

HOLY SPIRIT STUDY CENTRE :
A Review Of The Second Year And Future Hopes

by JOHN TONG

On October 1, 1982 the Centre began its third year in operation. The first annual report can be found in TRIPOD Vol. VI. The second annual report is included with this presentation.

The Centre will continue the four programs begun during the first year: (1) Library, (2) Newsclipping and Classifying, (3) TRIPOD, bi-monthly publication, and (4) Contacts and Dialogue.

During the second year the Centre developed four new programs:

1. The Theological Formation of Lay Catholics

Although the Centre and the Extramural Studies Office are different entities, they cooperate with each other very closely. Recently the office of the Extramural Studies Program moved into the Holy Spirit Study Centre. The Centre through Extramural Studies Program has developed special courses to assist in the training of lay catholics of the diocese. Since September of 1982 some specialized courses concerning China and the Church in China have been added to the present curriculum. These are: (a) History of the Chinese Church, (b) Chinese Christians and their Country, (c) Inculturation of Liturgy, (d) Religion and Culture, and (e) Third World Theologies. The two-fold purpose of these courses is to make Hong Kong catholics aware of their responsibility to China and also to help them to have deeper understanding of the history of the Chinese Church. Participation has increased annually. During 1981-82 322 took part. The current number of 1982-83 academic year has already surpassed 500.

2. The Research of the Chinese Church History

History itself is a witness to the truth. It helps us to have a better understanding of the past and a broad vision of the future. The Centre has a two-fold purpose in this project. Our remote and future goal



Graduates of the Extramural Studies Program with Bishop John B. Wu

is to study the history of the Chinese Catholic Church. The immediate goal is to study the history of the Hong Kong Catholic Church, which will be used as the basis for our broader study of the Catholic Church in China. This project is intended not only as a service to Hong Kong Catholics but also will be helpful to our Centre researchers in gaining some fundamental experience of the methods involved in writing history. We envision two steps in our preparation of the Hong Kong diocese history: (a) Phase I is to collect historical data from the diocesan and governmental archives as well as other sources. These collected materials will be translated into Chinese with commentaries. A booklet will eventually be prepared. This initial process is already underway. We expect this phase to be completed by the end of 1983. (b) Phase II is to write a history of the Hong Kong diocese. From the materials gathered during Phase I, important and relevant topics will be selected and arranged chronologically with reflection. The Centre feels that this will help the diocese to preach the Gospel more effectively and to be a leaven in the present society. A practical plan will be devised before the program is inaugurated.

3. The Development of Audio-Visual Materials

Since the opening of the Centre we have had extensive contacts and exchanges with others concerned with China. Besides our regular meetings, we welcome numerous visitors from other countries. The staff are invited to give lectures. In the past two years we have welcomed many individuals and groups on the average of at least two groups a week.

About once a month the staff of the Centre are invited to give lectures. In order to make a meaningful presentation of the religious situation of China, we need effective slides. In the past year the Centre staff has also collected about 600 slides on various aspects of life in China. These are already classified and prepared for presentation with brief explanations. These topical presentations have already been used both in the Centre and also loaned to various groups. We expect to develop this service.

4. Visits to China

The two-fold purpose of this program is to personally experience the changes and present reality of China and the Church there, and secondly to use this experience in promoting a deeper understanding and reconciliation between the Church in China and the Churches outside. During this past year members have visited Beijing, Xi'an, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Nanjing, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Zhongshan and Shiqi. Friendships established with Chinese Christians can help us in actualizing our hope of helping to bring various groups to come closer together. We hope in this way to make Chinese Catholics and Church leaders more aware of conditions in the Universal Church and also of the theological developments since Vatican II.

Finally, the centre wishes to express its deepest gratitude to all the supporters who helped us through their encouragement and assistance. We request their continued prayers, advice and support.

