

# THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE AND THE ENDEAVORS TO ESTABLISH AN ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY IN AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CHINA:1307-1946

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Today the People's Republic of China has no diplomatic relations with the Holy See. Though the Chinese ecclesiastical hierarchy was formally established on April 11, 1946, the proclamation of the Chinese People's Republic on October 1, 1949 completely changed China's relations with the foreign powers--in particular with the Holy See. The purpose of this article is to present an historical review of the efforts of the Holy See to establish diplomatic relations with the Middle Kingdom, and introduce an ecclesiastical hierarchy into China throughout its long history of missionary activity in the Far East.



## The Yuan Dynasty, 1280-1367

In the wake of Dominican and Franciscan diplomatic and missionary activity in the Mongol empire, the Holy See in 1307 established for the first time an ecclesiastical hierarchy in China when Pope Clement V (1305-1314) appointed the Italian Franciscan John of Monte Corvino (Giovanni da Montecorvino, 1247-1328) Archbishop of Beijing (Khanbaliq). A coadjutor was sent to him a few years later. In 1313, Quanzhou (Zaytun) in Fujian Province was made a diocese. After Monte Corvino's death in Beijing, all traces of the Roman Catholic Church were to disappear from China to the extent that the Jesuit missionaries, who arrived some 300 years later at the end of the Ming dynasty, were quite unaware that they had had Franciscan predecessors.

## The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1643

A new era in mission history dawned when, under the direction of Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460), Portuguese ships set out to explore the regions of Africa and the Indies. In 1487, Bartholomeu Dias

rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Thereafter, the Portuguese merchant-traders continued to plant along the coast of the Indian Ocean symbols of their right of occupation: the padroado, that is, crosses of stone bearing the blazon of the Portuguese king. In May 1493, Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) intervened in the fierce disputes among the competing European monarchs, notably the King of Spain, and confirmed these Portuguese conquests by an Apostolic Bull. In 1510, Goa was captured by Alfonso d'Albuquerque and became the Portuguese trade-centre for the East Indies. In 1514 or 1516 the first Portuguese traders arrived in Canton. On November 3, 1514, Pope Leo X (1513-1521) conferred upon the Portuguese king the jus patronatus missionum, the right of patronage of the missions (padroado). This right of the Portuguese to oversee Church affairs in the Far East included the right to nominate bishops. This gave the King of Portugal direct supervision over all missions in China, Indochina [Cochin-China and Cambodia, Laos, Tonkin/Tongking (North Vietnam) and Annam (South Vietnam)], Thailand (Siam) and Japan.

At the time the Jesuit missionary St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552) died on the small island of Shangchuan (Sancian) off the coast of Guangdong Province, the Portuguese merchants had already obtained official permission from the Chinese to reside there, as well as in Lambacao; and later in 1535, by bribing government officials, they also acquired Macao. In 1575, Macao was elevated by the Holy See to be the episcopal seat for all of China, Indochina, Thailand and Japan. Melchior Carneiro (?-1583) was appointed first bishop of Macao, but held the title only as a suffragan bishop under the Archbishop of Goa. Five years later in 1580, Portugal came under the political control of the Spanish king, Philip II (1556-1598).

In 1577, the Italian superior of all Jesuit missions in the East Indies, China and Japan, Alessandro Valignano (1537-1606) arrived in Macao. He instructed the Jesuits to learn to read, write and speak Chinese, to "Sinicize" themselves rather than to "Europeanize" the converts. In 1583, the Italian Jesuit Fathers Michele Ruggieri (1543-1607) and Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) received permission from the Governor-General of Liangguang (Guangxi and Guangdong) to live in Zhaoqing. Ricci, after first residing in a number of other Chinese cities, arrived in Beijing in 1601 seeking imperial patronage.

At the time of Ricci's death, there were nine Chinese converts who had taken religious vows in the Society of Jesus. However, none of them was to be ordained to the priesthood. In 1615, one year before the Chinese Christians were to experience persecution for the first time at the hands of the government official Shen Que (?-1624) in Nanjing, the Jesuit procurator, Nicolas Trigault (1577-1628) arrived in Rome. Trigault petitioned and obtained on behalf of the new superior of the Chinese mission, Father Nicolo Longobardi (Longobardo, 1565-1655) some

privileges from Pope Paul V (1605-1621) regarding the use of the Chinese language in the liturgy. However, Trigault's request to establish a seminary in Macao for the formation of a Chinese clergy, and to ordain a Chinese bishop and Chinese priests was denied.

