

Formal Addresses by
Bishop John B. Wu
in China



translated by Peter Barry

WORDS OF THANKS DELIVERED BY BISHOP WU TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS OF THE STATE COUNCIL'S BUREAU OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AT A BANQUET ARRANGED FOR HIM BY REN WUZHI, ACTING DIRECTOR, ON MARCH 26, 1985.

First, allow me to express my heartfelt gratitude for your most generous invitation, and to offer to you my somewhat belated New Year's greeting: May the Year of the Ox bring much prosperity and further progress to you all.

I recall that on the first day of the New Year, a commentator for the People's Daily pointed out that "the ox is man's good friend; he is productive and contributes much to human life." The writer encourages us to emulate his "simple, honest, industrious and humble spirit" in furthering our country's four-modernizations programme and its overall economic reforms, with a special care "to work for the benefit of all, that our Motherland may be strengthened and our people prosper."



Mr. Ren Wuzhi, director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs, giving the welcome speech to the delegation.

The relationship between the Catholic religion and social progress is reciprocal, one of mutual benefit. While the primary task of the Church is religious, namely, to spread the gospel of love and service of our Lord Jesus Christ, it also requires of Christians, as a fundamental responsibility, putting into practice in concrete ways our love for our fellowman, always showing concern for others, and making ever increasing contributions to social improvement. Moreover, man's social progress necessarily entails the complete and integral development of his material, spiritual and religious life. For this reason, the Church and service to society must go hand-in-hand.

Nowadays the leaders of China promote, unceasingly, an "openness to the outside world" and seek "to find common ground amid differences". During the past two decades, since the close of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has likewise placed much emphasis on "dialogue": the genuinely sincere and open exchange of views in an atmosphere of mutual respect that engages all men of good will in the common search for truth. I, myself, have the hope that this trip will offer me many opportunities to listen attentively

to your valued opinions and to arrive at a better understanding of the actual conditions in our motherland and in the Catholic Church here; may it further friendly exchanges between us and help to create conditions of mutual favour and benefit. It is my belief that Hong Kong and the Catholic Church of Hong Kong can continue to expand its role as a bridge for the promotion of our rich Chinese culture, and that we can work hand-in-hand in the building up of our society for the benefit of all.

In order to accomplish this mission of love and service, we consider it necessary that mankind enjoy religious freedom. We firmly believe that authentic religious faith and freedom of practice are a basic human right given by God at birth, as the United Nations in its Declaration on Human Rights has also already made clear. We look forward to a further exchange of opinions with you with regard to this issue in order that we might arrive at a deeper understanding that will serve to strengthen the confidence of the people of Hong Kong and throughout the world.

I, myself, was born in the Year of the Ox, which places me in the 'ox' category; further, this, my first homecoming since 1949, also coincides with the Year of the Ox. May I, then, respectfully offer the humble ox, who bears our burdens, and even our complaints, in a spirit of self-sacrifice and faithful service as a source of mutual encouragement for each and everyone of us.



Bishop Wu in front of Matteo Ricci's tomb with delegation members, Father Michael Yeung and Ms. Joyce Chang.

THIS ADDRESS TO LEADERS OF THE CHINESE CATHOLIC PATRIOTIC ASSOCIATION AND CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION WAS DELIVERED BY BISHOP WU AT A FORMAL LUNCHEON GIVEN FOR HIM BY THE LEADERS OF THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS ON MARCH 27, 1985.

Beijing, the capital of our country, is an old city rich in culture whose reputation is famous throughout the whole world. Moreover, Beijing creates a warm religious feeling within us Catholics, for it was during the Yuan dynasty that Franciscan friars travelled a great distance to come here to preach the Gospel. When, four hundred years ago, Father Matteo Ricci and his companions came to China to begin again Christian missionary work, they, too, lived here, where Xuanwumen Catholic Church is now located. They were tireless in spreading the Gospel among our fellow-countrymen; they introduced western scientific learning; and, they promoted cultural exchange and established friendly relations with the people of our country. When they finally died and were buried in Beijing, they left behind an example that continues to inspire us Christians of a later age to a faith in Christ, a love for our country, a oneness with the universal Church, and a total dedication of ourselves to the service of society.



Bishop Wu talks with Bishop Zong Huaide, CPA chairman (L), and Bishop Zhang Jiashu, chairman of the Church Administrative Commission and president of the Bishops Conference (R).

When I received the invitation of Director Ren Wuzhi of the National Bureau of Religious Affairs to visit Beijing I chose to begin my trip on March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation. I wished to follow in the footsteps of my forebears and placed our visit under the protection of the Blessed Mother. During his final illness on Shangchuan Island, St. Francis Xavier consecrated the people he loved to the Blessed Mother. And it was on the Blessed Mother's birthday in 1583 that Father Matteo Ricci finally received permission from the emperor to live in China. It was because of this that he placed a painting of Mary holding the Child Jesus above the altar in the chapel of his residence here. When Ricci went to pay his respects to the emperor, he brought along with him two pictures of the Blessed Mother. Later, Xu Guangqi recorded in his diary: "I went to visit Father Ricci but he was not available, so I went to the chapel. There when I caught sight of the picture of the Blessed Mother, a strong feeling of emotion swept over me.... I felt close to God." I believe it was upon viewing Mary's picture that Xu Guangqi decided to enter the Church. And it is for these reasons that I offer this journey into the hands of our Blessed Mother and ask for her protection that my visit might make some small contribution to our country and to our Church.



