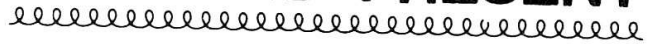




THE CHURCH IN CHINA:



PAST AND PRESENT



by Aloysius Jin Luxian

Editor's Note:

In April of this year, Aloysius Jin Luxian, Auxiliary Bishop of Shanghai, gave the following address to a group of German Catholics in Sankt Augustin while on a tour of West Germany. The Bishop raises a variety of sensitive issues relating to the present relationship of the Chinese Church and the Vatican. To our knowledge, it is the first time such issues have been addressed at length in a formal speech outside China by a member of the Chinese hierarchy. The text is an English translation of the original German.

Introduction

Six years from now we shall be celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the birth of the well-known astronomer and missionary Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1592-1666). This Jesuit priest, who was born in Cologne and died in Beijing, dedicated his entire life to the evangelization of China and the cultural exchange between East and West. I am very pleased to be able to address you today in his homeland, and to bring with me greetings from the people of China and its Catholics to the people of Germany and the German Church.

Four hundred years ago when the Chinese cast their eyes for the first time on Europeans then arriving in China

with their red hair, blue eyes and large noses, they were startled and amazed. The Germans of that time, in their turn, were astonished to discover the Chinese - a people of strikingly different appearance, with new and strange habits and customs, living in such a vast uncharted land. At the time, China was for them a remote and distant place. Did you know that when Adam Schall sent a letter home, he would have to wait three years before receiving an answer? The only means of transport then were sailing ships, which had to circumvent the entire coast of Africa to reach their destination. Chinese culture to those Germans seemed on the one hand to be immensely fascinating, yet on the other hand alien and mysterious. The habits and customs of these two peoples were so diverse that they often looked upon each other as inhabitants of different planets.

Thanks to modern advances in science and technology, our world has become much smaller. It is now only a twelve to fifteen hour plane trip from Cologne to Beijing. Or should one choose, one can sit in ones own home, pick up the telephone and dial a friend on the other side of the world in Shanghai. But the question remains: Do our two peoples really know and understand each other? Has modern technological progress really brought us closer together?

We now live in the space age. We look at photographs taken on the moon and study pictures from as far away as Mars. Yet despite this, communication between individuals and peoples on our own planet is often sadly lacking: our information is often faulty and this gives rise to prejudices, and there are many gaps in our knowledge. This is also true with regard to the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China. News is often disseminated that does not correspond to the truth; information is exaggerated or slanted with little regard for the actual facts. Sometimes false reports are spread abroad even about myself personally and my work. One of the reasons I have come here today to address you is to help us to overcome such misunderstandings. We must learn to speak with one another in sincerity and truth.

While there may be sinister reports about us, there are also many appreciative ones as well. Many German people come with open minds to visit China, to observe and listen without prejudice, in order to gain a more objective under-

standing of us.

I have been able to make this trip because of the kind invitation of my German friends. I am very pleased and grateful to them for their invitation. I wish also to express my thanks to those of you who invited me here to give this lecture. It is my sincere desire that by this mutual exchange of experiences we shall be promoting the cause of friendship between ourselves and our peoples. I hope and pray that what we say and do here this evening will have the blessing of Almighty God.

Among the topics suggested for this evening's lecture, the choice narrowed itself down to two: "World Church and Local Church from China's Perspective" and "Christian Faith in the Far East: A Chinese View". Both subjects are quite vast, and I am acutely aware at this time of my own limited knowledge in trying to address them. I am sure that there are many among you who know a lot more than I do about both topics. So what I would really like to speak about to you is primarily my own personal experience with regard to the presence of the Christian faith in China, both yesterday and today.

A History of the Catholic Church in China

First, let me take you on a short excursion into its history.

During the Tang Dynasty, at the beginning of the 7th century, before St. Boniface had arrived to begin his work in Germany and during the renaissance of the Chinese Empire, Christianity had already come to China. It came with Nestorian Christians who travelled to our country over the Silk Road. There they built churches and found among the Chinese many followers. This initial period of Christian missionary activity lasted for about 200 years. It came to an end when all foreign religions were suppressed by Imperial edict, and the Nestorians disappeared from China forever.

