

Brief Telephone Interview with Bishop Matthias Duan Yinming of Wanxian, Sichuan, on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Holy Father's Pontificate

Bishop Matthias Duan Yinming, aged 90, was one of the two Chinese Bishops invited to take part in the Special Synod of Bishops for Asia held last Spring in Rome. The Chinese government refused to let them travel to Rome for the occasion. Bishop Duan sent a telegram to the Secretariat of the Synod assuring the Synod Fathers of his "spiritual presence". In view of the 20th anniversary of the election of Pope John Paul II, Fides' put a few questions to Bishop Duan on the telephone.

Have you a message for the Pope for the twenty years of his pontificate?

On a personal level I would like to congratulate the Pope for these twenty years of pontificate. I pray for him daily, for his mission, his health and I asked the Holy Spirit to sustain the Pope in his service to humanity. I would also like to express to him my profound loyalty. On behalf of Chinese Catholics I can say that they love him deeply; they pray daily for him and join me in this message of congratulations.

What importance has this Pope for China?

He is truly an extraordinary Pope. His



mission is historic: he has done so much for the Church and for the world. He is tireless in his travelling the world to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the peoples of the earth. This is why he is welcomed with affection everywhere. We Chinese await in fidelity and prayer for his visit to China. We firmly hope he may one day come to visit our country.

You were prevented from coming to Rome for the Synod, do you think you will meet Pope John Paul II in the near future in Rome?

I am too old now. My health does not allow me to undertake long journeys. I thank the Lord that I manage to celebrate Mass every day and fulfil my pastoral duties. This is why I find the Pope so courageous and full of spirit: he continues, despite his age, his missionary activity and his journeys. Lastly I would also like to thank *Fides* and in particular the Director, for the service rendered to the universal Church.■

All of us at the Holy Spirit Study Centre
wish all of our readers

A Very Merry Christmas
And
A New Year filled with abundant blessings!