In 1622, Pope Gregory XV (1621-1623) established the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to implement much needed mission reforms. Its first secretary, Francesco Ingoli (1578-1649) listed four main reasons why up to that time the Church's missionary enterprise in the East and West Indies had proven ineffective: (1) the Padroado system that allowed Spanish and Portuguese kings to allocate to themselves the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the mission territories; (2) the colonial authorities' prohibition of native clerics to travel to Rome (no doubt to forestall complaints being lodged against them); (3) the Portuguese authorities' refusal to allow missionaries who were not Portuguese citizens to travel to the Indies, and their prohibition against the appointment of non-Portuguese as local mission superiors; (4) the interference of civil authorities in ecclesiastical and missionary affairs.

In order to rectify this situation, Ingoli suggested that an apostolic delegate be sent from Rome with the full powers of a nuncio, and new dioceses be established with bishops who would be empowered to convene provincial councils, in which the apostolic delegate would also participate. The implementation of this plan, however, proved to be impossible due to the existing Portuguese patronage system.

### The Early Qing Dynasty, 1644-1800

Determined to reform ecclesiastical affairs under the ineffective padroado, Father Alexandre de Rhodes (1591-1660), a French Jesuit, returned in 1646 from Tonkin and pleaded with Rome to develop a native clergy and to set up a hierarchy directly under papal authority. Propaganda Fide entrusted him with the task of finding secular priests qualified to become bishops. Father de Rhodes' lecture tours through France and Italy stimulated much interest in the mission work being done in the Far East, and in Paris the Compagnie des Bons Amis, an apostolic association of young men, responded with enthusiasm to his appeals.

In 1652, Propaganda Fide planned to reorganize the ecclesiastical hierarchy in China, without any reference to the diocese of Macao, by establishing an independent patriarchate with two or three archdioceses and twelve dioceses. The project was vetoed by Portugal, who feared an infringement on its patronage rights. However, seven years later in 1659, Propaganda Fide issued an instruction to three young men of the Compagnie des Bons Amis placing them in charge of the mission territories in Tonkin, Cochin-China, and those territories of China that lay

south of the Yangtze River. Consecrated as bishops in partibus infidelium, they were appointed by and answerable only to the Holy See. However, they were given no clearly defined territories of jurisdiction. In this way Propaganda Fide tried to circumvent the Portuguese patronage system, and, also, to a certain extent, the Jesuit influence in China. At the same time, a seminary was founded in Paris with papal approval to train missionary candidates "for the conversion of the infidels in foreign countries". This seminary, having the support of the vicars apostolic and missionaries abroad became the nucleus of the Paris Foreign Mission Society (Societe des Missions Estrangere de Paris), whose membership was open only to the secular clergy.

The King of Portugal Pedro II (1667-1706) and his councillors, who saw the appointment of these vicars apostolic as agents of France and feared the loss of the Portuguese monopoly of trade in the Far East, then requested Pope Alexander VIII (1689-1691) to establish two additional padroado dioceses on Chinese territory. Against the advice of Propaganda Fide, the Pope in 1690 established the dioceses of Beijing and Nanjing, allowing Pedro II to determine their boundaries. Six years later, with pressure from Propaganda Fide, Pope Innocent XII (1691-1700) limited their areas of jurisdiction to include only two Chinese provinces. In the other provinces, the original plan for establishing nine vicariates was modified to include only three. This came as a result of the continuing persecution of Christianity under the Manchu emperors, and the erosion of missionary zeal in France during the eighteenth century. The vicariates of Fujian, Sichuan, and Shaanxi were given over by Innocent XII to the care of the Dominicans, the Paris Foreign Mission Society and the Franciscans respectively.

In Beijing, Ricci's immediate successors, such men as Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1592-1666) and Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-1688), had won the sympathy of the first two Manchu rulers, the Shunzhi (1644-1661) and the Kangxi (1662-1722) emperors. Christianity flourished under Kangxi's patronage. In March of 1692, he issued a decree protecting all church properties and allowing Christianity to be preached freely and embraced throughout the country. Imperial patronage of Catholicism, however, did not outlast the long reign of the Kangxi emperor. The controversy over the Chinese Rites, which then broke out among Jesuits, Dominicans, and others undid nearly all that the missionaries had accomplished up to that time.