At the beginning of the 13th century, Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, established the Yuan Dynasty (1260-1368) in China, making Beijing his capital. These

Mongol rulers followed an open-door policy and were quite tolerant in their attitude towards all religions. As a result, Franciscan missionaries from Europe were allowed to enter China. They too travelled along the Silk Road, building churches and founding Christian communities. In the year 1298 the Italian Franciscan Giovanni de Montecorvino (1247-1328) and the German Franciscan Arnold of Cologne established the bishopric of Beijing. They found in China many followers, especially from among the nobility. The Catholic Church spread; there were churches in Yangzhou (Jiangsu Province), Quanzhou (Fujian Province) and in many other places. Christians were even given certain special privileges. But the Franciscan success was to be found mainly among the Mongols and less among the real Chinese, the Han people, who did not come to a knowledge of the gospel during this period, with the result that when the Yuan was overthrown in 1368 by the Ming, a Chinese dynasty that was to last until 1644, Christianity in China was destroyed for the second time.

It was only towards the end of the Ming Dynasty, when Matteo Ricci and Michael Ruggieri were able to settle in Shaoqing in the southern province of Guangdong that the fortunes of Christianity in China again changed.

Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) is well known to you. The 400th anniversary of his arrival in China was celebrated four years ago both in the East and West. Much was written and many symposia were held in his honour throughout the world at that time. Ricci has been praised as a model for all missionaries, for in his own day he had already grasped the vital importance accommodation and inculturation must play in evangelization. It was just such a policy that Ricci himself practised throughout his whole life. The question arises: How can we best imitate him in today's circumstances?

It was the ardent desire of the Apostle of Asia, St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552), to open the gates of China to Christianity. He died on a small island overlooking the southern coast of the China mainland, abandoned and alone on this wind and rain-swept doorstep just short of his goal. How mysterious are the ways of God. The year of Xavier's death saw the birth of Matteo Ricci, the man who would put



The Visitation: illustration in Chinese style in a catechism printed in 1620

into effect his dying wish. After completing his studies in Rome, where he pursued courses not only in philosophy and theology but also astronomy, Ricci went to Lisbon where, after obtaining the necessary permission from the Portuguese government to do missionary work, he set sail for Macau. After some years of preparation there, he was eventually able to proceed into the interior of China.

The missionaries of those days were faced with a non-Christian culture that dated back four thousand years, a culture notable for its high standards of morality. While there were Europeans who looked down from haughty heights at this culture, this was not to be said of Matteo Ricci. Immediately upon arrival, he threw himself with passion and love into the task of mastering the language, immersing himself in Chinese literature and a study of Chinese habits and customs. He followed the path of accommodation and incultu-

ration, and after much reflection and experimentation, he came up with a method of evangelization that was both practical and realistic. In time, he was accepted not only by the broad strata of Chinese people, but also by the elite of Chinese society.

Ricci observed two characteristics of the Chinese people that were very special: first, the deep respect they

had for the famous philosopher Kongzi (known to the West as Confucius), and second, the extraordinary, almost child-like, love and esteem they had for parents and ancestors... the progenitors of the family. No festive occasion was celebrated without rituals in honour of their ancestors; for example, the placing of food offerings before their pictures or memorial tablets. Ricci accommodated completely to the Confucian culture; he dressed in the garb of a Chinese scholar, and in his preaching and writing, he often quoted from the Chinese classics, clothing his message, as it were, in Chinese dress. He wrote: "In this way the Gospel becomes more easily understandable to the Chinese."

In this way Ricci was able to win the deep respect and friendship of many Chinese scholars, and through his friendship, many came to understand and accept the Christian faith. Among these scholars, there were many high officials of the court, notably Li Zhizao (c.1630), and Xu Guangqi (1562-1633) who later became the prime minister. By means of these relationships, Ricci was able to penetrate to the interior of the Imperial Court and he received an audience with the Emperor himself. Ricci was also the means by which the latest developments of Western science were introduced into China. Many Chinese came to respect his breath of learning and his deep knowledge of Chinese culture. It was through this kind of inculturation that Christianity could remain in China, sink roots and develop there.

