

Father Savio Hon appointed Secretary of Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

Tripod Staff

On December 23, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Father Savio Hon Tai-fai as secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, succeeding Archbishop Robert Sarah, and at the same time appointed him Titular Archbishop of Sila. The episcopal ordination took place on February 5, 2011, when Father Hon and four other priests were ordained to the episcopacy. Pope Benedict XVI consecrated the five new bishops, with Cardinal Angelo Sodano and Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone as co-consecrators.

Archbishop Hon is the first Chinese person to hold a senior post in the Roman Curia. He was born in Hong Kong on October 21, 1950. He is a member of Salesians of Don Bosco. He made his first religious profession on August 15, 1969, took his perpetual vows on August 15, 1975, and was ordained a priest in Hong Kong on July 17, 1982. He received a B.A. in philosophy from the University of London, and a doctorate in theology from the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome.

Archbishop Hon has held various positions in his congregation, including Provincial Superior of the Salesian Province of China from 2001 to 2006. He was also a member of the Pontifical Academy of Theology, and a member of the International Theological Commission. He taught at the Holy Spirit Seminary College in Hong Kong, and has also taught theology at various seminaries in China as a visiting professor. He has written many books on theology, and has been involved in translation work,

including the Chinese translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Present at the episcopal ordination, among others, were Cardinal Ivan Dias, Prefect of the of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Cardinal Joseph Zen, Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, Bishop John Tong of Hong Kong, and Bishop Martin Su of Taichung, Taiwan. Fr. Pedro Ho, the novice master of Archbishop Hon, also attended the ceremony. More than a hundred priests, seminarians, and Sisters from mainland China, who are studying in Italy and in other countries in Europe were also there.

At a press conference held at the Catholic Diocese Centre on the afternoon of December 24, 2010, the day following his appointment. Father Hon said that he was informed about two months ago that he was one of the possible candidates for the post. He instantly thought of reasons for not accepting it. However, he later thought that if the appointment is God's will, in humble obedience, he would accept it. On December 23, 2010, at 7 P.M. Hong Kong time, the appointment was announced. Since it came from the Holy Father, Father Hon obeyed his highest superior, and accepted the appointment without reservation.