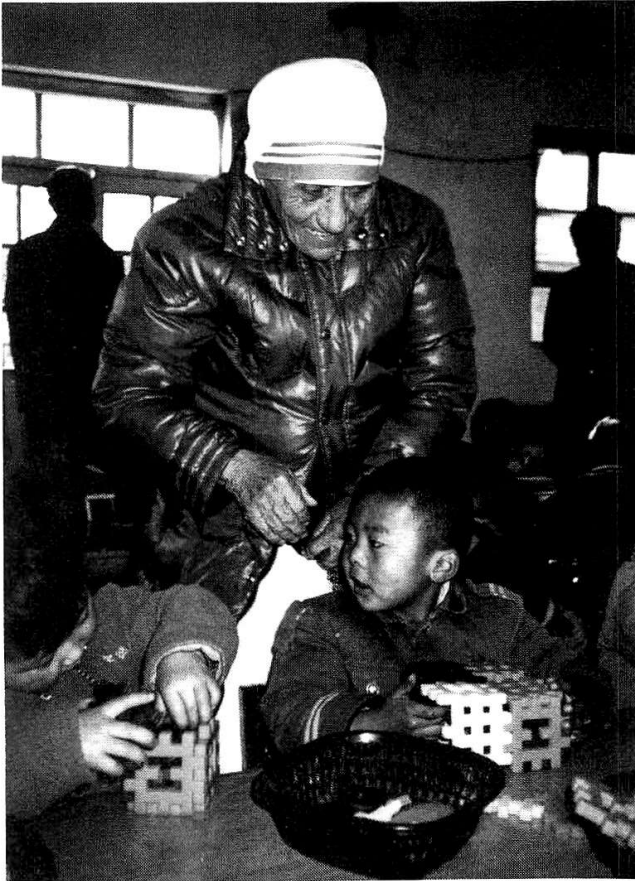


MOTHER TERESA VISITS CHINA



At a nursery in China

Mother Teresa, foundress of the Missionaries of Charity and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, arrived in Hong Kong on the evening of January 14th, 1985. She immediately joined in a prayer gathering, and thus began her ten-day visit to Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and mainland China.

The morning after her arrival in Hong Kong, she left for Macao. There she visited the government prison and spoke to the inmates. During her talk, she quoted the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 49, verses 14 and 15 which state that even if parents should forget their children, God could never forget them. She urged all those responsible to work to create a family atmosphere, one filled with love and forgiveness so that prisoners would not be forced to wait until after their release to experience love and concern.

During her time in Macao she called on a home for the aged where she met some of the mentally handicapped residents. From there she went to Yuet Wah Middle School where

she spoke to the students. She urged them to imitate the love of Jesus, pointing out that whatever they do for the least of their brothers, they do for Jesus. (Mt. 25, 40) She ended her Macao visit by visiting the Carmelite Sisters' Convent and meeting with all the priests and Religious of the diocese.

The 16th of January was Mother Teresa's day in Hong Kong. She spent the entire morning with close friends, sharing ways of improving their spiritual lives and their experiences in christian service. In the afternoon, she first called on Bishop John Baptist Wu, then took part in a special ceremony in which the government transferred a piece of land to the Catholic Church. During the ceremony, officials of the Department of Land signed a contract with the church for an old one-storey Army Barracks with 480 square metres of land in Shamshuipo. The property was rented for the nominal fee of \$1 a year for church use to enable the Missionaries of Charity to care for those in most urgent need of help. After that she was invited to attend the monthly meeting of the Hong Kong diocesan Chinese Priests' Association. During the gathering she treated them as an elder sister would her younger brothers, encouraging them to be zealous priests, pointing out the importance of priests for preaching the Gospel and carrying out pastoral work, stressing that a priest's life must be humble, poor, zealous and sincere. They must have a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in order to receive the strength to nourish their spiritual lives and to offer people-oriented service. She said that the greatest sickness in the world is not cancer, but rather the lack of love. That evening she flew to Taiwan for a three-day visit.