Statistics of those times demonstrate the correctness of Ricci's approach. In the year 1584, there were only 3 Christians in China; in 1585 only 19, which increased to 80 by 1589; by 1603 there were 500 and in 1610 over 2,500; this number rose to 38,000 in 1636, to 48,180 by 1648, and by the year 1670 there were already 273,780 Chinese Catholics. But such progress did not last long; for the devil had already sown seeds of discord in the vineyard of the Lord.

The Dominicans and Jesuits of that time were strong adversaries, holding conflicting opinions on a wide range of important issues. Their disputes, centered in Europe and especially in Rome, spilled over into China. Added to this was the political rivalry between Portugal and other emerging colonial powers. Portugal was the first European

colonial power to arrive in the East, and it laid claim to India and all the lands adjacent to the Indian Ocean. It had obtained from the Pope Padroado rights over the missions in those territories. And a Papal Bull issued by Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) openly encouraged Portugese colonial expansion to include all nations east of India. Colonial powers arriving later in East Asia, especially France, would engage in keen competition with Portugal for protectorate rights over the missions there. It was the policy of the European powers to use religion and the missionaries to further their colonial policies.

We come now to the Rites Controversy, which we touched on briefly above. The veneration of Confucius and ancestors, which was common practise throughout China, was considered by the Jesuits to be merely civil ceremony in nature, and therefore open to Christian participation. But the Dominicans and others, most notably the French missionaries, saw ancestor worship as a superstitious practice and thus forbidden to all Christians. Not only did these people reject Chinese culture in principle, but they even changed the surnames of their converts from Chinese names to Western names. What were they really after? The colonialists and those that helped them saw only to their own selfish interests, and the well-being of the Church meant little or nothing to them.

The Kangxi Emperor (1655-1723) was a wise and open-minded man. He was also friendly towards Christianity, holding in high respect the virtue and learning of such early missionaries as Adam Schall and Verbiest. He admired the teaching found in the Gospel, especially as it related to Christian love. When the squabbling and controversies among the missionaries were brought to his attention, his favorable impressions gave way to disillusionment. He began to think that behind the external facade of virtue, there was much that smacked of egoistical intrigue and greed for power. Out of sympathy for the Jesuits, he wished to put an end to the controversy over the rites, and so he publicly declared the veneration of Confucius and the worship of ancestors to be ceremonies of a civil nature. Despite this statement by the Emperor, the Dominicans and their followers not only did not abandon their attacks, but even stepped up their efforts to add further fuel to the controversy.

It was Pope Clement XI (1700-1721) who sent the Titular Patriarch of Antioch, Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon (1668-1710) as Apostolic Delegate to China to promulgate the papal prohibition of the Chinese rites and to see that it was put into effect. He summoned to Beijing one of the greatest opponents of this form of inculturation, the Vicar Apostolic of Fuan, Charles Maigrot, MEP (1652-1730), and together they were received by the Emperor. When the Emperor pointed to the four large Chinese characters that hung behind the Imperial throne and asked Maigrot through an interpreter if he understood their meaning, Maigrot answered that he did not. Whereupon the Emperor said to him: "You cannot speak a word of Chinese nor recognize it when it is written. How then are you able to make judgments about Chinese matters? You are like one who stands outside a room commenting on what is going on inside the closed doors. Your talk has no basic foundation. Leave China!" Tournon was forced to return to Macau, only to have the Portuguese government there imprison him for attempting to appoint a Chinese archbishop without the King of Portugal's approval.

After the death of Tournon, Pope Clement XI sent another papal legate to China. Carlo A. de Mezzabarba came armed with the Papal Bull Ex Illa Die to enforce the prohibition. He too was received by the Emperor in accordance with Chinese courtesy. When in the course of the audience the Emperor asked him whether or not there were men in Europe with wings as those he had seen portrayed in Western religious art, Mezzabarba replied: "No, there are no men with wings. The painters merely wanted to symbolize in this way the swiftness of angels." The Emperor retorted: "I understand. Because we Chinese are not familiar with your language, we do not understand your affairs. But you as a Westerner do not speak our Chinese language, so how are you able to make decisions about Chinese affairs? That is what I meant to convey by my question."

