

Bishop Duan's Reply to Vatican Invitation

Bishop Duan Yinmin and his auxiliary Bishop Xu Zhixuan were not permitted to come to Rome to attend the Synod of Asia. The announcement was made by the spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Office who, on April 30th in Beijing, explained to journalists the reasons for the refusal: "China has no official relations and there are no religious ties...." Needless to say, the two Bishops of the official Church were sad and disappointed. Bishop Duan, sent a fax message to Cardinal Jan Schotte, Secretary General of the Synod. The following is an English translation of the original message written in Latin:

I wish first of all to greet the Supreme Pontiff, Pope John Paul II. Secondly, I wish to express deep gratitude to Cardinal Angelo Sodano and Cardinal Jan P. Schotte, who kindly sent me the list of the Synod participants and the agenda of the work. Sadly, I am unable to take part in the Synod for political reasons. My heart was so heavy with grief that for two nights I was unable to sleep. Then a great calm entered my heart: the body is absent, but the heart is ever present at the Synod of Bishops. Could it be that it is not really indispensable to go to Rome?

O Sweet Synod of Bishops! You discuss so many matters, you examine so many problems! Declarations, suggestions, methods to spread the faith are proposed and evaluated in public. In the Synod of Bishops everything is made public for it to be put into practice by all believers in Christ. If your Eminence agrees, I would like to be informed about what takes place during the Synod. I thank you in advance.

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