (Spring 2008) 148, pp. 29-47.

8 James E. Walsh, "The Catholic Central Bureau of China," in: *China Missionary* 2 (June 1949) 6, p. 611.

9 The Chinese translation of the entire text of *Acta-Decreta* by Leopold Leeb, "1924 nian Shanghai zhujiao huiyi Ladingyu wenxian Han yi" 1924年上海主教會議拉丁語文獻漢譯 [Chinese Translation of the Latin Document of the 1924 Shanghai Council] (unpublished manuscript) is of great help to me.

10 Liber IV, Titulus VII, Caput I, N. 748, *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924: Acta-Decreta et Normae-Vota, etc.*, Zi-Ka-Wei, Shanghai: Typographia Missionis Catholicae 1929, p. 231.

to Protestant schools under the Anti-Christian Movement since 1922,[11] the Council Fathers warned that during this period of national renewal and new educational order Catholic schools held "even greater importance and significance," and that every effort must be made to spread Christian faith.[12]

The *Acta-Decreta* cited the canonical prohibition against Catholic children attending non-Catholic schools and warned about the rise of materialism in public schools, which undermined traditional values. It also noted the anti-Catholic and rationalistic atmosphere often found in Protestant schools.[13] Therefore, it stressed the importance of offering Catholic doctrine as an elective course to non-Christian students, and providing deeper religious education to Catholic students under the guidance of bishops.[14]

Three Synodal Commissions

Walsh recalled that, beyond drawing up specific laws for Catholic missions in China, the Council Fathers "wished to go further." To benefit all missions, the Council Fathers agreed to create three Synodal Commissions to address questions that were national and general in scope.[15] They were aimed to foster continuous cooperation beyond the boundaries of mission territories in the following tasks: (1) For schools, books, and journals; (2) for a Chinese version of the Holy Scriptures; and (3) for a uniform text of Catechism and prayers.[16]

The second commission failed due to difficulties finding translators skilled in both biblical languages and modern Chinese.[17] It was not until the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War that Italian Father Gabriele M. Allegra, OFM and his team of Chinese Franciscan friars were entrusted with the project. The third commission, led by German Bishop Augustin Henninghaus, SVD, completed a new Chinese Catechism (*Yaoli wenda* 要理問答) with 377 questions and answers from 1929 to 1933.[18] Bishops could modify and trans-

11 Historians generally agree that Catholic institutions faced less disruption than Protestant ones during the May Fourth Movement (1919) and the subsequent Anti-Christian Movement (1922–1927). These movements targeted private schools run by Western missionaries, accusing them of undermining national identity and advocated for increased government supervision. Wiest, "Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools and China's Drive toward a Modern Educational System (1850–1950)," p. 97.

12 Liber IV, Titulus VII, Caput I, N. 749, *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*, p. 232.

13 Liber IV, Titulus VII, Caput I, NN. 753 and 756, *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*, p. 233.

14 Liber IV, Titulus VII, Caput I, N. 761, *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*, p. 234.

15 Walsh, "The Catholic Central Bureau of China," p. 611.

16 The order of the three commissions follows Title VIII "De Commissionibus," Liber I of *Primum Concilium Sinense Anno 1924*, pp. 32-37.

17 Letter from G. de Jonghe to Fr. Guimbretiere (Istituto Biblico Pontificio, Jerusalem), September 20, 1930, Vatican Apostolic Archive (hereafter referred to as AAV), Archivio della Nunziatura Apostolica in Cina (Arch. Nunz. Cina), b. 85, f. 211; Celso Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina* (*1922–1933*): *Memorie de fatti e di idee*, vol. II, Rome: Via di Propaganda 1947, p. 5.

18 Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina* (*1922–1933*), vol. II, p. 5; Hermann Fischer, *Aogusiding · Haninggao zhujiao zhuan* 奧古斯定 · 韓寧鎬主教傳 [Biography of Bishop Augustin Henninghaus], trans. Leopold Leeb, Taipei: Missionary Sisters Oblates of the Holy Family 2004, pp. 312-313.

late it into local dialects, provided that their versions maintained consistency in structure and content to achieve "substantial uniformity."[19]

Commissione pro scholis, libris et diariis

The Commission on Schools, Books and Press was the principal and longest lasting commission. In his report to the Propaganda Fide, Archbishop Costantini admitted that "the establishment of this commission cost me some effort, because each religious family loves to do it on its own."[20] He nominated five priests from different congregations and nationalities as standing members for a term of three years. His intention was likely twofold: to foster cross-congregational cooperation and to dilute the dominant influence of French missionaries and their government within the Catholic missions in China.

Table 1. The first group of Synodal Commission members (1928–1933)

Auguste Bernard (1889–1962)	SJ	French	**President**; Rector of Institut des Hautes Études et Commerciales, Tianjin
Philip Wu Dehui 吳德輝 (1893–?)	CM	Chinese	**Vice-president** and national director of **Catholic Action**; from Baoding, and served at the North Church of Peiping
Georges de Jonghe d'Ardoye (1887–1961)	MEP	Belgian	**Secretary** and **Administrator**; from the Vicariate of Chengdu; **Inspector of Schools** (1932–1933)
George Barry O'Toole (1886–1944)	OSB[21]	American	**Rector** of Fu Jen Catholic University, Peiping
Theodor Mittler (1887–1956)	SVD	German	**Moderator** of the Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis

Source: The Propaganda Fide Historical Archives and *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*.[22] Table created by the author. Bold text indicates their roles within the Synodal Commission.



Picture 1. The first members of the Synodal Commission (1929).
From left to right: G. de Jonghe, T. Mittler, G. O'Toole, P. Wu, A. Bernard.

Source: *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis* 2 (January 1929) 1, n.p.

19 Letter from Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, "Chiede sussidio per le spese della Commissione Catechistica," February 15, 1929, APF, N.S. vol. 1000, ff. 728-729.

