



One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism

by Laurence T. Murphy



(Father Laurence T. Murphy, M.M. is the Director of International Education for the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in the United States and President Emeritus of Seton Hall University. The following are his words of greeting to the Church in China on the occasion of his recent visit.)

Greetings to the Church of God which is in BEIJING AND SHANGHAI, to you who have been consecrated in Christ Jesus and called to be a holy people, as to all those who, wherever they may be, call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 1, 1-3)

On this my seventh trip to China, I come as an old friend. Many years ago my father visited China while serving as an officer in the United States Navy, and during the 1940's I, too, followed in his footsteps, visiting Shanghai as a naval officer. Each trip brings me great satisfaction in that it allows me to experience once again the richness of Chinese culture, the depth of friendship, and the warmth of the Chinese Christian community.

I come with two purposes in mind: first, to extend the hand of friendship to you, and second, to learn - to increase my knowledge of China and my understanding of recent developments in the Chinese church. As the Director of International Education for the ACCU, I hope to develop further the friendly exchanges between Chinese and American universities. Also because of the close relationship of ACCU and Catholic seminaries in the United States, and because of my own background as a seminary professor for many years, I welcome the opportunity to share experiences with those involved in seminary training here.

If I were to sum up my experiences as a teacher in the Christian community, both within and without the seminary context, I would say that three factors are most important for maturity in the apostolic community.

The first is described by the Greek word *didache*. It means "the teaching," or "doctrine," but it describes a way of life. For you and me doctrine should not be merely an ideology, something abstract, but it should be alive in us as the wisdom of God. I have been told that the idea of Christ as the Way is appealing to Chinese culture. May we all walk safely in this Way. The Chinese classics say: "To follow nature is called the way of life; to cultivate the way is called education." (The Book of the Mean). (率性之謂道，修道之謂教) This is enlightening for our Christian faith.



Bishop Jin and Father Murphy flanked by students from Zhejiang Province, a sister-province to New Jersey, Father Murphy's home state.

The second is described by the Greek word: *koinonia*. It means a sharing in community, but even better for us is a "fellowship in the Spirit." We are called by Jesus to bear one another's burdens, to share one another's joys and hopes, and always to support one another. We are never simply individuals, but always a fellowship. Every celebration is a concelebration. Every vocation is a convocation. This is like the meaning of the Chinese proverb: "A bosom friend who lives far away brings a distant land near." (海外存知己，天涯若比鄰)

The third is described by the Greek word: *diakonia*. It means "service," and that is why the first deacons were ordained, so that they could serve the people of God. We know the example of Jesus, who took a towel around his waist and bathed the feet of his disciples. He told us, "the Son of Man has come, not to be served by others, but to serve, to give his own life as a ransom for the many." (Mt. 20:28) The Chinese use the phrase: "to lay down one's life for a just cause" (殺身成仁，捨生取義) to describe this exalted type of service.

I ask of you, then, to live a life worthy of the calling you have received, bearing with one another lovingly. Make every effort to preserve the unity which has the Spirit as its origin and peace as its binding force. There is but one body and one spirit, just as there is but one hope given all of you by your call. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all, and works through all, and is in all. (Eph. 4, 1-6)



Bishop Li Side and friend