



Easter, 2017

Upon the Map of China
Rests the Shrine and
Our Lady of She-Shan
Through Whom We Pray
"There may be one fold
and one shepherd"

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* In Memoriam

"If we renounce our faith, we will disappear and there will not be a resurrection. If we are faithful, we will still disappear, but there will be a resurrection."

At the height of the communist persecution on the Roman Catholic Church in China, Bishop Kung spoke to the clergy of the Shanghai Diocese at their semi-annual retreat. The Bishop said, "You should have no illusion of your destiny. You have already been condemned. God prepared this for you because God loves you. What are you afraid of? If we renounce our faith, we will disappear and there will not be a resurrection. If we are faithful, we will still disappear, but there will be a resurrection."

Easter is the most important feast of the Church. Saint Paul says: "If Christ be not risen again [our] faith is in vain, for [we] are yet in our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). The Catechism said, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." (sec. 651). During the past 68 years, thousands of martyrs and dry martyrs in China accepted this destiny based on this promise. Persecution is still ongoing in China. To show a better image to the world, the Chinese government changed its method of persecution in recent decades. Instead of arresting Christians en masse and marching them to prisons and labor camps, they continue to declare the Roman Catholic Church illegal. Local government officials may impose heavy fines for any 'violations'; underground clergy may be arbitrarily subject to interrogations and education sessions, or be removed from their dioceses on administrative detentions to unknown locations thereby leaving no record in the prison system. When you attend the Holy Week and Easter celebrations, please remember the underground Church in your prayers, that they, too, will have a holy, safe and peaceful celebration.

Crucifixion of Jesus – A Meditation written by Bishop Kung

We have enclosed a prayer card, *Meditation on the Crucifixion of Jesus*, written by Cardinal Kung while he was in jail. He secretly wrote this on a thin small 4" square rice paper. He folded and hid this precious piece of paper on himself for many years. This meditation sustained him for three decades in that very harsh inhuman environment.

Since Bishop Kung's arrival in the U.S. in 1988, wherever he went, both for short or long trips, he never left without a cross in the breast pocket of his jacket. The cross was on his desk and even on the hospital tray table. Two months before Cardinal Kung's death, he was in the hospital and diagnosed with stomach cancer. His confessor, Monsignor John Horgan-Kung standing next to his hospital bed informed

him in French of the cancer. (Cardinal Kung is fluent in French and Latin but not in English.) Upon hearing this diagnosis, Cardinal Kung did not say a single word or ask any question. After a few seconds, he took his cross from his hospital tray table, held and kissed the cross. He then sang *Salve Regina* accepting God's will and offered his suffering to Holy Mother and to China.

The photograph on this prayer card is the main window at the sanctuary of the Basilica of Saint John the Evangelist, Stamford, Connecticut. Cardinal Kung lived 12 years in Stamford, Connecticut. He had celebrated and presided at many Holy Masses there. Cardinal Kung had spiritually adopted Saint John as his parish in exile. When Cardinal Kung died in March 2000, he lied in State at Saint John Church and his funeral Mass was celebrated there by Cardinal Stafford, Representative of Saint Pope John Paul II.

Death of Two Underground Bishops

In the past two years, two underground bishops died. **Casimir Wang Milu** was the underground bishop of Tianshui (Qinzhou) in Gangu county, northwestern China. He was secretly ordained a bishop in 1981 in Tianshui by Bishop Peter Fan Xueyan of Baoding, Hebei, who himself suffered thirty years in prison and labor camps and finally was tortured to death in prison. Bishop Wang was arrested in 1983 and spent ten years in prison. Bishop Wang passed away on February 14, 2017 at the age of 74 for health reasons. His funeral was attended by thousands near his native village in Gangu.

Cosmas Shi Enxiang was born in 1922 in Shizhuang (Hebei). He was ordained as a priest in 1947, two years before China turned Communist. Because Bishop Shi opposed the 'Three-self Movement' which sought to create an independent Church, he was arrested in 1954 and spent much of the following three decades performing hard labor in the frozen tundra of Heilongjiang and the coal mines of Shanxi provinces. After his release in 1982 he was secretly ordained a bishop. He had many arrests between 1989 and 1993 before his final arrest in April 2001. There was no news on Bishop Shi until January of 2015, when news of his death circulated. However, the family have not seen his body as of today.

