

## Documentation

### *Constitution of the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference*

*translated by Peter Barry, M.M.*

Article 1: The official name is the Bishops Conference of the Catholic Church in China.

Article 2: The conference is the leading national structure for church affairs of the Chinese Catholic Church. In accordance with the Bible and based on the traditional spirit of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, its purpose is to:

- study and explain the doctrines to be believed and the rules to be observed in the church,
- examine and approve the election and ordination of diocesan bishops,
- establish pastoral guidelines
- develop pastoral ministries.
- organize and unite all the clergy and laity to observe the Constitution, laws, regulations and policies of the country
- implement the principles of independence, self government and administration which is in accordance with the situation in China.
- represent the Chinese Catholic Church outside of China.

Article 3: The conference is made up of all ordinaries of dioceses, as well as auxiliary and advisory bishops. The conference will have a president, a vice-president, a secretary-general, a standing committee made up of a certain number of bishops and several advisory bishops.

Article 4: The conference is accountable to the Chinese Catholic Representatives' Congress. The Chinese Catholic Representatives Congress is convened once every 5 years, but if necessary, the time can be advanced or postponed. The functions and powers of the Representatives Congress are to:

--formulate or revise the constitution of the Chinese Bishops Conference;

--evaluate the work reports of the Conference;

--discuss and pass important resolutions and decisions.

--elect the president, vice-presidents, secretary-general and standing committee members of the Bishops Conference.

The convening of the Representatives Congress, the quota of and manner of naming delegates are matters decided jointly by the standing committees of the Bishops Conference and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association.

Article 5: The Chinese Bishops Conference has a standing committee made up of the president, the vice-presidents, the secretary-general and standing committee members. It is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Catholic Representatives Congress and the plenary sessions of the Bishops Conference, for developing and promoting church affairs, and for dealing with related matters.

The president, vice-presidents, secretary-general, standing committee members and advisers remain in office until the next Catholic representatives congress. Office holders are eligible for re-election.

Article 6: The president is in charge of the work of the standing committee. The vice-presidents and the secretary-general help the president to handle routine affairs.

General meetings of the Bishops Conference will be held once every two years. The standing committee of the Bishops Conference will meet once a year. If necessary, the time of the meetings can be advanced or postponed.

Article 7: If the president and over half of the standing committee members consider it necessary to have an enlarged standing committee meeting or an enlarged meeting of the Bishops Conference, they can invite diocesan administrators (priests), superiors of seminaries and convents, responsible persons in church affairs on the provincial level, priests, Sisters and Catholic representatives to participate. However, such persons have only a consultative status; they have no voting rights.

Article 8: Concerning major issues, the president, vice-presidents and general-secretary of the Bishops Conference must meet with the chairman, vice-chairmen and general-secretary of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association for discussion and decision.

Article 9: The church affairs committees of each province, autonomous region, municipality directly under the Central Government and each diocese have the duty to obey and carry out the resolutions and decisions of this conference.

Article 10: If the standing committee observes certain needs, it may establish special committees or work groups to handle them. The responsible persons are appointed byof the president, vice-presidents and secretary-general, and their term of service coincides with that of the standing committee of this conference.

Article 11: The finances of the Bishops Conference are the responsibility of the standing committee.

Article 12: The Bishops Conference is based in Beijing.

Article 13: The termination of the Bishops Conference, if deemed necessary, must be discussed and decided upon by the Chinese Catholic Representatives' Congress.

Article 14: This constitution has been approved by the Chinese Catholic Representatives' Congress and hereby takes effect.

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### *Constitution of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association*

Article 1: The official name of this organization is the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association.

Article 2: This association is a mass organization made up of Chinese Catholic clergy and laity of the Catholic Church in China who love the country and religion. Its purpose, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the People's government, is to: