

Fr. Lombardi Replies to Question about Chinese Ordination

Vatican Information Service

VATICAN CITY, 18 NOV 2010 (VIS) — Given below is the English-language text of a question put to Holy See Press Office Director Fr. Federico Lombardi S.J. concerning an episcopal ordination in the People's Republic of China, and his reply.

Question: What is the position of the Holy See regarding the news according to which some bishops in mainland China are forced to participate in an episcopal ordination in Chengde, Hebei? Is the candidate approved by the Pope?

Answer: The Holy See is disturbed by reports from mainland China alleging that a number of bishops in communion with the Pope are being forced by government officials to attend an illicit episcopal ordination in Chengde, northeastern Hebei, said to be scheduled around 20 November.

If these reports are true, then the Holy See would consider such actions as grave violations of freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.

It would also consider such an ordination as illicit and damaging to the constructive relations that have been developing in recent times between the People's Republic of China and the Holy See.

Moreover, the Holy See confirms that Fr. Joseph Guo Jincui has not received the approval of the Holy Father to be ordained as a bishop of the Catholic Church. The Holy See, keen to develop positive relations with China, has contacted the Chinese authorities on this whole matter and has made its own position clear.

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