Despite repeated statements by the Emperor, the Pope remained adamant, forbidding Chinese Catholics from practicing ancestor worship under threat of excommunication. When the Emperor learned that missionaries were continuing to implement the papal ruling, he had them expelled from China.

One can easily imagine the difficult situation the

Chinese Catholics found themselves in at that time. A Catholic who followed the prohibition in order to remain a Christian could no longer consider himself to be Chinese, for every Chinese without exception practised veneration of Confucius and ancestor worship. Catholic children had to renounce Chinese education, since the heart of traditional teaching was Confucian doctrine. Chinese Catholics now became outcasts in their own society, pariahs among their own people.

What resulted from this crude form of papal interference was the decline of Christianity in China. The number of Chinese Catholics, which had climbed to over 300,000, quickly dropped under 200,000 after the prohibition. Those who remained Catholics were mostly farmers and fishermen, who had to live isolated from, and were despised by, the rest of Chinese society.

After two hundred years, Rome finally reversed its decision and lifted the prohibition. Today Chinese are encouraged to venerate Confucius and their ancestors. In many churches in Taiwan, the picture of Confucius is placed side-by-side with that of St. Thomas. On All Souls Day, Christians go to the cemeteries to place before the graves of deceased relatives their favorite foods. These changes are certainly to the good; it is surely better to admit ones mistake than to persist in error. But have they not come too late? At a time when the veneration of Confucius was vitally necessary to the Chinese, Rome forbade it, and now at a time when the Chinese have become quite indifferent to him, Rome allows it. The damage caused by the Rites Controversy can hardly be undone. It is good when a man recognizes his mistake; if he reflects on the causes, there will be less chance that he will repeat that mistake in the future. In my opinion, an important reason why Church officials blundered in handling the rites question lay in the unholy alliance between the Church and the colonial powers. They had forgotten the teaching of Christ on love and equal rights for all men; they wanted to Christianize other countries while they colonized them.

The gates of China were reopened to the Christian missionaries in 1842 by the so-called 'Unequal Treaties,' which ended the First Opium War and which the victorious

British forced the Emperor to sign. In the provisions of the treaty, one could read side-by-side: "From now on foreign merchants are permitted to sell opium in the whole of China ...and missionaries shall be allowed to spread their gospel throughout the empire." That supposedly Christian believers would actually use violence to force opium on citizens of other countries is really a disgrace for Christianity. Freedom to preach the gospel that goes hand-in-hand with freedom to trade in opium brings no honour to the Church. Christianity was used by the European powers solely to extend their political influence. And the Roman Curia allied itself with these powers, apportioning to them the Chinese Church.

With the decline of Portugal, France assumed the so-called Protectorate over the Catholic missions in China. Franciscan missionaries were to receive the lions share of the territories: Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Hebei, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Guangdong, Yunnan and Zhejiang. Belgian missionaries were given Mongolia, the Germans got Shandong province. The missionaries bought properties, built churches, established schools and hospitals. Most of the missionaries were good people, who consecrated their whole lives to the Church of China. But, also, some were not! To quote one example, the Rector of the Catholic Aurora University in Shanghai was fond of saying: "L'Aurore, c'est la France!"

In the eyes of many Chinese, the missionaries represented narrow national interests. Christianity was, therefore, a western religion for the West and not for China. Furthermore, missionaries were accorded many special privileges, which allowed some of their Christians to bring unfair lawsuits, with the help of the missionaries, against their neighbours. This was the source of much of the discontent, resentment and anger that was directed towards the missionaries. In the year 1900, it led to the Boxer Rebellion. The battle-cry of the Boxers was: "Up with the Qing dynasty, and down with its enemies (including those half-foreign devils the Christians)." Eight foreign powers, including Germany, joined forces and sent troops to China to put down this rebellion. After the siege of the legations was lifted in Beijing, China was condemned, and powers imposed an indemnity of 400,000,000 Chinese dollars (a dollar at the time was half the monthly wage of an ordinary labourer). The foreign troops were eventually withdrawn,

but the anger of the Chinese against the foreigners and the Christian religion only grew stronger.