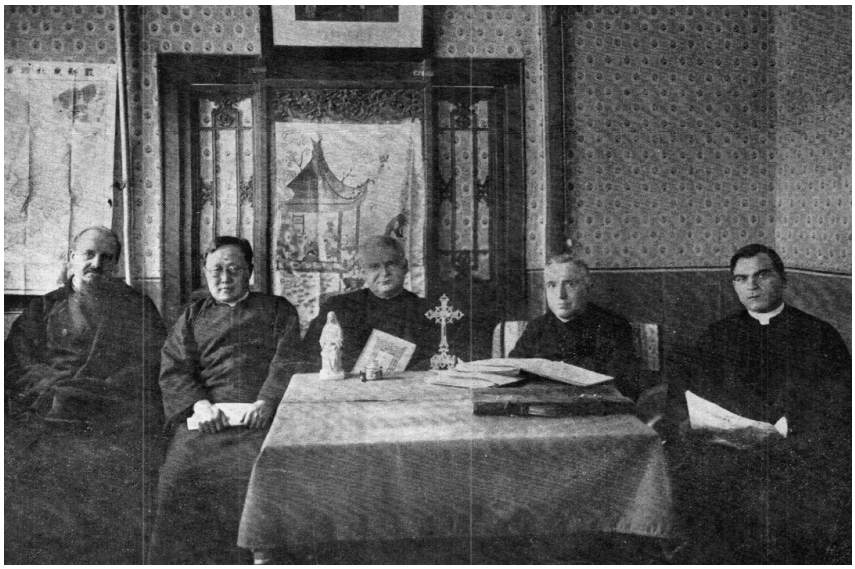
20 Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, "Commissione Sinodale per le scuole, la gioventù e la stampa."

21 Father O'Toole was a secular priest and a member of the Oblates of St. Benedict (Third Order Benedictine). The abbreviation for the Oblates is also OSB, the same as the Order of St. Benedict.

22 Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, "Commissione Sinodale per le scuole, la gioventù e la stampa"; "Membra Commissionis Synodalis," in: *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis* 2 (January 1929) 1, n.p.

From the choice of the first members, we can tell that most of them had expertise in education matters. Besides the two university rectors, Father Georges de Jonghe d'Ardoye, MEP founded an educational complex called College of Sapientia in Qionglai county, Sichuan province, from 1919 to 1923;[23] Father Theodor Mittler, SVD taught in a school and a minor seminary in southern Shandong province before joining the Synodal Commission.[24]

In practice, the Synodal Commission faced persistent staffing challenges. Mittler noted that from the context and the numerous weighty tasks assigned to the Commission, it is evident that the Shanghai Council required five active Commissioners, but only three were active until American Father Frederick C. Dietz, MM (1892–1968) arrived in August 1932.[25] Father Auguste Bernard, SJ the first president, and Father George B. O'Toole, OSB were offsite and only attended plenary sessions, while Fathers Philip Wu, CM (replaced by Father Venanzio Chao Huaixin 趙懷信 [?–1949] in September 1931),[26] de Jonghe, and Mittler handled daily duties. The Commission lacked a president from September 1931 to November 1932 until Mittler was elected the second president. In May 1933, Father Dietz became the second secretary and administrator. The vice-president role was vacant after Father Chao's departure in December 1933.[27]



Picture 2. The second members of the Synodal Commission (1932). From left to right: T. Mittler, V. Chao, G. de Jonghe, F. Dietz, Alphonse Hubrecht CM.

Source: *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis* 5 (December 1932) 12, n.p.

Although two new members were appointed to the Commission in that year – Belgian Father Joseph Rutten, CICM (1874–1950) and Chinese Father Paul Yu Pin 于斌 (1901–1978)

23 "Georges de Jonghe d'Ardoye," Institut de recherche France-Asie, https://irfa.paris/missionnaire/3068-de-jonghe-dardoye-georges/ (accessed January 2, 2024).

24 Leopold Leeb (ed.), "Biographies of SVD's in China (1879–1955)" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.), p. 94.

25 Theodor Mittler to Mario Zanin, "Pro Memoria: Materiae Quod Commissionem Synodalem Ejusque Opera Considerandae, Discutiendae, Mutandae, Repormandae" (June 21, 1934), p. 2, AAV, Arch. Nunz. Cina, b. 85, f. 306.

26 Father Venanzio Chao was a younger brother of Bishop Philip Chao Huaiyi of Xuanhua. He graduated from the seminary of Peiping, and became the bishop's secretary and the rector of Xuanhua's minor seminary. In 1932, he taught in the major seminary, and joined the Synodal Commission as its vice-president and director general of Catholic Action. Bibiana Yee-ying Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau. National Catalyst for Cultural Apostolate in China* (*1947–1951*), Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute 2021, p. 38. [For this book by B. Wong, see also the review by Elisa Giunipero in *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* XII (2022) 2, pp. 56-59. Eds. note.]

27 Mittler, "Pro Memoria", p. 21.

– the situation was "indeed worse than before in every aspect," because new tasks were added to the Commission at the same time.[28] For instance, Father Rutten supervised missionary medical work, including disease prevention, hygiene improvement, and healthcare organization within Catholic missions.[29] Father Yu, from Heilongjiang province, a Chinese philosophy and literature professor at the Pontifical Urban College in Rome, was recommended by Archbishop Costantini to direct Catholic Action in China.[30]

Regarding the two most senior members, Father de Jonghe, the Commission's secretary and administrator, also served as Director of the Catholic Youth Association (*Gongjiao qingnian hui* 公教青年會) and Inspector of Catholic Schools until he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Yunnan in June 1933; Father Mittler, the Commission's president and moderator of the *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*, was finally dismissed by the new Apostolic Delegate in May 1934 after making several requests. In his memorandum, Mittler suggested Archbishop Mario Zanin (1890–1958, tenure 1934–1946) invite two more priests to the Commission: one responsible for schools and education and another dedicated to translations. He recommended that both Commissioners be Chinese.[31]

In August 1934, Father John Niu Yiwei 牛亦未 (1897–1976) of Zhengding (Hebei province) assisted Father Yu to promote Catholic Action and publish five Chinese periodicals, including the *Schola Catholica* (*Gongjiao xuexiao* 公教學校), which replaced the *Analecta Educationis* (*Jiaoyu yiwen lu* 教育益聞錄) in 1935.[32] After Yu was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Nanjing in 1936, Niu took his place and remained the only Chinese Commission member until Father Paul Chow joined as secretary of the Pontifical Missionary Works in 1940.[33]

The Synodal Commission was placed under the authority of the Apostolic Delegation. The members were to "lend attentive ears and supportive hands" to his voice."[34] Their office was in Naizifu, a traditional Chinese quadrangle in eastern Peiping, originally a residence for imperial nursing mothers since the early 17th century. In 1926, Archbishop Costantini, aiming to avoid adverse sentiments by setting up the Apostolic Delegation among the foreign legations at Dongjiaomin Lane, purchased the premises and allotted the courtyards to the Synodal Commission and Catholic Action headquarters.[35] Costantini met daily with Commission members through a connecting door, and their discussions

28 Mittler, "Pro Memoria," p. 2.

29 Patrick M. W. Taveirne, "Father Joseph Rutten, CICM, 1874–1950: A Practical Missionary," manuscript of a lecture on "The 13th International Verbiest Conference on Religion and the Rule of Law and the History of the Catholic Church in China, August 21–24 , 2018, Leuven, Belgium," 11 pp., here pp. 8-9.

30 Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau*, p. 38.

31 Mittler, "Pro Memoria," p. 3.

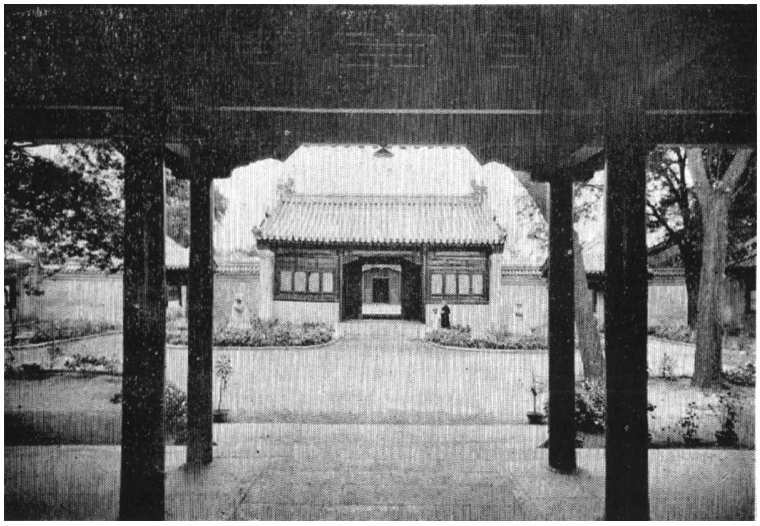
32 Catholic Action, before the Second Vatican Council, is a generic term referring to "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy," which became a widespread movement of multiple types of lay organizations under the promotion of Pope Pius XI (pontificate 1922–1939). He endeavored to organize the laity to infuse the temporal society with Gospel values, first in Italy and then throughout the universal Church. Bibiana Yee-ying Wong, "Catholic Lay Apostolate in Twentieth-century China: From Catholic Action to the Legion of Mary," in: *Tripod,* Spring 2022, no. 200, pp. 108-109.

33 Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau*, pp. 38-39; *Les Missions de Chine: Seizième Année* (*1940–1941*), Peking: Lazaristes du Pétang 1942, p. 1.

34 Mittler, "Pro Memoria," p. 4.

35 Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina* (*1922–1933*), vol. II, pp. 12-13.

were often related to missionary affairs. He recalled that their fraternal bond brought him comfort and joy, and their ideas and efforts provided invaluable assistance to him in "extremely difficult circumstances."[36]



Picture 3. Entrance of the Apostolic Delegation in Peiping.

Source: *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis* 5 (May 1932) 5, p. 469.

Educational Work of the Synodal Commission

Although the Commission's Latin name indicated its two major functions – for schools, book, and press – the Chinese name given by the first Vice-president, Father Philip Wu, merely revealed its principal duty to support Catholic schools and promote Catholic education: Gongjiao jiaoyu lianhehui 公教教育聯合會, which is literally "Catholic Education Union." Regarding the disharmony of the two names, Father Mittler admitted the fact that "the Latin name errs by excess, while the Chinese name errs by deficiency."[37] In fact, even within the scope of education, the Commission fell short of fulfilling every duty assigned to it by the Shanghai Council.

(i) *Collectanea* and *Analecta Educationis*

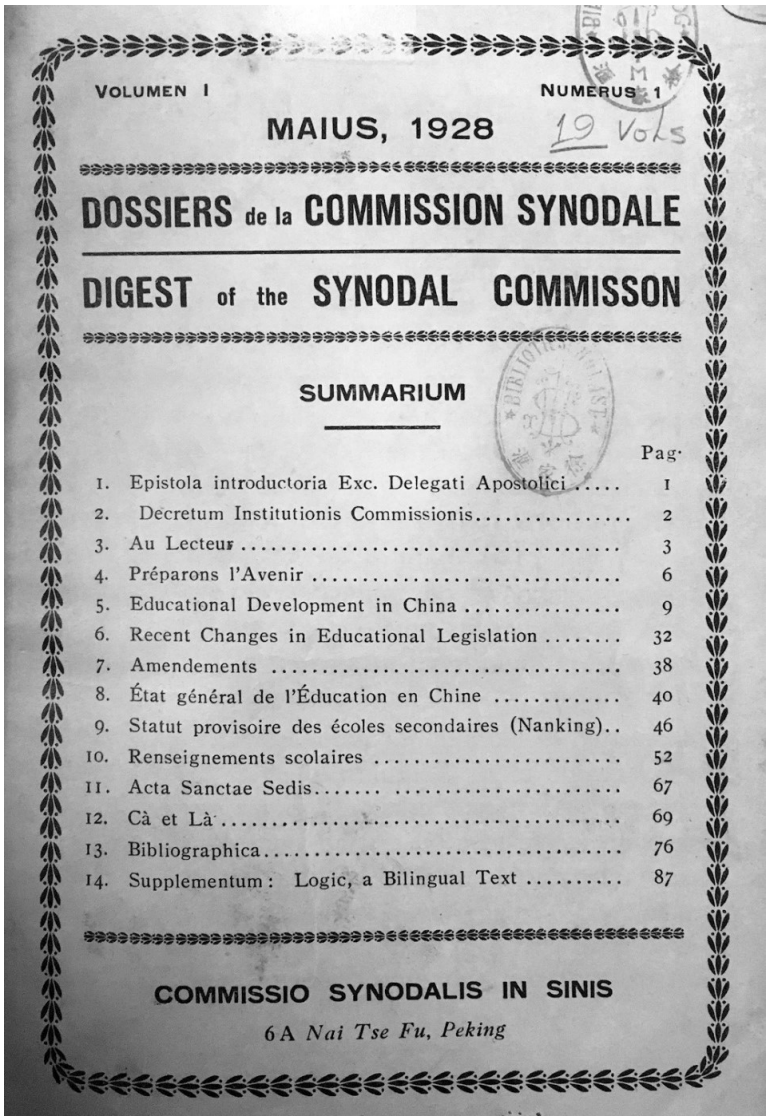
The Synodal Commission's foremost and most critical duty was placed on educational matters. Missionaries like Bishop Walsh valued the *Digest of the Synodal Commission* (*Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis*) for its "great services for the Church in China" over two decades. Under the successive editorship of Fathers Mittler and Edouard Boedefeld, OFM "the magazine was full of helpful information. It breathed a love of things Chinese that was particularly inspiring." Walsh believed that the reader would "find the collection a fascinating treasure house of missionary lore."[38]