*At a factory for the
handicapped*

In Taipei she met with the Sisters of the diocese and then with Auxiliary Bishop Wang Yurong to discuss arrangements for the setting up of a convent of her Missionaries of Charity there. After this, she gave a public talk at Zhong Shan Hall where she received the highest award of the government from the Minister of Internal Affairs. Jiang Jingguo, President of the Republic of China praised her, saying: "From the highest spirit of love, you do not discriminate between nationalities and regions, you do not discriminate between different races and religions, giving only of your heart and efforts to look after people." She then headed south to Tainan where she visited Bishop Paul Cheng Shiguang and also her Sisters of Charity who work there.

After her Taiwan visit, she returned to Hong Kong on the 19th of January to prepare for her trip to mainland China. The trip was in response to an invitation extended to her by Chinese Catholics. When someone asked her if there was any political significance in visiting both Taiwan and China during this trip, Mother Teresa responded: "I don't understand politics because it is too complicated; my activity is simply to extend love, unity and reconciliation."

On the afternoon of the 20th of January Mother Teresa arrived in Beijing to begin her three-day visit. At the Beijing airport she was received by Mr. Tang Ludao, Vice-president of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, Mr. Liu Bainian, Deputy secretary-general of the same organization and Fr. Wang Zicheng, Vice-rector of the National Catholic Seminary.

During her stay in Beijing Mother Teresa visited the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association office and met Bishop Zong Huaide, its chairman. She then went to the Nan Tang Cathedral to attend Mass and receive Communion, calling also on Bishop Fu Tieshan, bishop of the diocese. Her next stop was a factory employing handicapped workers from where she went on to visit an agricultural village in the suburbs. She also met Ms. Cao Jingru, representing the Religious Affairs Bureau, Mr. Deng Pufang, Deputy director of the Chinese Foundation for the Handicapped, and Ms. Kang Keqing, Chairperson of the National Women's Association.

Wherever Mother Teresa went in China, she was very cordially received. When Bishop Zong Huaide saw her in her simple habit and wearing only straw shoes, he asked someone to buy her a woollen overcoat, cotton shoes and heavy socks.

During her talk with Bishop Zong Huaide, chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, he said to her: "In the past China was a

quasi-colonial nation, and the Church of that time took on a colonial style, completely controlled by foreign missionaries; after the establishment of the 'New China', the national constitution clearly stated the freedom of religious belief, but the Vatican still published encyclicals to stir up the people to oppose the government and to forbid Catholic children from attending government schools. Right up to the present the Vatican still does not recognize our country, saying also that we are persecuted, and encouraging divisions among us, leaving us no choice but to walk our independent road and govern the Church ourselves." Mother Teresa replied: "I don't know anything about what you say, but nevertheless at the present time the Church does not exist in such circumstances any place in the world." When someone asked if she had any special direct instructions from Pope John Paul II to convey during her trip, Mother Teresa said: "The Holy Father learned about my trip from the newspaper. I haven't discussed it with him."



At an old folks home

Mother Teresa met Deng Pufang, the son of today's top Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping, for forty minutes. After they had exchanged experiences regarding their work on behalf of the handicapped, Mother praised Mr. Deng, saying: "You have done so much good for your country and society, you have God in your heart." Deng replied. "I am an atheist, but I am convinced that I must do all these things." Then Mother said: "This is God's grace to you." Deng ended their conversation with "Our viewpoints are not the same, but our end is the same, to do those things which benefit the people."

During an hour-long talk with Madame Kang Keqing, the widow of the late Marshall Zhu De, Mother Teresa expressed her views regarding her hopes of opening a convent to serve the people of China. Madame Kang responded: "Our country has set up many organizations for doing such welfare work, such as care of the aged and handicapped, and we have educated

our youth to see the virtue of caring for their parents and the aged." Mother Teresa responded: "Although this is true, what we want to give is not just general care but also the warmth of love." When Mother Teresa returned to Hong Kong on the 23rd, she told reporters at the airport that she had explained her hopes of establishing a convent of her sisters on mainland China, and that now everything depends on the decision of the Chinese government, the local bishops and the bishops' conference.

Mother Teresa concluded that after her trip to China, she has an even greater love for China, that she always has hope in her heart, and that she asks all christians in the world to pray and sacrifice for China, and to pray also for world peace and unity.

translated by Elmer Wurth

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THE NEW
CHINA

Edited by
Elmer Wurth, M.M.

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