

Statement of the Holy See on Episcopal Ordinations in Harbin and Shanghai

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Episcopal Ordinations in Harbin and Shanghai (Mainland China)

With regard to the episcopal ordination of the Reverend Joseph Yue Fusheng, which took place in Harbin (Province of Heilongjiang) on Friday 6 July 2012, the following is stated:

- 1) The Reverend Joseph Yue Fusheng, ordained without pontifical mandate and hence illicitly, has automatically incurred the sanctions laid down by canon 1382 of the *Code of Canon Law*. Consequently, the Holy See does not recognize him as Bishop of the Apostolic Administration of Harbin, and he lacks the authority to govern the priests and the Catholic community in the Province of Heilongjiang.

The Reverend Yue Fusheng had been informed some time ago that he could not be approved by the Holy See as an episcopal candidate, and on several occasions he had been asked not to accept episcopal ordination without the pontifical mandate.

- 2) The Bishops who took part in the illicit episcopal ordination and have exposed themselves to the sanctions laid down by the law of the Church, must give an account to the Holy See of their participation in that religious ceremony.

- 3) Appreciation is due to those priests, consecrated persons and lay faithful who prayed and fasted for a change of heart in the Reverend Yue Fusheng, for the holiness of the Bishops and for the unity of the Church in China, particularly in the Apostolic Administration of Harbin.
- 4) All Catholics in China, Pastors, priests, consecrated persons and lay faithful, are called to defend and safeguard that which pertains to the doctrine and tradition of the Church. Even amid the present difficulties, they look to the future with faith, comforted by the certainty that the Church is founded on the rock of Peter and his Successors.
- 5) The Apostolic See, trusting in the concrete willingness of the Government Authorities of China to dialogue with the Holy See, hopes that the said Authorities will not encourage gestures contrary to such dialogue. Chinese Catholics also wish to see practical steps taken in this direction, the first among which is the avoidance of illicit celebrations and episcopal ordinations without pontifical mandate that cause division and bring suffering to the Catholic communities in China and the universal Church.

The ordination of the Reverend Thaddeus Ma Daqin as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Shanghai on Saturday 7 July 2012 is encouraging and is to be welcomed. The presence of a bishop who is not in communion with the Holy Father was inappropriate and shows a lack of consideration for a lawful episcopal ordination.

From the Vatican, 10 July 2012