Further mistakes that were to prove disastrous for Chinese Catholics were made by the Vatican at the time of the Japanese aggression. The Vatican had hurried to recognize the Japanese puppet-state of Manzhuguo in Manchuria. The Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Zanin also wrote a letter to all the bishops, priests and Catholics in China, cautioning them to remain neutral in the face of actual Japanese aggression. Understandably, this position deeply offended Chinese patriots. Since Japan and Italy were forming an axis with the Fascist government of Germany, what were the Chinese to think of the Vatican, which was in Italy, and the Catholic Church at large?

From the time of Matteo Ricci throughout three hundred and fifty years of the Church in China, there had been only one Chinese bishop. All the bishops of China were foreigners, when in 1926 the first Chinese bishops were ordained. Naturally, they were given only the unimportant dioceses. In the 1930's, however, the attitude of the Vatican did change, and right after World War II, in 1946, an independent Chinese hierarchy was set up, with Beijing finally getting its first Chinese archbishop and cardinal. Unfortunately, it was already too late. In 1949, Mao Zedong took power in China. We should not overlook the fact that this power change also meant the end of all colonial and imperial claims by the European powers, and the recovery by China of full independence as well as her national self-respect.

In this very difficult and delicate situation, Chinese Catholics were subjected to another series of misfortunes. The Roman Curia forbade Chinese Catholics from cooperating with the Communist regime, which was now ruling China and was accepted by its people. Catholics were forbidden to read newspapers, periodicals and books published by the Communists. They were also prohibited from joining trade unions or any other associations that were communist-organized. And while the Chinese were fighting American troops in the Korean conflict, the Vatican appointed an American as Bishop of Yangzhou (Jiangsu Province). Can you imagine what would have happened if during the First World War the Vatican had appointed a Frenchman to be Archbishop of Cologne and a German as Archbishop of Lille?

Thus once again the Chinese Catholics found themselves on the horns of the old dilemma: to remain a Catholic, they could not remain a Chinese. After the foreign missionaries had left or been expelled from China, the Vatican did not wish to appoint any new bishops. The Chinese Catholics themselves then proceeded to choose and ordain them. The names of those chosen were sent to the Roman Curia, but the answer that came back was a threat of excommunication.

From this brief history of the Church in China, we can learn three things:

1. The Church must put down roots in every people and culture; the faith must be brought to the masses; the Church must share the fate of the people.



Lo Pa-hong, benefactor of Catholic social work in early twentieth century in Shanghai.

2. Inculturation must be the primary principle on which all pastoral activity is based.

3. The Church must be independent of colonial powers and must be able to exercise regional self-administration.

Each local Church should be allowed to determine its own fate. The Church of China has had its own personal experiences. At the same time, it knows very well that the Roman Curia has a world-wide strategy and it must attempt to balance the interests of many different peoples and powers, which is not always a simple task. We Chinese Catholics are Catholics who want to remain Catholics; we have no wish to become Protestants or Orthodox Christians. We basically accept the First and Second Vatican Councils, and we are trying now to implement the Second Vatican Council directives in China. With the help of God, we ourselves are able to administer and develop our Church in our own region. We possess the courage, the wisdom, and, I pray, the charism to do so.

Today we have reopened more than 600 Churches, including the cathedrals of Beijing and Shanghai. The great pilgrimage-church of Sheshan near Shanghai has also been reopened. We now have six regional seminaries and one national seminary preparing young men for the priesthood. In my own diocese, we have established a research institute for the publication of books and periodicals, and have recently established an association of Catholic academicians. We look with confidence to the future.

World Church and Local Church: A Chinese Perspective

Now I would like to say a few words about a second topic: the relationship between the World Church and the local Church from a Chinese point of view.

What actually is a local Church and what is the World Church? Only after clarifying the meaning of these words is one able to continue the discussion. The local Church is a concept of some elasticity and flexibility. Each Christian community basically can be called a local Church. A diocese is a local Church in the fuller sense of the word; a regional, a national, a continental Church is likewise a local Church. Cologne is a local Church as is Shanghai. The diocese of Rome is likewise a local Church, as is the Italian Church, the Asian Church, the European Church, the Slav Church, etc.