The rector Bishop Jin, the professors and students of Sheshan Seminary welcome Bishop Wu.

ANOTHER ADDRESS GIVEN TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
AND LEADERS OF THE TWO CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS AT
A BANQUET BISHOP WU HOSTED FOR GOVERNMENT OF-
FICIALS AND CHURCH LEADERS ON THE EVENING OF
MARCH 27, 1985.

We feel privileged and grateful to be invited by the Director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs, Mr. Ren Wuzhi, to visit Beijing.

We are Catholics from Hong Kong, and Hong Kong can be likened to a bridge between China and the West. At the same time, our Catholic faith requires of each Catholic a love for one's country, and urges us to strive to be good citizens. With this in mind, I would like to say a few words about how I personally view the triangular relationship between China, Hong Kong and the world.

The Catholic Church has been in Hong Kong for over 140 years. The Hong Kong church is a local church, and its administrative responsibilities are gradually being assumed by native priests under the leadership of a native bishop. Lay Catholics have also taken up their responsibilities for preaching the Gospel and for serving the community at large. In general, it is the local Catholics who contribute the financial support needed for the running of the diocese.

Each local church is united with the universal church in spirit and faith; all make up one body and, as one body, share their individual resources. Thus, our Hong Kong church receives financial assistance and personnel from other churches around the world, and the Hong Kong church, in turn, sends clergy and lay people to serve in other local churches, as well as making financial contributions to foster the evangelical and social service works of the universal Church. This is a special characteristic of the Catholic Church at-large.

We Hong Kong Catholics, in accordance with tradition, firmly believe that bishops are the "successors of the Apostles forming an "Apostolic College" which was established by Jesus Christ himself. At one with the successor of Peter, the leader of the "Apostolic College", all the bishops of the world are joined in a bond of unity, love, and peace. At the same

time, under his leadership, all bishops have a duty to be solicitous for the whole Church.

The Church throughout the world is very pleased at China's ever-increasing openness to the outside. The Church also sincerely desires to enter into a dialogue, promote understanding, increase contacts, and cooperate with China in the building up of our society and for the benefit of all mankind. By serving as a bridge, Hong Kong Catholics and I desire to do our utmost to see that this hope is realized. Since we Chinese have always had high aspirations and are proud of our farsightedness, I believe that by sincere dialogue and by going through proper channels we can remove all obstacles that might stand in the way of bringing about peace and harmony between Catholics in China and Catholics outside. I am certain that this will be a great benefit to China and that it will result in an increased confidence in our Motherland throughout the world.

In concluding, I wish to underline what I have said earlier, that as Catholics we assume the duties and responsibilities of modern day Chinese citizens as our sacred mission, united in spirit and working together for the common good. Let us devote our energies for the integral development of the whole man, safeguarding freedom, and extending justice for the peace, happiness and prosperity of our Motherland, and for the good of the whole world.



Bishop Wu addressing government officials and CPA leaders.

BISHOP WU DELIVERED THIS ADDRESS AT A BANQUET GIVEN FOR HIM BY BISHOP JIN LUXIAN AT SHESHAN SEMINARY ON MARCH 29, 1985.

Overlooking as it does the surrounding hills, Sheshan's landscape is quite breathtaking. I have heard that it was once a Buddhist place of worship, and then later served as a rest home for missionaries. Subsequently, it became China's most important pilgrimage site for all Chinese Catholics. On many occasions throughout the history of the Catholic Church in China, the name Sheshan has aroused feelings of ardent love for the Blessed Mother. Its fame has spread beyond China to the outside world. I feel happy and privileged to have had this opportunity to make my own personal pilgrimage here today.

Mary is the Mother of God, the Mother of the Church, and our Mother. The evangelists Matthew and Luke wrote the story of Jesus' birth and childhood from details that Mary had given them. Thus, each year the world celebrates the wonderful Feast of Christmas. It was at Mary's request that Jesus performed his first miracle at the wedding feast of



Auxiliary Bishop Li Side of Shanghai and Bishop Wu praying in the Xujiahui Church.

Cana. On the cross, Jesus asked his beloved disciple John to carry out his filial duties for him. He also asked his mother Mary to show a mother's love to John, Peter and the whole Christian community. On Pentecost Sunday, the Holy Spirit gave direction to the Church, safeguarding its unity through Peter, the community's first leader. At the same time, through Mary, the Holy Spirit gave comfort and guidance to that Christian community. Thus Mary became the symbol of love within the apostolic college. "Our Lady, Help of Christians" of Sheshan helps us to move closer to Jesus and strengthens our resolve to spread the Church's love. She also assists us in making manifest our country's ancient and beautiful tradition of filial piety.

There is a cross now on the top of the basilica's bell tower. I have been told that a statue of the Blessed Mother holding the infant Jesus in her arms had formerly stood there, and that the infant's arms were outstretched so that his body formed a cross. My companions and I are happy to see that the basilica has been reopened, and while gazing at the cross, we wish to take a lesson from its form. It points towards the heavens to remind us always to move in the direction of the heavenly Father as Christ has taught us, and always to seek a greater union between God and man. The cross points downward to the earth to teach us to be incarnate in this world as Christ was, and to strive to plant our Gospel roots deep into the rich cultural soil of our motherland. It stretches horizontally from right to left so as to remind us to follow the path of Christ's death and resurrection; its outstretched arms beckon us to renew ourselves continually, to remain faithful to our church, love our country and work for mankind's benefit and for the promotion of universal peace.



Bishop Wu speaking to the seminarians of Sheshan Seminary.