

Catholic Church could continue to maintain relations with the Vatican after 1997, but as for China herself, there were still many problems to be resolved before the matter of relations with the Vatican could be taken up. Questioned about whether the present government subvention to religious-run institutions such as schools, hospitals and social programs would continue after 1997, Mr. Ren replied that the matter would have to be discussed during meetings of the Basic Law Drafting Committee.

The Religious Affairs Bureau Delegation returned to China on April 10.

## FORMAL ADDRESS OF BISHOP WU

*On April 4th, Bishop John B. Wu played host to the visiting delegation from China's National Bureau of Religious Affairs, which was headed by Director Ren Wuzhi. During the reception banquet, the Bishop gave the following welcoming address.*

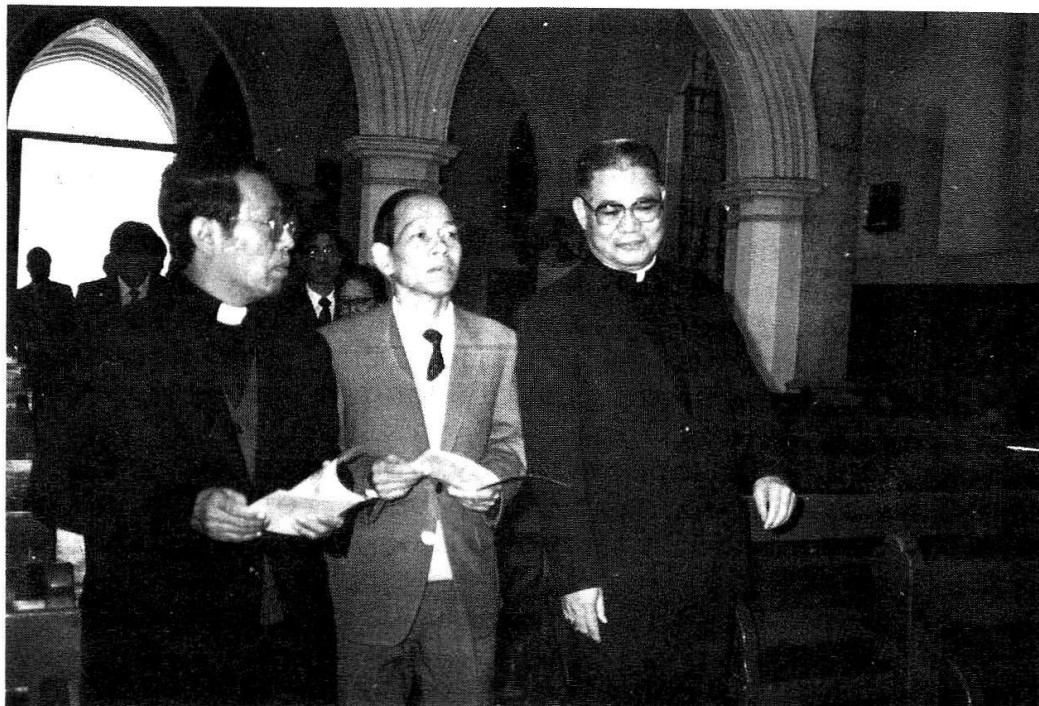
Director Ren and Distinguished Visitors and Guests,

Your presence here tonight brings to mind my own visit to China in March of 1985. It was at your kind invitation that I and the five Catholics in our delegation went to Beijing and Shanghai for the purpose of further developing better communication and understanding among us. Your warm reception on that occasion made me feel quite honoured. And now you have come to Hong Kong on your first official visit, having graciously accepted the invitation extended to you by the representatives of Hong Kong's six major religions. Today you were able to visit some of our Catholic institutions, and the opportunity you availed us to exchange and share ideas and opinions has been for us most valuable. As host this evening, I have also invited representatives from among our Catholics to be with us that this humble meal may serve as a sign of our mutual friendship.

It was the Third Plenum of the CCP's 11th Central Committee that launched China on a new policy of openness to the world at-large. It legislated large-scale reforms, promoting the four modernizations and opening the door to

the importation of much needed technology as a means to achieve its goals. What has been accomplished to date is apparent to all; the results have been outstanding. By the same token, it was the Second Vatican Council that twenty years ago launched the Church on her own present policy of renewal and reform, promoting an open dialogue with the world, and urging Catholics to renewed efforts in carrying out their responsibility not only of fidelity to God but also of love of country expressed in practical service to their fellow citizens. Catholics are expected and urged to use their talents in the service of society, to place high value on a good moral life, and to work for an integrated and balanced development within society's structures. In this way, we are to herald the coming century with a renewed spirit.

China's traditional respect for and emphasis on the rule of law has led to the 1982 revision of her Constitution. Further, in order to preserve Hong Kong's future stability and prosperity, China has set up the Basic Law Drafting Committee. This respect for and emphasis on the rule of law is also shared by the Catholic Church. In 1983, the



*At Cathedral (L-R) Pastor James Wan, Director Ren, Bishop Wu*

Church promulgated its new Code of Canon Law. The new Code places greater emphasis on the local churches in order to enable each local church and every Catholic to adapt better to local conditions and the needs of these changing times that they might continue to bear witness to the gospel of love and service. Under the leadership of the Holy Father and in union with the universal Church, all Catholics share this same faith and seek to live in communion with one another.

The Catholic Church firmly believes that God is the ultimate source of all authority and the basis of all law. She requires of Catholics that they be law-abiding citizens showing love for their country and respect for the legislators and those entrusted with the execution of the country's laws. The Church also teaches that freedom of religion is a God-given right and the exercise of this freedom is based on respect for man and is inherent to man's nature. This fundamental human right has been proclaimed in the United Nation's charter and is given legal guarantees in both the Sino-British Agreement and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

When I visited Beijing and Shanghai in March of 1985, and again on my recent tour of eastern Guangdong Province, I was able to observe first-hand how the religious policy is being implemented in the Motherland, and I realized then how much work, energy, and good will is involved. Many churches have been renovated and reopened, and many clergy have been returned to their former occupations. Most heartening to everyone, not only here but also abroad, has been the news of the release from prison of Bishop Gong Pinmei, along with other clergy members and lay Catholics. I am sure that your Bureau will continue in its efforts to make even greater progress in the implementation of our country's religious freedom policy, with the result that China's reputation will be further enhanced as the world comes to realize the great strides being made in her open door policy.

Let me now propose a toast to China's continuing development, to continued progress in the implementation of her religious policy, to the health of Director Ren and members of the delegation, and, finally, to the success of this your first visit to Hong Kong.