The World Church, or Universal Church, is rather an abstraction: since as such it exists nowhere; it exists only in the local Churches. Perhaps instead of "Universal Church" it would be better for us to say "complete Church" (vollständige Kirche) or total Church (Gesamtkirche). The total Church as a whole exists in each local Church, each local Church thus being a complete Church. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." (Eph 4,5-6)

The Church is a Sacrament, i.e., sign and instrument for the most intimate union with God as well as for the unity of the whole of mankind. This means that behind its external aspect it contains in itself mysteries: the mysterious activity of God. Among others we can find at least two:

In the "Lauda Sion", the Eucharistic hymn of St. Thomas Aquinas we pray:

"By His Sacred precepts guided, (Docti sacris institutis
Make we bread and wine provided, Panem, vinum in salutis
A saving victim from above... Consecramus hostiam...

"When the host in pieces breakest (Fracto denu[m] sacramento
If thou waver, thou mistakest, Ne vacilles, sed memento
For each fragment thou partakest Tantum esse sub fragmento
Holds no less than does the whole. Quantum toto tegitur.

Of the substance no division, (Nulla rei fit scissura;
Signs alone admit partition, Signi tantum fit fractura:
Whence unlesened the condition Qua nec status nec statura
Of the symbolled body and soul." Signati minuitur.)

In the Preface for the Trinity we sing:

"O holy Lord, Father almighty, (Domine sancte, Pater omni-
ever-lasting God; Who with potens, aeterne Deus: Qui
Thine only-begotten Son and cum unigenito Filio tuo, et
the Holy Spirit are one God, Spiritu Sancto, unus es Deus,
one Lord; not in the oneness unus es Dominus: non in unius
of a single person, but in Trinitate substantiae. Quod
the Trinity of one substance. enim de tua gloria, reve-
For that which we believe lante te, credimus, hoc de
from Thy revelation concern- Filio tuo, hoc de Spiritu
ing Thy glory, that same we Sancto, sine differentia
believe of Thy Son, that same discretionis sentimus. Ut
of the Holy Spirit, without in confessione verae sempiternae
difference or separation. Deitatis, et in personis proprietas, et in
So that in confessing the essentia unitas, et in majestate
true and ever-lasting God- adoretur aequalitas.)
head, we shall adore distinc-
tion in persons, oneness in
being, and equality in majes-
ty."

How beautiful this Preface is!

Should the relationship between the total Church and the local Church not be the same? Differentiation, unity and equality of the Churches on earth reflect the mystery

of the Trinity in Heaven.

That is why in the relationship between the local Churches we must take note that we see the most important thing is mutual love, communion, koinonia, community - and not power and law. Proceeding from love, the missionaries set out to preach the Gospel. After the founding of a local Church, they should retire into the background, not holding onto leadership positions for hundreds of years. They should make their own the saying of John the Baptist: "He must increase, I must decrease."

Our Church is God's new people; she is founded by Christ to bring salvation to all men. She is, therefore, open to all peoples, to all nations. She is a pilgrim en route to the heavenly Jerusalem. When she proclaims the Gospel in a new country, she should not tie herself to that one culture.

The Church springs from Judaism, from the Orient, that is why she had in the beginning many Oriental characteristics. She developed in the West; Hellenism, Latinism,



In the editorial office of "Life and Education", the diocesan newspaper of Aachen. (L-R Fr. Shen, Bishop Jin, the Director of "Life and Education")

the Gospel and Judaism are all elements in Western Christianity. Hellenism and Latinism were united so closely that today one can hardly distinguish between them any more.

The Church of the early centuries was an outstanding example of inculturation. Later the elements of Latinism dominated. The emphasis was put on law and power. Naturally a certain institutionalisation of the Church is necessary, but it must not eliminate communion, mutual fraternity and love on equal terms. Today we are confronted with the task of inculturating and incorporating the Church into new cultures. Each unifying with other cultures makes the Church richer and more beautiful. It is a sign of the vitality of our Church, whereas monotony and "single-colouredness" indicate only stagnation and weakness. Christianity is not destroyed by multiplicity but rather completed and perfected by it; the colourful cultures of all the nations are part of her richness.

