



Appeal Letter to the Government of the People's Republic of China from Bishop Su Zhimin,

the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Baoding, Hebei China

June 15, 1996



Standing Committee
People's National Congress

Respected leader:

Since the passing of the new constitution at the Third Plenary Meeting of the Eleventh National Communist Party Conference, and in line with its spirit and principle, many new laws were promulgated improving the country's body of legislation. The government had many times promoted legislation familiarization through the media to the public and leaders of the government, demanding them to achieve the following standard "Whereas there is a law, the law must be obeyed. The enforcement of the law must be strict, and violators must be prosecuted." This philosophy brought the previous lawlessness during the cultural revolution under control, and advanced the country, step by step, to one that is governed by law. Nevertheless, since early April, there have been many instances of illegal actions in Baoding district of Hebei Province. The civil rights of the people, especially in the matter of district's religious worship, have been violated.

1. Task forces from the city and county government, under the guise of helping the Catholic escape from poverty to wealth, entered and took up stations in those villages which have more Catholics. They thoroughly investigated all religious activities, the number of seminarians, nuns and other Catholics, as well as the socio-economical situation of the Catholic families. In early April (and even before that in some villages), they forbade Catholic students to wear religious medals and to join religious activities. The students were further ordered to renounce their Catholic religion. Those who refused were dismissed from school. Those Catholic teachers who refused to renounce their religion were dismissed from their government jobs.

2. In May, these task forces, using the reason that pilgrimage to Dong Lu was forbidden, forbade the Catholics to leave their village. The Catholics had to report to the local authority morning and night. Those who live in Da Hou Village of Qing Yuan County were required to report to the local authority eight times a day - 4 times in the morning, 4 times in the afternoon. A fine of JMP 100 was levied on those who reported late. Adult Catholics were required to join study groups. During the busy farming season, working in the field was not allowed, nor were they permitted to go home to eat. Meals had to be delivered from home. Some people were not allowed to go home and sleep. By deceit, bully, threat, fine and torture, Catholics were forced to renounce their religion. Many Catholics were tortured as the result of their refusal to do so, especially in the region of Nan Song Village, and Nan Man Ying Village of Qing Yuan County. After more than one month of suffering, more than 4000 Catholics renounced their faith under coercion, among them, three thousand students under eighteen years of age.

3. Religious personnel were forced to go to their local police station or to join study groups. They were forced to join the Patriotic Association and were not allowed to go home. Some of them are near eighty years old, weak, and sick. Some disappeared and their whereabouts are still unknown. Bishop AN Shu Xin of An Jia Village in Xu Shui County was taken by the Xu Shui County security police on February the 8th. His whereabouts remain unknown.

Rev. Hu Duo, the Pastor of the church in Hu Qu Village went to An Jia to offer a Mass on April 13. Before the Mass, he was taken by the party secretary of the village to the village office, and then sent to the local police station. He still has not been released. Rev. CUI Xin Gang, the Pastor of the church at Dong LU, was under the security officer's guard in February. Since April 21, he has disappeared. Rev. Wei Jing Kun, the Pastor of the Church in Tian Ge Zhuang Village was taken away by a security agent on April 24th while preparing a funeral service. His whereabouts are unknown. Rev. Chen Bai Du, the Pastor of the Church in Da Hou Village, Rev. Xiao Feng Zun, the pastor of the Church in Tang Zhuang Village, and Rev. Ma Shun Bao, the pastor of the Church in Nan Song Village are detained by the village government and are not allowed to return home to administer sacraments. Rev. Zhao Ting Bin, the Pastor of the Church in Quan Kun Village, is under house arrest. He is not allowed to administer sacrament.

4. Baoding's lay person Zheng Da Peng was taken away by security personnel under the pretense of a meeting. His whereabouts are not known. There are a number of Catholics still under arrest:

One at Nan Man Ying Village of Qing Yuan County,
Three at Xiao Deng Village,
Two at Tien Ge Zhuang Village,

Six at An Jia Village of Xu Shui County,
One at Ma Ge Zhuang Village, and Two at Xu Ge Zhuang Village of Gao Yang County.

In May, government officials forced the Catholic in Nan Song Village to hand over all their religious medals. Those who refused were beaten savagely and fined. In addition, they forced nuns there to join study group to learn marriage life.

5. The prayer houses in Bei Guan and in Dong Lu , both located in Baoding, were torn down on May 21st and 25th . The Church in Nan Song Village were taken over by the School Board and were converted to a kindergarten. Churches and prayer houses in various villages located in Qing Yuan County were either sealed or torn down. There is no way that the Roman Catholics can practice their religion routinely and normally.

In early May, the security personnel forced a Church-operated home for the elderly in Tian Ge Zhuang Village to dissolve. They arrested a young female worker, Chen Shu Ying, and a church electrician, Jia Chang Jiang. Both were detained in the jail of Qing Yuan County. As of today, they still have not been released.

On May 23rd, three hundred armed police surrounded and sealed the Church in Quan Kun Village. They took away the consecrated Hosts. A number of Catholic saw some consecrated Hosts on the streets. These consecrated Hosts still have not been returned.

The above facts are against the laws and regulations as stipulated in items 36, 37, 38, and 46 of the Constitution.

These illegal actions violated the civil rights of the Catholics. They not only severely damaged the rights of the Catholic public, but also damaged the esteem of the Party and the Government, thereby adversely affecting the image of the Party and government. This is detrimental to the unity of the Party, politics and the Catholics.

Representing 35,000 Catholics and all the religious personnel, I, in my own name, appeal to the Standing Committee of People's Congress to thoroughly investigate the aforementioned serious unlawful encroachment on the citizen's rights , and to administer corrective measures to restore order and control to ensure that the civil rights and interests of the vast number of religion believers are protected.

With my highest respect,

(signed)

Bishop SU Zhi Min
Bishop of Baoding