Father Mittler appraised that the publication of the multilingual *Collectanea* – in Latin, Chinese, French, and English – together with its sister Chinese periodical, *Analecta Educationis*, was the only task that the Synodal Commission had actually carried out – the

36 Costantini, *Con i missionari in Cina* (*1922–1933*), vol. II, p. 6.

37 Mittler, "Pro Memoria," p. 2.

38 Walsh, "The Catholic Central Bureau of China," pp. 611-612.



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DOSSIERS de la COMMISSION SYNODALE

DIGEST of the SYNODAL COMMISSON

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COMMISSIO SYNODALIS IN SINIS

6 A *Nai Tse Fu, Peking*

Picture 4. The contents page of the *Collectanea*'s inaugural issue, featuring many articles about Catholic schools and education in China.

Source: *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis* 1 (May 1928) 1, n.p.

fourth one, "to produce a bulletin on education in China." The *Collectanea* appeared four times in 1928 and ten times per year from 1929 onwards, each issue containing about one hundred pages, resulting in a yearly volume of around 1,000 pages. Its contents extended beyond education, including various mission-related questions for the readers' benefit. Mittler noted that newly arrived missionaries found it helpful for learning Chinese, especially through translations and terminology. Many essays also offered advice and guidance to Chinese clergy on proper religious practices and continued studies. As of June 1934, the subscription stood at slightly over 800, with approximately a hundred coming from outside China.[39]

The *Analecta Educationis* was taken care by Chinese Commission members, namely Fathers Philip Wu, Venanzio Chao and Paul Yu successively. Since its inauguration in March 1929, the *Analecta* was published four times a year, and then became a bi-monthly under Father Yu's editorship in early 1934.[40] As its name suggests, the journal primarily focused on educational matters, aiming to connect educators in Catholic schools nationwide and

39 Mittler, "Pro Memoria," p. 11.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

foster exchange of opinion. Its goal was to Christianize education in China: "Omnipotent science, when venturing beyond faith, can hardly address life's profound questions. Pure Catholic education safeguards faith and ensures scientific studies remain on track."[41]

In 1934, Father Yu restructured the "tasteless and meager" periodical, which had only 350 subscribers, renaming it *Schola Catholica*. The first issue was published in April 1935 and continued until the last issue in June 1939, with a fortnightly frequency. The revamped periodical covered a broader range of content, including commentaries, government laws and decrees related to schools, news on Catholic and general education, biographical sketches of notable educators, book reviews, apologetic speeches, a reader's forum, and a correspondence column.[42]

(ii) School Inspection and Other Entrusted Tasks

A new position was created in early 1932 for liaison between the Synodal Commission and local vicariates, and better implementation of the Shanghai Council's directives on Catholic schools. Archbishop Costantini named Father de Jonghe as the Inspector of Schools. Through him, "some beneficial school inspections have been conducted."[43] His first visitation began with the middle school of Fu Jen Catholic University in Peiping, and then major port cities including Tianjin, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. It was hoped that the Inspector could negotiate with bishops and school directors to unify school administration and curricula, better implement Catholic education, and manage the compilation and use of textbooks.[44] In 1934, Archbishop Zanin appointed Father Yu as the second Inspector. He continued to tour around the country to boost the morale of Catholic educators.[45]

Father Mittler reported that the Synodal Commission failed to achieve the other four tasks regarding schools. The first task, "to propose matters related to the religious, moral, literary, and scientific education of youth of both sexes in schools," lacked clear explanation. Despite extensive efforts in assisting mission schools through letters, treatises, and advice, they sought a precise definition to improve progress.

The second duty, "to accurately suggest and prepare texts or books suitable for use in schools," required significant funds and skilled editors. This involved evaluating public school manuals for Catholic use and persuading publishers to accept minor changes. Additionally, they prepared suitable manuals and sought official recognition but success seemed doubtful due to limited resources. Mittler suggested categorizing future manuals

41 The editor, "Jiaoyu yiwen lu zhi xiwang" 教育益聞錄之希望 [The Hope of *Analecta Educationis*], in: *Analecta Educationis* 2 (1930) 1, p. 1.

42 The editor, "Juan shou yu" 卷首語 [Preface], *Schola Catholica* (*Gongjiao xuexiao* 公教學校) 1 (1935) 1, pp. 2-3.

43 Mittler, "Pro Memoria," p. 4.

44 The editor, "Gongjiao jiaoyu lianhehui shicha gongjiao xuexiao ganyan" 公教教育聯合會視察公教學校感言 [Reflection on the Catholic School Inspection of the Synodal Commission], in: *Revue Catholique* 21 (1932) 4, p. 193.

45 Yuan Chengbin 袁承斌, "Gongjiao xuexiao de shicha zhidu" 公教學校的視察制度 [The System of Catholic School Inspection], in: *Quanguo gongjiao jiaoyu huiyi jiyao* 全國公教教育會議紀要 [Summary of the National Catholic Education Convention], Shanghai: School Department, Catholic Central Bureau 1948, p. 64; "Yu zongjiandu zai Wuhan shicha gongjiao xuexiao zhi jingguo" 于總監督在武漢視察公教學校之經過 [Director Yu Inspects Catholic Schools in Wuhan], in: *Schola Catholica* 2 (1936) 11, pp. 17-18.

into three groups: religious manuals (Catechism, Sacred Scripture, Apologetics), neutral subjects (Mathematics), and essential manuals for natural sciences, sociology, and pedagogy. These categories would be thoroughly discussed during Commission sessions.

The third duty, "to promote coordination among schools so that they may mutually assist one another," was also "vague and overly complex." What the Synodal Commission primarily did was to provide various kinds of information to schools. Occasionally, it assisted in recruiting new teachers from graduates of Catholic institutions for schools. However, Mittler noted that great caution was necessary, and any recommendation should not be made without obtaining written and formal consent from the local Mission.

Regarding school coordination, the Inspector of Schools could play an active role to understand the conditions of mission schools across China. By comparing similar situations and broadening their perspective, he could help to foster "beneficial and effective connections and relationships" among the schools. However, Mittler admitted that most Catholic schools, starting from primary levels, were "enclosed gardens" that kept outsiders away, often hindering their development. He proposed precisely defining and dividing the third task concerning schools.

Finally, the fifth duty was "to take care of young people who seek to study abroad." Mittler gave no further details or the actual number of beneficiaries, besides saying: "It must be acknowledged that the Commission has, willingly or unwillingly, contributed financial aid until now and has drawn the attention of its readers to one or two of the best foreign institutions in its periodicals."[46]

In short, the publication of the *Collectanea* and the *Analecta Educationis / Schola Catholica* stands out as the most tangible achievement when evaluating the Synodal Commission's principal work on education. Serving as a dynamic platform to amplify information flow and facilitate the exchange of views, the periodicals are not only significant in their historical context but also valuable materials for researchers studying the development of Chinese education. This accomplishment was realized despite the constraints of limited resources. During the war in Japanese-occupied Peiping, German Father Boedefeld endeavored to keep publishing the *Collectanea* for the benefit of the missionaries until his death in 1945.

Epilogue

The shortcomings of the first central coordinative body for Catholic missions in China were partly mitigated by Archbishop Costantini's proactive engagement with the Chinese government. His negotiations with the foreign and education ministries in 1929 likely resulted in the promulgation of the Regulations on the Educational Undertakings Established by Religious Organizations (*Zongjiao tuanti xingban jiaoyu shiye banfa* 宗教團體興辦教育事業辦法). The decree mandated that schools subsidized by religious groups adhere to the Ordinance on Private Schools, while allowing institutions for the study of

46 Mittler, "Pro Memoria," pp. 5-8.

religion to remain independent of government programs, provided they were not classified as schools.[47]

"This is of little consequence; what matters is the substance," Costantini pointed out, "This decree relieves us of a distressing doubt and ensures the valuable instruments for religious propaganda. It is to be hoped that in practice, it will not raise further difficulties."[48] Consequently, some primary schools rebranded as *jingtang* to maintain autonomy and Western leadership, while secondary and tertiary institutions gradually complied with government programs to ensure diploma recognition. To enhance the intellectual standards of Catholic schools, Costantini supported their submission to government supervision:

> *The freedom afforded to mission schools resulted in their establishment being too casual, rendering them markedly inferior to those operated by Protestants and unable to confer recognized diplomas. Catholic youth graduating from the old mission schools, when taking entrance exams for the Catholic University of Peking, were found to be completely unprepared and significantly inferior to their non-Christian peers.*[49]

In August 1932, Costantini reaffirmed with Propaganda Fide that seminaries and catechetical schools across China could enjoy full freedom. Although registered private schools were barred from providing compulsory religious instruction during regular hours, they retained the freedom to offer such instruction after the official timetable. Costantini emphasized that only Catholics were obligated to attend religious courses, while non-Catholics were free to participate at their discretion.[50]

Father de Jonghe reported that the Catholic Church had maintained its position and even made notable progress in some areas.[51] The 1932 statistics compiled by the Synodal Commission (see next page) show a prevalence of registered Catholic schools, particularly at higher levels. There was a significant increase in secondary schools following the Shanghai Council's directive to have at least one in each apostolic vicariate and prefecture. Total student enrollment across all schools rose by 13 percent from 1931, reaching 330,483.

Archbishop Zanin continued to lead the Synodal Commission with great interest after Costantini's departure from China in 1933. New tasks, such as coordinating medical work and running the first Catholic news agency in China, *Agenzia Lumen*, were added to the Commission's daily activities.

Bishop Walsh assessed the value of the Commission as a means of liaison over the difficult years, noting that the connection between the bishops of China and the Synodal Commission may not have been ideal, but it was likely all that was possible given the vast

47 Letter from Celso Costantini to Pietro Gasparri, "Libertà accordata per i Seminari e le scuole di preghiera," April 26, 1929, AAV, Arch. Nunz. Cina, b. 87, f. 272; "Zongjiao tuanti xingban jiaoyu shiye" 宗教團體興辦教育事業 [Educational Undertakings Established by Religious Organizations], in: *Analecta Educationis* 1 (1929) 1, p. 176.

48 Letter from Celso Costantini to Pietro Gasparri, "Libertà accordata per i Seminari e le scuole di preghiera," April 26, 1929, AAV, Arch. Nunz. Cina, b. 87, ff. 272-273.

49 *Ibid.,* ff. 273-274.

50 Letter from Celso Costantini to G. M. van Rossum, "Insegnamento religioso nelle scuole in Cina," August 20, 1932, AAV, Arch. Nunz. Cina, b. 87, ff. 369-371.

51 G. de Jonghe, "Catholic Church in China, 1930," in: *The China Mission Year Book,* Shanghai 1931, p. 132.

Table 2. Statistics of Catholic Schools in 1932

Types of schools	Number of schools	Growth (decline) rate comparing to the previous year	Percentage of registered schools	Total number of students enrolled
Catechetical schools	9,442	+ 7 %	--	188,018
Lower primary schools	3,177	+ 15 %	17 %	107,616
Higher primary schools	309	No change	46 %	15,699
Lower middle schools	73	+ 33 %	47 %	8,995
Higher middle schools	28	+ 75 %	57 %	1,637
Normal schools	25	- 14 %	40 %	936
Special schools	108	+ 77 %	--	6,752
Universities	3	No change	66 %	830

Source: Synodal Commission in China/Agenzia Fides, January 26, 1932. The Vatican Apostolic Archive, Arch. Nunz. Cina, b. 87, f. 372. Table created by the author.

and varied country. "No nationwide meetings of the bishops could be held to discuss mission matters in general, the Shanghai Council itself being the first and the last occasion of that nature." In compensation, regional meetings of bishops were instituted, focusing on the national movements and key activities promoted by the Synodal Commission.

The Synodal Commission's diverse composition facilitated collaboration among religious congregations. Bishop Walsh noted, "The members of the Commission were a cosmopolitan group and were subject to changes, … making them widely representative." Members were loaned temporarily by their bishops and superiors, leading to inevitable recalls and replacements. Bishop Walsh believed these changes did not impair efficiency but rather introduced capable missionaries to the Commission over twenty years. He stated, "It was thanks to the Apostolic Delegation that the important work of coordination and uniformity envisaged by the First Chinese Council was organized, developed, supported, and preserved."[52]

Political, geographical, and manpower constraints hindered the Synodal Commission from achieving greater success. Less than a year after the war ended, in April 1946, Pope Pius XII established the Catholic Hierarchy in China, and Archbishop Zanin planned to reorganize and modernize the Commission. After his recall by the Holy See in July, the first Apostolic Internuncio, Archbishop Antonio Riberi (1897–1967, tenure 1946–1959) implemented the plan, forming the Catholic Central Bureau in Shanghai with ten departments and a dozen priest-officers.[53] This Bureau played a crucial role in revitalizing the Catholic missions during the regime change until it was banned by the Communist government in 1951.

52 Walsh, "The Catholic Central Bureau of China," pp. 612-613.

53 Wong, *The Short-lived Catholic Central Bureau*, pp. 51-53.

Bibliotheca Sinica Christiana, A Comprehensive Catalog of the Publications of the Divine Word Missionaries in Shandong Province (1882-1950) – A Workshop Report

Dirk Kuhlmann and Barbara Hoster

As a tribute to the 150th anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word (Societas Verbi Divini, SVD), the Monumenta Serica Institute's most recent monograph *Bibliotheca Sinica Christiana: Annotated Catalog of Divine Word Missionaries'* (*S.V.D.*) *Publications in Shandong* (*1882–1950*) offers a research guide to the Society's publishing enterprise in China. At the same time, getting this book printed also brought a project to conclusion that has taken almost a quarter of a century of joint efforts: It was pursued with great perseverance and meticulously compiled by Roman Malek SVD (1951–2019), the long-time director and editor-in-chief of the Monumenta Serica Institute, and posthumously completed by the Institute's editorial team.

The nucleus for this catalog were the SVD publications from China held in the Sankt Michael Mission House in Steyl, which were rediscovered there in the 1970s and recorded in a list by the former China missionary and librarian Bernhard Kolanczyk SVD (1903–1983). In the 1980s, these holdings were transferred to the SVD's Monumenta Serica Institute in Sankt Augustin and integrated as a book collection in the Institute's library.

From the early 2000s on, Roman Malek turned his attention towards this collection and sought to complete it by securing further copies of missing titles, for example from the holdings of the library of the St. Gabriel Mission House in Mödling near Vienna and the estates of former SVD China missionaries. He planned to document the publication activities of the SVD in the Chinese province of Shandong, the SVD's first mission territory, as comprehensively as possible and to make them accessible for research into the history of Christianity in China. Towards this aim, Fr. Malek devoted over twenty years of work parallel to his many other tasks, recording individual book titles in bibliographical entries based on the physically available copies in the Monumenta Serica Institute's library as well as adding information pieced together from the various editions of the *Catalogus Librorum,* the book catalogs published by the SVD in China. Even after his stroke in 2011, he kept on editing these entries despite his physical limitations. In mid-November 2019, just two weeks before his death, Fr. Malek entrusted the WORD files of the catalog entries to the editorial team of the Monumenta Serica Institute for further processing and publishing. In addition to the bibliographical entries, a rich image archive of book covers, full pages, and illustrations from various SVD titles published in China had already

been gradually built up until that time at the Institute by Jozef Bištuť SVD. From the very beginning, Fr. Malek emphasized that these illustrations should not be considered mere embellishments to the catalog. They should serve their own purpose in highlighting that the individual titles were not just pure information carriers but also material products, artistically designed with an aesthetic appeal: In the course of the SVD's almost seventy years of publishing activities in China, a wide variety of book designs unfolded, including traditional Western motifs, modern Art Nouveau/Art Deco elements as well as syntheses between Chinese and Western art styles. Printing techniques ranged from traditional block printing and thread sewing to lithography and Western bookbinding. This diversity was to be showcased for the readers with representative illustrations.

Western Traditional Cover:



"Yesu shengxin erguo linge yu Zhongguo" 耶穌聖心爾國臨格於中國 (Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy Kingdom Come in China), in: [Augustin Henninghaus, S.V.D.], *Jiaohuang qinli chuanjiao zonghui* 教皇欽立傳教總會 (Decree on the Pontifical Society of the Propagation of the Faith), Yanzhou: n.d., frontispiece.

From 2019 to 2024 the catalog entries were edited and prepared for printing. Quite a few times adding and correcting individual entries turned into solving mystery cases, requiring repeated cross-checking and reconciling different information in one definite entry text. In this, the Institute benefitted very much from a donation of SVD publications from China by the Mission Library and Catholic Documentation Center (mikado, Missio Aachen) on the one hand and the acquisition of corresponding holdings from the Centro Freinademetz in the SVD Generalate in Rome on the other, both of which helped to expand Fr. Malek's already impressive collection and close some considerable gaps in

Modernised Cover:



Alban Stolz, transl. Johann Blick SVD, *Shengren debiao* 聖人德表 (A Table of Saints), vol. 1 (Januarius), Yanzhoufu 1940, cover.

Sino–Western Synthesis:



Peter Röser, S.V.D., *Qingnian fenglang* 青年風浪 (The Storms of Youth), Yanzhou 1931, cover.

the materials. This made it possible to examine more than three hundred titles directly on the basis of printed copies readily at hand. Some interesting details emerged in this process, such as the fact that the SVD missionaries published a Chinese version of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* in a collection of edifying stories, albeit without naming the literary model. The plot is moved from Christmas to Chinese New Year, and the avaricious money-lender Ebenezer Scrooge is transformed into a Chinese merchant with the nickname "Stingy Li." This can be seen as an attempt to introduce Chinese readers to Christian virtues through cultural adaptation.

