

Holy Spirit Study Centre Loses a Friend

Holy Spirit Study Centre lost a great friend when Prof. Leo Goodstadt passed away in Dublin on April 24, 2020. Leo was a fervent Catholic all his life. On his deathbed, he received the Sacrament of the Sick, and due to the corona-virus, only a private funeral was held in Ireland. At the time of his death, Leo was an honorary fellow of the University of Hong Kong and an adjunct professor in the School of Business Studies, Trinity College, University of Dublin.

Leo's field was economics. He came to Hong Kong in 1962. In 1964, he became a lecturer in economics at the University of Hong Kong. He was also an Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre for Asian Studies of the same university. He was also a frequent contributor on the subject of economics to the Far Eastern Economic Review. From 1989 to 1997, Leo was the head of the Hong Kong government's Central Policy Unit. In that capacity, he was the government's chief advisor on such major reforms as elections, welfare, administrative efficiency and budgetary matters. Both before and after his government service, Leo was involved in consultancy work with Asian banks.

As a fervent Catholic, service to the Church was also uppermost in Leo's mind. He served on the faculty of Holy Spirit Seminary College, and on the Board of Governors of Holy Spirit Study Centre. At the Seminary College Leo taught the Social Teachings of the Church. He told the rector, Father John Tong (now Cardinal Tong), that he rooted this subject in the Old and New Testaments.

Besides his many articles for the Economic Review, Leo had five books published by the Hong Kong University Press. The two most recent ones are: A City Mismanaged: Hong Kong's Struggle for Survival in May 2018, and Poverty in the Midst of Affluence: How Hong Kong Mismanaged its Prosperity, Revised Edition in December 2014. As one can surmise, both are critical of the management of the city after Hong Kong's return to the sovereignty of China in 1997.

Prof. Goodstadt also wrote several articles for Tripod, the journal of Holy Spirit Study Centre. The two most recent were: "After the Revolution: the

Relevance of Catholicism to Contemporary China” in issue No. 154 (Autumn 2009), and “Hong Kong’s Cruel Poverty” in issue No. 175 (Winter 2014). Before that, in the years 1981-1985, Leo had contributed articles to issues 2, 3, 7, 13, 16, 18, 24, and 27 on such diverse topics as “Muslims in Marxist China,” “Atheism and the Chinese Communist Party,” “China’s Economic Reforms: Causes of Controversy,” and “Economic Reform and Corruption in China.” One can only say that, as a writer, Leo was certainly “prolific.”

On a more personal note, I was presiding at Mass at St. Joseph’s Church in Mid-levels Hong Kong on a Sunday evening after Easter about 20 years ago, and Leo happened to be in the congregation. As I recall one of the readings contained the passage from Romans 8: 11: “If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you.” In my homily I proceeded to talk about the presence of the Spirit in the baptized Christian, and how the presence of the Spirit in them gives them the power to bear witness for Jesus in society. After Mass, Leo came up to me and said: “Father, that was great; we should tell the Catholics about the ‘indwelling of the Holy Spirit’ more frequently. It would enliven their faith, and make them more active witnesses for the Lord to others,” or words to that effect. What surprised me was that here was a man who could talk eruditely about the most complicated economic and political situations around the world, discussing with me the richness every baptized Christian has through the “indwelling of the Holy Spirit!” Like St. Thomas More before him, Leo was indeed “A Man for all Seasons!”

“Requiesce in pace,” Leo!

(Fr. Peter Barry, M.M.)