On March 26, 1693, the Vicar Apostolic of Fujian, Charles Maigrot, M.E.P. (1652-1730), issued a directive to all missionaries under his jurisdiction condemning the Chinese rites. Maigrot called into question the earlier Jesuit interpretation of the rites and called on the Holy See to reconsider the facts and to render a new judgment on the matter. In spite of Kangxi's rescript in 1700, which endorsed the Jesuit interpreta-

tion, Pope Clement XI (1700-1721) on November 20, 1704 approved a decree that condemned the rites as being so imbued with superstition that Chinese Catholics were forbidden to participate in their practice. However, the publication of this decree was deferred in order to enable the papal legate Carlo Tommaso Maillard de Tournon (1668-1710), Patriarch of Antioch, time to explain its content to the missionaries and thus ensure its observance. The sending of papal legate to China, like the previous appointment of the three vicars apostolic, was another attempt by Propaganda Fide to circumvent the Portuguese patronage system.

Tournon sailed from Europe in April, 1703 and reached Macao two years later at the beginning of April. When his request for an audience with the emperor was granted in late August, he left Canton reaching Beijing on December 4, 1705. Kangxi ordered him to live at the Jesuit residence in Beitang and sent two Manchu officials to inquire after the true purpose of his visit. Tournon replied evasively. He had come to express the Pope's gratitude to the emperor for favors granted to the missionaries and to institute formal diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the emperor. He also was to oversee the appointment of a religious superior in Beijing who would have charge over all missionaries in China. Despite Kangxi's initial displeasure at his response, the papal legate was granted three imperial audiences. In them Tournon avoided all discussion of the rites issue, as he knew the matter had already been settled by Clement XI's still unpublished decree of 1704.

During Tournon's second audience, Maigrot came to Beijing at the legate's invitation. Some time after his arrival in the capital, he was summoned to the Summer Palace in Jehol, and questioned by Kangxi himself. Dissatisfied with Maigrot's replies about the rites controversy and his rudimentary knowledge of Chinese, Kangxi sent him back to Beijing. Later, on December 21, 1706, the emperor issued an edict banishing Maigrot from the country and stipulating that only those missionaries who signed a paper certifying that, they would follow the practices of Matteo Ricci and would remain in China for the rest of their lives were allowed to remain in the empire. By this time, Tournon had already left Beijing and he received the news of Kangxi's edict while in Nanjing. On February 7, 1707, the papal legate issued a directive which followed the general norms laid down by Clement XI's still unpublished decree of 1704. Kangxi immediately sent two Jesuit emissaries to Rome to present his side of the rites issue to the pope. He then ordered Tournon to be sent to Canton, and later to Macao. It was in Macao that the papal legate was officially informed of his elevation to the cardinalate. The Portuguese authorities considering his presence as an infringement on the padroado had him confined to his quarters, where he died in June, 1710.

Pope Clement XI had no intention of going back on his previous

papal decrees. In March, 1709, he finally made public the decree of 1704, and issued another in September, 1710, declaring that the decree of 1704, as well as Tournon's directive, had to be observed by all parties concerned. Finally, Clement XI's apostolic constitution Ex Illa Die was published on March 19, 1715. It reaffirmed the content of the three previous decrees and placed the missionaries under a severe moral constraint by demanding that they take a formal oath that they would comply with his directives. The oaths were to be taken in the presence of the ecclesiastical authorities in China and its adjacent territories, and authenticated copies were to be sent to the Holy Office in Rome. The arrival of the apostolic constitution at the imperial court aroused the indignation of the emperor.

In the end, Clement XI sent another apostolic legate to the Middle Kingdom in the person of Carlo Ambrogio Mezzabarba (1682-1741), Patriarch of Alexandria, who arrived in Beijing on December 26, 1720. During his audiences with Kangxi, Mezzabarba informed him that he was authorized to grant certain special dispensations with regard to implementing the decree on the Chinese rites, and that he was also willing to convey the emperor's personal views to the pope on his return. In the meantime diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Middle Kingdom were held in abeyance. On November 4, 1721, the papal legate addressed a pastoral letter from Macao to all ecclesiastical authorities and missionaries in China and its surrounding territories, listing eight dispensations to the ban on the rites. However, no one was permitted to disclose the contents of the letter to any non-missionary and any information contained in it could be divulged only as "necessity or use might demand."