Prayer Sponsor Program

The life of an underground clergy and religious is very difficult and dangerous. As a Prayer Sponsor, you will be given a name of an underground clergyman or nun to include in your daily prayers. Please contact us if you wish to be a Prayer Sponsor.

Vatican and China Negotiation

During the past year, news has been circulating that the negotiation between Vatican-China is close to signing an agreement on the appointment of bishops. It is well known that Pope Francis has expressed his great desire to complete this agreement and to visit China. On February 15, in his recent interview with Spanish daily El Pais, **Pope Francis** said he would go to China "*as soon as they invite me.... China always has this aura of mystery about it that is fascinating....In China, the churches are full. You can practice your faith in China.*"

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kiun, SDB, the retired Cardinal of Hong Kong, pleaded with the Vatican not to "sell out" China's Catholics by making a deal with the communist government to allow them to nominate bishop candidates for the pope to accept or reject. This may appear to give the pope final power over the appointment of bishop. But in effect, the pope may only choose those few government approved and vetted candidates. **Cardinal John Tong**, the Cardinal of Hong Kong wrote an article last month on this Vatican-China negotiation. Cardinal Tong is more optimistic and considered that this milestone agreement will gradually bring the two sides, Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) and the underground Church, towards greater cooperation. Cardinal Tong also mentioned that there are three other issues to be resolved: 1) 7 illegitimate Patriotic bishops, 2) the future of the CCPA which has directly governed the independent Church and its bishops, and 3) the recognition by the government of the 30+ underground bishops. Cardinal Tong mentioned that the 7 illegitimate Patriotic Bishops may be pardoned by the Pope. The CCPA, which now has authority over all Catholics in China may change its focus in the future to charity and social programs. The government in turn will recognize the underground Bishops. **Liu Bonian**, a former vice-president of the CCPA who has directed the Patriotic Association for 50 years and continues to have significant influence on the Patriotic Church, indicated that the Beijing regime has not reached an agreement with the Vatican on the appointment of bishops, and dismissed any possibility that the bishops of the "underground" Church will be recognized by the government as the "underground" bishops are "*unfit for the [Communist] Party to work with.*"

On February 21-22, the **core leaders of the CCPA and the Bishop's Conference of the Catholic Church in China** met at Wuhan, Hubei province, to plan their work for 2017 and the next five years. On the feast of the **Chair of St. Peter** on February 22, these leaders of the CCPA paid their respects at the tomb of Bishop Dong Guangquin, the first Chinese bishop ordained without papal approval in 1958. This appeared to be a subtle way to show Rome their position on the Vatican-China negotiation.

May 24 – Day of Prayers for China

In 2007, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote: "*Dear Pastor and all the faithful, the date 24 May could in the future become an occasion for the Catholic of the whole world to be united in prayer with the church that is in China....*" A year later, Pope Benedict authored a **Prayer to Our Lady of Sheshan** which is printed on the enclosed prayer card. For many years, many Cardinal Kung Foundation supporters offered Holy Masses for China at their own parishes on May 24 or on a date close to this. If you have already requested this Mass, please let us know the date of your Mass, the name and address of the parish so that we can keep a record. Please also pray the Pope Benedict's Prayer to Our Lady of Sheshan on your own or with your family.

Pray for the Cause of Canonization for Cardinal Kung

We just observed the **17th Anniversary of the death of Cardinal Kung**. He died on March 12, 2000 in exile in Stamford, Connecticut. Please pray a *Hail Mary* daily for the opening of the cause of canonization for Cardinal Kung. If you would like to receive a **Third Class Relic card** with the **Prayer for the Intercession of Cardinal Kung** printed on it, please write to us.

The Board of Directors joins me in wishing you a blessed Easter.

Three Holy Masses will be offered for your intentions during the Easter Season at an underground Seminary in China.