Further editorial work comprised the alphabetical sorting of the previously unorganized holdings in order to speed up the process of reviewing and checking individual titles as well as deciding on the final selection of the illustrations to be included. Due to his untimely demise, Fr. Malek was no longer able to write his own foreword to this work. To share his thoughts on the publication activities of the SVD in China with a wider audience, a translation of his previously published German article "The Printed Word in the Service of Evangelization: The Publication Activity of the Divine Word Missionaries in Shandong (1882–1950)" was added as a posthumous introduction.[1] In this article, Roman

1 The original article „Das gedruckte Wort im Dienst der Evangelisierung: Publikationstätigkeit der Steyler Missionare in Shandong (1882–1950)" was published in *China heute* XXXIV (2015) 3, pp. 182-189. It is based on a lecture Fr. Malek held in Sankt Augustin in 2008.

Malek also quotes the appraisal by the China missionary and Bishop of Yanzhou, Augustin Henninghaus SVD (1862–1939), who considered the SVD publications to be a substantial contribution to the great corpus of Christian literature for China, in his diction, a "Bibliotheca Sinica Christiana." Roman Malek decided early on to adopt this term as the title of the future publication.

The now published work offers a comprehensive catalog of the books and other materials printed by the SVD missionaries in Shandong and distributed from there between the end of the 19th and the mid-20th century. These publications cover a wide range of topics: Among them are apologetic and catechetical works, reprints of books from the "old China mission," i.e., the Jesuit mission of the 17th to 18th centuries, such as Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實義 (The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven) or Giulio Aleni's *Wanwu zhenyuan* 萬物真原 (The True Origin of All Things). There are also books for instruction in matters of faith and prayer books, works on biblical texts and retellings of parts of the Old and New Testament, song- and hymnbooks, and periodicals such as the *Gongjiao baihua bao* 公教白話報 (Catholic Newspaper in the Vernacular) as well as secular works, including teaching materials for the SVD schools in Shandong, dictionaries and grammars for learning Chinese, German and Latin as well as introductions to Chinese culture.

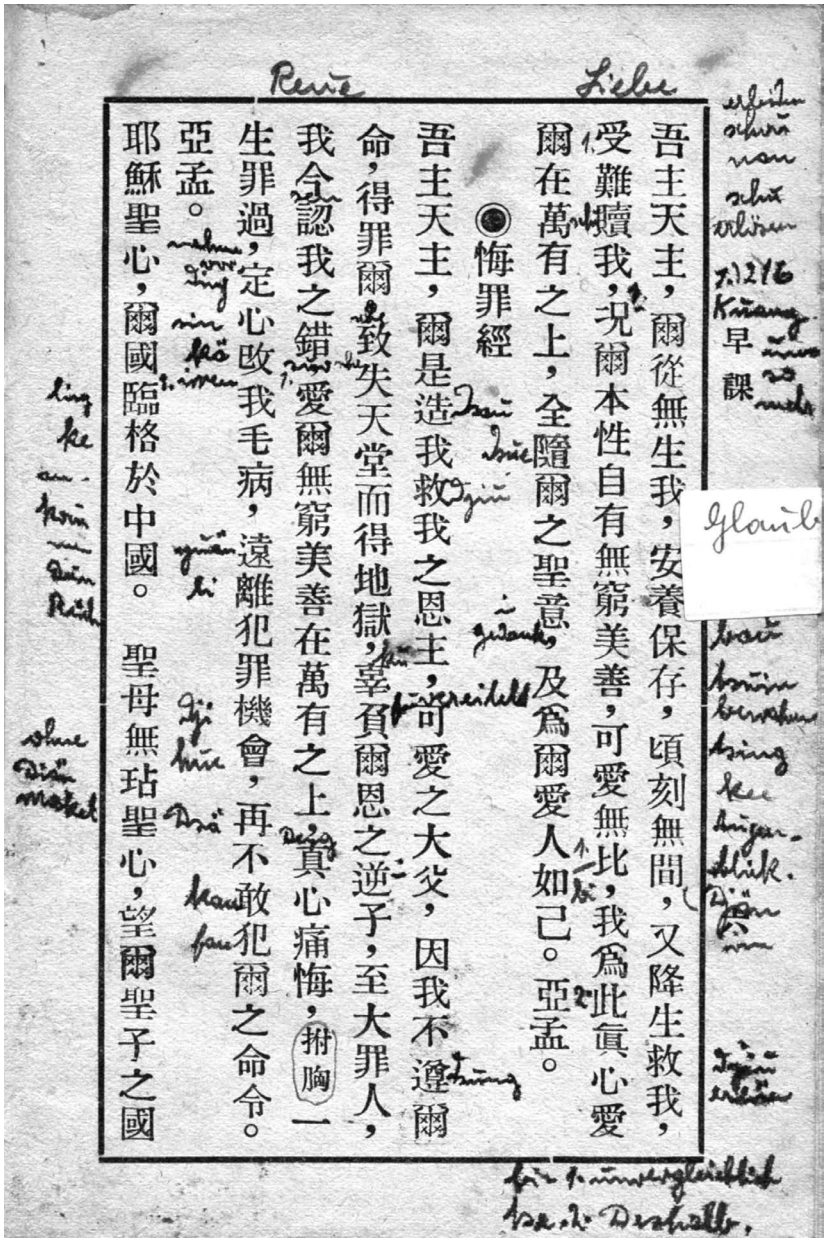
The catalog comprises over 450 entries, arranged alphabetically according to the respective titles in Chinese, German or Latin, occasionally also in English.[2] Each entry consists of detailed bibliographical information. These are supplemented – wherever available – by excerpts of the descriptions from the above-mentioned *Catalogus Librorum*. This is followed by a brief explanation in English of the respective work and, in selected cases, the corresponding table of contents. There are also references to any available secondary literature and to printed Chinese catalogs that include the holdings of individual SVD titles in libraries in the People's Republic of China. Six articles by SVD missionaries such as Augustin Henninghaus, Karl Weber (1886–1970) and Eduard Breitkopf (1885–1950), which appeared between 1909 and 1940 in the *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* and the *Steyler Missionsbote*, provide a contemporary perspective on the publishing activities of the Society of the Divine Word in China.

A substantial part of the SVD publications from China – 316 titles – is also physically available in the library of the Monumenta Serica Institute. The materials can serve as points of departure for a wide range of studies, including the history of Christianity in China, missionary studies, research on religions, philosophies and other aspects of Chinese culture, ethnology, language teaching (among others research on the impact of auto-images and hetero-images), school education, and book design. They are available to interested scholars for research at the Monumenta Serica Institute in Sankt Augustin, Germany.

As these books passed through our hands many times during the long editorial process, they became very familiar to us. We particularly cherish those that noticeably carry traces of the SVD's and SSpS' daily work in the China mission. They were used as personal

2 The last catalog on Catholic writings published by the SVD and other congragations in China, *Catalogus Librorum a Biblioteca Catholica Societatis Verbi Divini Pekini Compositus / Tushu mulu 1950 gongjiao tushuguan Beijing Shengyanhui* 圖書目錄1950公教圖書館北京聖言會 (Peking 1950), only lists 424 SVD publications, therefore the *Bibliotheca Sinica Christiana* can be considered a complete list of SVD publications in China.

Annotated book:


吾主天主，爾從無生我，安養保存，頃刻無間，又降生救我，受難贖我，況爾本性自有無窮美善，可愛無比，我爲此眞心愛爾在萬有之上，全隨爾之聖意，及爲爾愛人如己。亞孟。

◉悔罪經

吾主天主，爾是造我救我之恩主，可愛之大父，因我不遵爾命，得罪爾，致失天堂而得地獄，辜負爾恩之逆子，至大罪人，我今認我之錯，愛爾無窮美善在萬有之上，眞心痛悔，拊胸一生罪過，定心改我毛病，遠離犯罪機會，再不敢犯爾之命令。亞孟。

耶穌聖心，爾國臨格於中國。聖母無玷聖心，望爾聖子之國

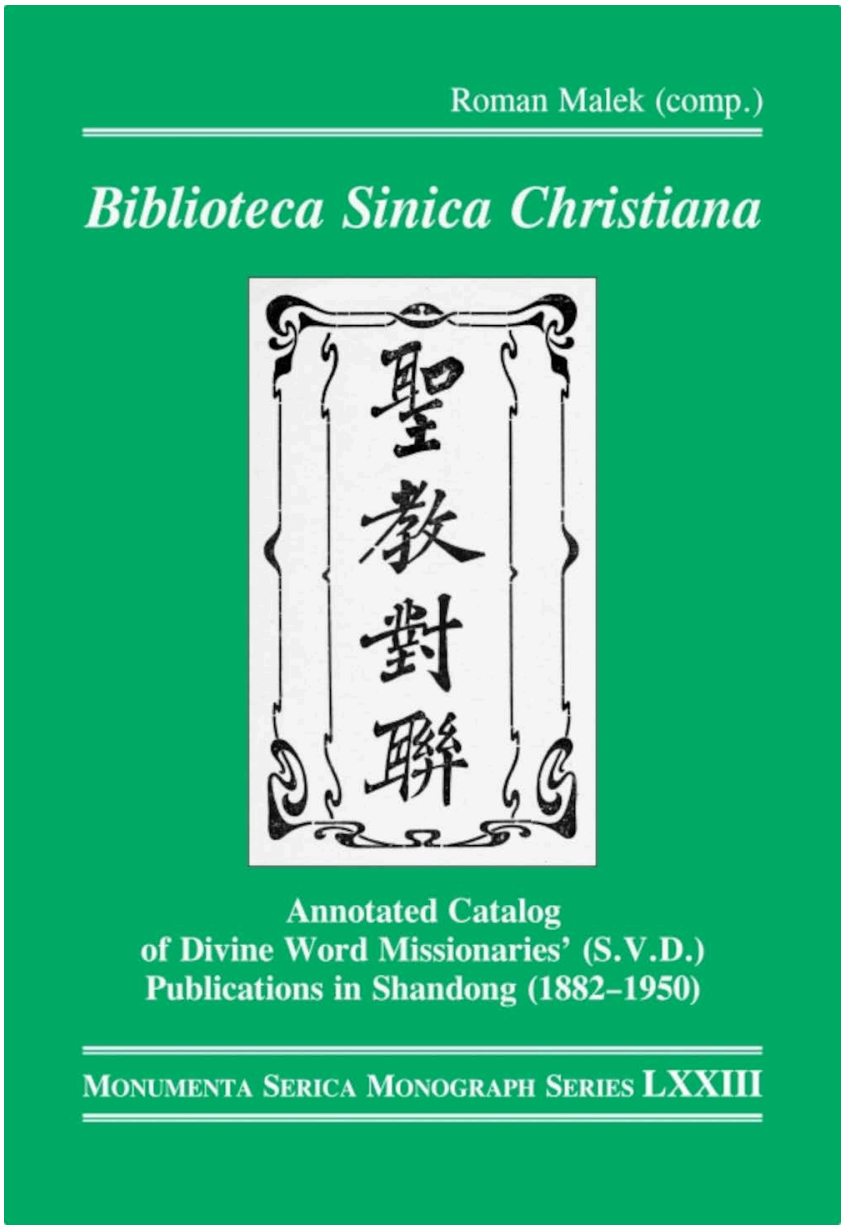
Zaowan ke misa jingwen 早晚課彌撒經文 (Collection of Morning and Evening Prayers), Yanzhoufu 1937, p. 6 (with handwritten notes by Sr. Christinia, SSpS).

Chinese textbooks and language companions for preaching the faith. One example is the edition of a Chinese book for morning and evening prayers with handwritten notes by Sr. Christinia SSpS (Maria Harnischmacher, 1900–1995). Thus, all in all, the complex editorial work on the *Bibliotheca Sinica Christiana* was not just tedious, barren labor for us, but also a very enriching experience as it filled our perception of the SVD China mission with life and brought us much closer to its protagonists and works.

The *Bibliotheca Sinica Christiana*, compiled by Roman Malek, significantly contributes to documenting the publishing activities of a specific Catholic missionary society, in this case the SVD, in late Imperial and early Republican China. It aims to encourage further research on the history of the SVD in China as well as on the history of religious publishing in modern China in general.

For further information on this title see:
https://www.routledge.com/Bibliotheca-Sinica-Christiana-Annotated-Catalog-of-Divine-Word-Missionaries-SVD-Publications-in-Shandong-1882-1950/Malek-Hoster-Kuhlmann-Wesolowski/p/book/9781032854342

Cover:



Cover: The Chinese illustration is the cover of *Shengjiao duilian* 聖教對聯 (Couplets of the Holy Teaching), Yanzhoufu: Tianzhutang, 1920, a collection of Christian couplets for celebrating the Lunar New Year and other festive and religious occasions composed by the Catholic scholar (*xiucai* 秀才) and author Fei Jinbiao 費金標 (fl. ca. 1910–1930). This illustration is also an example of Sino-Western synthesis in book design.

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