Kangxi's edict of 1706 banishing all non-certified missionaries was not strictly enforced in his time. When Yongzheng (1723-1735), who was unfavorably disposed towards the Jesuits who supported Kangxi's ninth son against him in the struggle for succession became emperor, he enforced the prohibition against Christianity much more strictly. In 1724, he issued an edict which ordered all missionaries - except those who were scientists and technicians, such as the court astronomers - to be banished to Macao. Churches were confiscated and Chinese converts were persecuted. This ban was not lifted until the mid-nineteenth century.

Because of the dissension caused by Mezzabarba's pastoral letter, especially around the matter of the dispensations, Pope Clement XII (1730-1740) set up a panel of inquiry to put an end once and for all to the rites controversy. Finally, on July 11, 1742, Pope Benedict XIV's (1740-1758) Apostolic Bull Ex Quo Singulari reiterated Rome's anti-rites stand and condemned Mezzabarba's eight concessions. While this did serve to bring to a close the long series of papal decrees on the matter,

it did not end the controversy. Oaths against the Chinese rites continued to be required of missionaries going to China right up to the 1930's.

Missionaries continued to go to China, but now in diminishing numbers. This was due to many complex factors, such as the waning power of Spain and Portugal, the prohibition of Christianity by the Manchu emperors, the suppression and almost complete dissolution of the Society of Jesus by Pope Clement XIV (1769-1774) from 1773-1815, the outbreak of the French Revolution, and the subsequent Napoleonic Wars.

### The Late Qing Dynasty, 1800-1911

England and Holland succeeded Spain and Portugal as the dominant European forces in the Orient. The British wrested the opium trade from the Portuguese in 1772, when the East India Company established a monopoly on the opium production. France emerged as the leading power on the European continent. In April, 1838, due to these changing socio-economic and political circumstances, Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846) abolished the Portuguese padroado and recognized the de facto primacy of the French in the Church's Far Eastern missionary enterprise. The padroado dioceses of Beijing and Nanjing were reconverted into vicariates apostolic. Pope Gregory XVI, who formerly had served as the prefect of Propaganda Fide, also entrusted some Chinese mission territories into the care of individual missionary institutes or congregations, from whose members the ecclesiastical superior was to be chosen. This procedure would gradually develop into Propaganda Fide's policy of the jus commissionis (the right of entrustment). This meant in practice that once an ecclesiastical organization had been given a mission territory by the Holy See to evangelize, no other group could enter the territory without the expressed invitation of that organization.

France, mindful of the precarious position of western missionaries and their converts, moved to have a provision of toleration written into its own treaty with China. In this, it was frustrated. But the French negotiator was able to wring from the Chinese government two edicts which liberalized to some extent the existing legislation banning Christianity. The first, issued in December, 1844, exempted from punishment any Chinese whose adherence to Christianity was deemed sincere. The second, dated February, 1846, granted the additional concession that old church buildings, dating from the time of the Kangxi emperor, if still standing and not otherwise in use, should be restored to original Christian ownership.

Propaganda Fide called a general Synod of all Far Eastern vicars apostolic to take place during the winter of 1849 or 1850 in Hong Kong. (In 1841, the British colony had become a prefecture apostolic). The

purpose of the Synod was to discuss the orderly establishment of an ecclesiastical hierarchy for China and its neighboring countries. The plan consisted of (1) the setting up of the ecclesiastical provinces of Beijing with thirteen suffragan dioceses, Chengdu in Sichuan with nine, and Kecho (Tonkin) with eight; (2) the superiors of the missions were asked to draw up the exact boundaries of their ecclesiastical territories, or to suggest new ones, bearing in mind the nature of the originals; (3) the vicars apostolic would now function as diocesan bishops, abandoning their former titles as titular bishops in partibus infidelium. However, the majority of vicars apostolic opposed the Synod on the grounds that it would prove too costly and offered little time for careful preparation. They were also most apprehensive about the possible negative reaction of Chinese authorities. Then, too, the French government objected to holding the Synod on British territory. Thereupon, Propaganda Fide postponed the Synod indefinitely.

In the early 1850s, France took on the role of champion and protector of Roman Catholic missions. Lacking interests of real substance in the Chinese empire, she felt compelled to create fictional ones in order to offset the prestige and influence of her British rival. the Sino-French agreements of 1858 and 1860 contained substantial benefits for missionaries.

Article 13 of the Sino-French Treaty of Tianjin guaranteed the missionaries the freedom to preach and practice their religion anywhere in the empire and Chinese converts were given the right to practice Christianity without fear of punishment. Also, it formally rescinded all previous official documents directed against the foreign religion.

