

Intervention of Bishop Andrew Tsien Chih-Chun, Bishop of Hualien

The Underground Church in China, which is loyal to the Pope, is still subject to persecution from the Chinese Communist authority. The Chinese Bishops' Conference, established by 57 loyal Bishops of the Underground Church of China in 1989, asks the Synod of the Bishops of Asia for its solidarity, love and communion towards their poor, persecuted brothers. They are grateful to the Holy Father who encouraged the loyal Church in his speeches and messages, especially in his address of 3 November 1996 to the Church in China, in which the Holy Father appealed that the government of the People's Republic of China not be afraid of God and of His Church and respect one's right to live according to the dictates of one's conscience. They plead that the Synod and the Bridge Church do the same and propose that:

1. This Synod encourage the loyal Bishops and recognize their Conference.
2. This Synod state clearly, as did the Holy Father, to the Bishops of the Open Church that, to be a Bishop of the Church, one must clearly abjure the principles of the Patriotic Association and profess their communion with the Pope and the Universal Church.
3. The Bridge Church hear and respect the feelings and opinions of the Loyal Church. The Loyal Church Chinese Bishops will be grateful to all the Fathers of the Synod of Asia if they help them to obtain freedom of religion.

(original text: English as above)