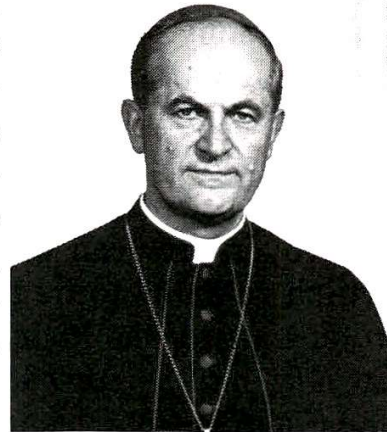


Documentation

Address of Josef Cardinal Tomko to the Bishops of Taiwan

In his address to the bishops of Taiwan, Josef Cardinal Tomko gave two reasons for welcoming the invitation of the Taiwanese bishops to come to Taiwan. The first was the celebration marking the 700 years since the beginning of evangelization in China through the work of John of Montecorvino, and the second was the ordination of the new bishop of Chiayi. These events provided an opportunity



to ask where do we find evangelization or the mission of the Church today? And what will be the role of the Church in evangelization, especially in Asia and in Taiwan tomorrow? The Cardinal's talk was a reflection on these questions which are fundamental for the life of the universal Church and for the church in Taiwan. The Cardinal then spoke of evangelization in the context of Asia, the world and in Taiwan in particular. He then addressed the bishops on their special responsibility for the evangelization of the Church in Mainland China. That section, which is section three of the address, follows:

3. Evangelization Ad Extra

3.1 ...The command given by the Lord to his Church is universal. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (MT. 28:19). *Asia* also has need of Jesus Christ. The excuse that you are a young Church is not valid! "Every Church, even one made up of recent converts--John Paul II points out--is missionary by its very nature, and is both evangelized and evangelizing" (RM 49). And he adds: "These young Churches...should share as soon as possible in the universal missionary work of the Church. They should themselves send missionaries to proclaim the gospel all over the world, even though they are suffering from a shortage of clergy" (RM 52;

cf. AG 20). As Paul VI launched the call at Kampala in Uganda in 1969, "*Africans, you must evangelize Africa,*" so today it must be said to the Christians of Asia: "You must be the first evangelizer of Asia!"

3.2 And for you especially, Asia is *Mainland China* which is closer, in distance and in spirit. In this way you will be in full harmony with the Holy See. As the Holy Father expressed his thoughts to you in December 1990 concerning the beloved Catholic community of the Mainland: how can we not be "deeply moved to thank God for the shining example offered by the Bishops, priests, religious and faithful during these years?" Moreover, how can we also not fail to remember the long road which remains to be traveled "before that beloved Catholic community of the Mainland can give *full and open expression to its faith and its communion with the Successor of Peter* or with the Catholic Church spread throughout the world?"

We feel joy for their growth in faith and for what is positive and free in their ecclesial lives. But we suffer in the fact of restricting and confusing situations due to external factors, as well as to a certain internal division.

We are all well aware that in a certain way the main problem is *doctrinal*. The question concerns the very nature of the Church of Christ, of the Catholic Church. We must ask whether the Church of Christ can be determined in its structures, directed in its government, circumscribed in its worship and in its internal life by some external factors. We know that in her long history, all forms of interference between the religious and secular authorities, such as theocracy or caesaropapism, brought harm both to the Church as well as to the State.

In the present situation of confusion and division regarding not only practical attitudes, but also ideas, clarity is the first duty of all Christians and above all of every Bishop, so that everyone may act in truth and in charity, *veritatem facientes in caritate* (Gal 5:13).

3.3 Wishing to recall at least *some important truths* in the present situation, we can limit ourselves to the following:

1. Our church is *Catholic*, i.e., it is *universal* not only in name but also by reason of its very nature, structure, mission and doctrine (Faith).

2. The Catholic Church is therefore united by the bonds of faith, of communion among all the particular communities (or Churches) existing in the different nations of the world, and of *communion with the Successor of Peter*, the visible head of the Catholic Church.

"Fully incorporated into the Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the Church together with her entire organization, and who, by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion--are joined in the visible structure of the Church of Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the Bishops" (*Lumen Gentium*, 14).

3. Jesus Christ built his Church with Peter as the "rock". The primacy of Peter and of his successors is not only honorary, but jurisdictional. Consequently, communion with the Successor of Peter must be in faith and obedience. to pray for the Pope in the Eucharistic Prayer is a beautiful thing, but it is still not full communion with the Pope. A model of church which does not include the primacy of jurisdiction of the Successor of Peter is not all. These are for us truths of *faith* and not only questions of discipline. They concern the very nature of the church which *no* human power may change.

4. The Catholic church is not a federation of national or particular Churches. The Bishops who govern the particular Churches must be in true and full communion with the Pope. Therefore a "national" Church cannot exist and continue to be one with the Catholic Church. And no group can be authentically Catholic without accepting this truth of the Catholic Faith.

5. Recognition of the primacy of jurisdiction of the Pope however does not hinder any Bishop from exercising in his own Diocese real and immediate powers of government and administration, so long as he does not deny communion with the Pope and with the Catholic Church throughout the world.

3.4 After having recalled these important truths which are to be applied with clarity and charity (always *veritatem facientes in caritate*), I would like to propose some *practical suggestions* so that you may be able to exercise your role as a *bridge*

Church.

1. Without judging people and their intentions, and with deep respect for some difficult situations of the past, clarity about the truths of the Catholic faith and the nature of the Catholic Church *is* necessary and has to be promoted.

2. It is also necessary to work with fidelity to bring about the fullness of unity among all those who sincerely wish to be one with the Successor of Peter, therefore favoring the process of reconciliation.

3. The sending of *material* aid is certainly needed. Nevertheless, we should not forget that the principal contribution is to be found in the spiritual sphere. Therefore you must continue to encourage and use the *spiritual means* of prayer, sacrifice and fasting....

At a distance of seven hundred years from that event and as we approach the Great Jubilee of the Redemption of the year 2000, in this particular part of Asia, we hear once more the cry of St. Paul repeated by John Paul II at the beginning of the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*:

The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion... [it] is still only beginning and... we must commit ourselves to its service. It is the Spirit who impels us to proclaim the great works of God: 'For if I preach the Gospel it gives me no ground of boasting, for the necessity is laid upon me; woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!' (1 Cor 9:16).

Therefore let us strive to listen attentively to what the Spirit is saying to the whole Church and in particular to this Church in Taiwan.