Article 6 of the French text of the Sino-French Convention of 1860 reiterated the earlier Chinese promise to restore to the Catholic Church all confiscated properties. But the Chinese text went much further, apparently due to the duplicity of one of the French interpreters, when it promised that Catholicism would be tolerated throughout China; that those who arrested Christians illegally would be punished; that the titles to churches, schools, cemeteries, land and buildings which had been previously confiscated would be returned to their rightful owners; and, most important, that Catholic foreign missionaries would be permitted to rent and purchase land and to erect buildings thereon at will.

Further, articles 6 and 8 guaranteed foreign travel in all parts of China under permits issued by the French consul and countersigned by Chinese authorities. There were no permits required for travel within the territorial limits of the treaty ports. Hence, the French legation in China was able to issue travel-permits to the French and other Catholic missionaries, guaranteeing the above-mentioned privileges.

After the Convention of Beijing in 1860 had reaffirmed Western diplomatic right of abode in the Chinese capital, there was a genuine need



for a Chinese foreign office to centralize and direct foreign affairs. On the recommendation of Spring Kung (Gong Qiunwang of Yixin, 1833-1898), the Office of General Management, the Zongli Yamen, (a common abbreviation for Zongli geguo shiwu yamen) was established in Beijing on March 11, 1861. Though commonly known to foreigners as the Foreign Office, in reality it functioned more like a subcommittee of the Grand Council (Junji chu), the chief advisory body of the emperor, than a regular board of government. The Office played an active role in the 1860s, especially in dealing with the so-called 'missionary cases', (jiao'an) in which Chinese provincials and local officials, foreign diplomats, as well as the missionaries themselves were often involved.

On the occasion of the First Vatican Council (1869/70), Propaganda Fide again proposed to the vicars apostolic from China who were at the Council, the establishment of an ecclesiastical hierarchy in China and the appointment of an apostolic delegate. Neither of these proposals was accepted by the participants, who feared that both measures would curtail much of their freedom and independence. Even the proposal to reorganize the mission territories into regions, with a view to the future establishment of ecclesiastical provinces, was rejected as premature by over half of the vicars apostolic. However, in 1874 a special session of Propaganda Fide decided to divide the 28 Chinese mission territories into five regions, which also would be able to convene regular regional synods. Both proposals were approved by Pope Pius IX (1846-1878). In 1880, the first regional synods were held in Beijing, Taiyuan, Hankou, Chengdu and Hong Kong. Until 1910, synods were held regularly in these places as often as circumstances allowed.

After the Tianjin Massacre of 1870 a memorandum from the Zongli Yamen asked the representatives of the Western powers to voluntarily abrogate all their protectorate and extraterritorial privileges, that is, their consular jurisdiction over treaty power nationals. This request was denied and from then on the Yamen's influence began to decline. By 1870, Li Hongzhang (1823-1901) was serving as both the governor-generalship of Zhili (Chihli) and the superintendent of trade for the three northern ports of Tiensin, Port Arthur and Chefoo. Serving in this double capacity, his power now eclipsed that of the Zongli Yamen. Li's headquarters at Tianjin virtually became China's foreign office for the next quarter of a century.

During the Sino-French War (1884/85), Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) wrote a letter to Emperor Guangxu (1875-1908) asking for his personal protection for missionaries and Chinese converts. The letter, dated February 1, 1885, was delivered to the Zongli Yamen by the Italian missionary Francesco Giulianelli (1811-1898). When the emperor gave a favorable response, Li Hongzhang took the opportunity to suggest the establishment of a nunciature in Beijing. In 1886, Pope Leo XIII con-

sented to his proposal and appointed Antonio Agliardi (1831-1915) as nuncio to China, while Beijing prepared to send Marquis Tseng (Zeng Jize, 1829-1890) as its own representative to the Holy See. But France objected to the Holy See's plan, since a nuncio would automatically become an independent member of the diplomatic corps in Beijing. In September, 1886 Leo XIII decided to postpone the sending of a nuncio, rather than submit to French demands to withdraw the appointment entirely. In view of Li Hongzhang's proposal, Rome now considered whether or not the right moment had finally arrived to establish an ecclesiastical hierarchy in China. In concrete terms this would mean creating two archdioceses, one in Beijing and the other in Nanjing. The papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Mariano del Tindaro Rampolla (1843-1913), sent Johann Baptist Anzer (1851-1903), a member of the Society of the Divine Word, to ask Li Hongzhang if the Chinese government would agree to this plan. After their meeting on July 26, 1891 at Tianjin, the French Lazarist and Vicar-general of Beijing, Alphonse Favier (1837-1905) continued negotiations with the governor-general of Zhili. In a secret report dated January 16, 1892, Favier disclosed Li Hongzhang's views to Cardinal Rampolla. Li's understanding was that the establishment of a hierarchy was not a political but a purely religious matter, and, as such, it was a suitable instrument for maintaining unity in governing and directing internal ecclesiastical affairs in China. Li said that the Chinese government stood prepared to recognize archbishops and bishops as having the same rank and title as they have in Europe. This would give them the right to discuss ecclesiastical affairs with Chinese governors-general and provincial governors, but not with the Zongli Yamen. Only a Rome appointed apostolic delegate could negotiate directly with the Yamen. When choosing archbishops, Li said it was hoped that the Pope would take into consideration the wishes of the Chinese court and government. Further the treaties with the foreign powers, especially those with France and Germany, were not to be affected by these measures. And, finally and most importantly, the Pope was permitted to establish the Chinese hierarchy at any time, and only thereafter would he be called upon to appoint an apostolic delegate for China.

While further negotiations were taking place between Li Hongzhang and the Zongli Yamen, the Holy See was also negotiating with the French government. Insurmountable obstacles gradually appeared from both quarters. The Zongli Yamen stated that Rome had to renounce formally all foreign protectorates as a condition for allowing the introduction of the ecclesiastical hierarchy into China. However, Li Hongzhang, who as imperial commissar with full powers, continued with his original plan. On October 1, 1892, he suggested in a letter to Cardinal Rampolla to begin with the appointment of an archbishop of Zhili for North China. Li

recommended Bishop A. Favier, who himself was unaware of this proposal at that time. At Li's suggestion, Favier asked Rampolla whether the German customs official, Gustav Detring (1842-1913), could be allowed to come to Rome to assist in the negotiations with France. Rome did not respond to his request. At first, France did not disapprove of the Holy See's plan to establish a hierarchy in China, but the growing fear that its establishment would cause a dangerous breach in her protectorate privileges over the Catholic Missions caused her to veto the plan on September 6, 1892 and opt in favour of the status quo. Then, in August 1894, Pope Leo XIII suddenly laid aside all plans to establish diplomatic relations with China and set up an ecclesiastical hierarchy there. He was influenced by French arguments that China, under the pretext of a direct agreement or concordat with the Holy See, sought to separate the Catholic Church from the French protectorate only to make it subject to Chinese jurisdiction.

During the 1880's, Germany was moving towards placing both its missionaries and their Chinese converts directly under her protection. In 1891, she finally succeeded in her efforts. Thereafter, she issued her own travel-permits. The new Italian government, which had no diplomatic contact with the Holy See since its occupation of the Papal States in 1885, followed the German example in 1888. Despite protests from both the Holy See and the French government, Italy assumed full responsibility for the representation of all Italian missionaries in China in 1902.

Now missionaries in China were increasingly looked upon as the agents of the imperialistic powers who had joined France and Great Britain in the mad scramble to carve out spheres of influence. On March 15, 1899, an imperial edict granted official rank and status directly to the missionaries themselves in a move to keep the settlement of missionary disputes out of the hands of foreign power ministers in Beijing, who often used such disputes to further their own territorial demands. According to the new arrangement, it was no longer the foreign diplomat who would handle ordinary Catholic missionary disputes since the Catholic clergy was now given official rank and allowed to participate in Chinese civil affairs. Now it was up to the vicar apostolic and the individual missionary to settle such matters directly with the Chinese provincials and local officials (although in cases of grave offenses the representative of the protectorate power might still be called upon for assistance). This effort by the Chinese government to decentralize missionary affairs was confirmed by imperial edicts published in January and early March 1899, which directed local authorities to settle certain commercial and missionary cases on the provincial level without recourse to Beijing.