Christianity does not mean Latin or European culture. The Church up to today is in a growth process moving towards her completion; she needs many nutrients, i.e., other cultures, including the Indian, the Chinese. Inculturation, acculturation, interculturation and transculturation: that is how the process of Christianization happens. A procession of different people in a variety of colourful dresses is more beautiful and more interesting than a single line of long, black soutanes.

Recently I read a book by Cardinal Albert Decourtray, the Archbishop of Lyons. I found it very inspiring. May I quote a few words from it?

Many people think that the faith should be pure and ideal, that one should express it in unchanging concepts for many thousands of years. But in reality the Christian faith can develop only by incorporation with the local culture. God's Word, including the Holy Scriptures, is expressed in human speech, with the character therefore of a national culture.

The faith of the Logos, God's Son, can experiment, live, express itself in diverse cultures in different civilizations, without anything being changed in the substance.

We can go even further in saying: it is precisely in plurality and in different times and places that God's Word develops its infinite power. In no way should we tie God's Hands.

Since God's Word has entered the history of men, goodness and beauty unfold without limit in this world. Christ said to his disciples: "You will do greater things than I" - in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is why the Church is not helpless or terrified to death when confronted with new cultures, new political circumstances, new challenges. Her attitude then is not negative but sympathetic. Precisely because she possesses the truth, the light and eternal life, she is full of confidence and optimism.

The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. She grows in time and space to that dimension which was predetermined for her by God. The quintessence of the cultures of all countries comes from God and is foreseen by God as a constitutive part of the Body of Christ. Every refusal causes an irreplaceable loss. St. Paul says: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ... If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together." (1 Cor. 12,12.26)

The relationship between the local Churches must therefore be: koinonia, communion, mutual love, respect, help. There should be no crude interference; no local Church should seek to oppress other Churches.

In my opinion princes of the Church who live in palaces cannot understand the pain and misery of those who live in the slums, who have little to eat and little to wear. Would that all priests and nuns, would that all Christians who see this misery, might help them. Therefore, let there be no more interference!

We have in China only 3 million Catholics, a very small minority. But we can again do pastoral work; we struggle; and we find success. We would like to have communion with all Catholics who are brothers and friends

to us that we might share together our suffering and joy.

I am no historian and I am no theologian. I have only shared with you some of my experiences. I thank you from my heart.



Bishops in China Elected and Consecrated Since 1981

At the 4th Conference of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association held in November in Beijing, Chairman Zong Huaide, Bishop of Jinan, reported that 22 Bishops have been independently elected and consecrated in China since 1981. They are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Diocese</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Date of Consecration</u>
Xu Zhenjiang *	Shenyang	Liaoning	July 24, 1981
Zhang Wenbing	Dali	Shaanxi	
Zhao Jingnong	Tianshui	Gansu	
Ma Longlin	Suzhou	Jiangsu	
Qian Huimin	Nanjing	Jiangsu	
Li Panshi	Jiangmen	Guangdong	September 27, 1981
Cai Tiyuan	Shantou	Guangdong	
Ji Huairang	Xian	Shaanxi	December 18, 1981
Zhang Xin	Taiyuan	Shanxi	
Fan Wenxing	Hengshui	Hebei	December 20, 1981
Liu Jinghe	Tangshan	Hebei	
Liu Zongyu *	Chongqing	Sichuan	December 21, 1981
Liu Dianchi	Jilin	Jilin	October 10, 1982
Liu Dinghan	Xianxian	Hebei	
Jin Luxian		-	January 27, 1985
Li Side	Shanghai	-	
Chen Shizhong	Yibin	Sichuan	June 14, 1985
Li Xuesong	Jilin	Jilin	September 22, 1985
Yu Runshen	Hanzhong	Shaanxi	November 30, 1986
Zhu Huayu	Bengbu	Anhui	
Huang Ziyu	Xiamen	Fujian	
Zhang Shizhi	Mindong	Fujian	

* Xu Zhenjiang died in 1984; Liu Dianchi died in 1985.