In 1900, anti-foreign feeling culminated in the Boxer Rebellion which

became a turning point in the history of Christian missions in China. While there were, of course, larger social, economic, political and religious factors that contributed to the violent outbreak, it was the missionaries and their converts who were its main victims. Almost two hundred foreign missionaries (not including their children) and over thirty thousand Chinese Christians (mostly Catholic) were killed by the Boxers. Following these incidents, the French protectorate was further weakened by the Act of Separation of 1905, which severed diplomatic relations between France and the Holy See. The French legation in Beijing announced it would no longer handle cases involving non-French missionaries. For its part, in 1908, the Chinese government formally revoked the rank and privileges granted to missionaries by the imperial decree of 1899.

### The Republic of China, 1912 -

In 1918, despite the existence of the Act of Separation, France again thwarted attempts by Benedict XV (1914-1922) to establish direct diplomatic relations with China and the appointment of a papal nuncio. Rome then took a different approach. Attempting to put further distance between the Catholic Church in China and the foreign powers--France in particular--Benedict XV published the apostolic letter Maximum Illud on November 30, 1919. In it he advocated the establishment of a native clergy and hierarchy in all mission countries. The letter contained many of the ideas proposed by the newly appointed prefect of Propaganda Fide, Cardinal Willem Marinus van Rossum (1854-1932).

In August 1922, Bishop Celso Costantini (1876-1858) was appointed by Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) as the Holy See's first apostolic delegate to China. Although not officially a member of the diplomatic corps, Costantini was the de facto religious representative of Rome with the authority to supervise the entire Catholic Church in China. When he established his first residence in Hankou, he declined all offers from the French and Italian ministers in Beijing to present him formally to the Chinese government. He wanted to make it clear to all that, in the spirit of Maximum Illud, the Church was not to be looked upon as a political instrument of any foreign nation and that he had come to China as apostolic delegate in a strictly pastoral capacity.

By a decree issued on 16 January, 1924 Propaganda Fide revoked the 'privilege of precedence' which had granted the foreign missionaries with the title Apostolic Missionary priority status in all things over the native clergy. By so doing the date of ordination became the one and only criterion for seniority among priests. On February 4, 1924, officials of Propaganda Fide and the Sacred Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs gathered to discuss the situation of the Church in

China and its relation to the French protectorate. Without directly denouncing the foreign power protectorates, the cardinals ordered that missionaries should avoid as much as possible any contact with foreign diplomats and gave guidelines for such contacts as were deemed necessary. Participants at the First Council of China (Primum Concilium Sinense) which took place in Xujiahui [Zikawei] outside Shanghai and lasted from 15 May until 13 June, 1924, discussed such problems with Costantini as the existing tension between native and foreign clergy, the promotion of Chinese priests and the consecration of Chinese bishops, the creation of new Church commissions for apostolic work, and the liberation of the Church from the political influences of the foreign protectorates. During this first plenary council, Rome proposed a new plan to reapportion the 64 mission territories making them into seventeen ecclesiastical regions.

On June 15, 1926, Pius XI issued his missionary encyclical, Rerum Ecclesiae, in which he reaffirmed the missionary mandate of the Church, called for a greater increase in missionary vocations, and emphasized the need to build up a strong native clergy in all mission territories. On October 18, 1926, more than 240 years after the first and only ordination of a Chinese bishop, (the Dominican Gregorio Lopez Luo Wenzao, (1616-1691), Pius XI consecrated six new Chinese bishops in Rome.

New directives by Propaganda Fide on December 8, 1939 issued the instruction Plane Compertum Est which did away with the anti-rites oath previously demanded of all missionaries going to China and its surrounding areas. This decision was transmitted to and ratified by Pius XII (1939-1958).

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Republic of China gradually revoked all foreign concessions, and the foreign powers agreed, in principle, to give up their consular jurisdiction. However, complete restitution of China's lost rights of sovereignty came only in 1943 when the United States and Britain took the lead in voluntarily abrogating all unequal treaties with China, thereby ending a century-old national humiliation. On February 25 of the same year Xie Shoukang (1894-) presented his credentials to the Pope as the first permanent Chinese diplomatic representative to the Holy See.

By the apostolic constitution Quotidie Nos on April 11, 1946, the Holy See established the ecclesiastical hierarchy in China. Thomas Tien, S.V.D., (Tian Gengxin, 1890-1967) was appointed archbishop of Beijing and became the first Chinese cardinal. At the same time Antonio Riberi (1897-1967) was appointed internuncio to China. The Republic of China was then divided into 20 archdioceses with 79 suffragan dioceses. The 38 prefectures apostolic were left untouched and the vicars apostolic were transferred from their titular dioceses in partibus infidelium to the newly created Chinese dioceses.

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