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Dear Friends:

China-Vatican Relationships – A Temporary Lull

For the last five years or so, there appeared to be a period of lull for the China-Vatican relationships, during which a number of Patriotic Association's (PA) priests were consecrated bishops with papal mandate. The China-Vatican relationships were optimistic at that time. It had seemingly improved to such an extent that many senior Vatican officials, the United States Bishops Conference, and many so called "China experts" all sang in unison that the two Catholic Churches in China, the PA controlled official Church and the underground Roman Catholic Church, are the same Catholic Church! In doing so, they appeared to have accepted the PA controlled official Church even before a Papal announcement that never came. This seemingly good rapport was auspicious enough that the Chinese government even sent its Philharmonic orchestra to Rome to perform for the Pope on May 7, 2008.

Truly Difficult Times

It did appear that, finally, the much sought after and long awaited diplomatic relations between China and the Vatican could be within reach. In his letter to China in 2007, Pope Benedict XVI, while recognizing that there are still difficulties in practicing religion freely in China, even "*revoked all the faculties previously granted (to the underground church) in order to address particular pastoral necessities that emerged in truly difficult times.*" The Pope explained that his decision was based on "*some positive developments of the situation of the Church in China, and, in the second place, the increased opportunities and greater ease in communication, and finally the requests sent to Rome by various Bishops and priests.*" In other words, the Vatican was so comfortable with the progress of its relationships with China that it considered the "*truly difficult times*" were over for the Roman Catholic Church in China. I respectfully disagree. In his general audience on December 1, 2010, His Holiness the Pope described that "*...the Church in China...is going through a particularly difficult time....*"

Cardinal Kung Foundation's Position

For the past two decades ever since our inception in 1992, The Cardinal Kung Foundation, as written consistently in our newsletters, strongly argued and rejected this notion that the "two Catholic Churches in China are the same church". The underground Church in China has always righteously maintained that only the Church founded by Jesus Christ is the true Catholic Church, not the PA controlled official Church which was established by an atheist government. We, therefore, always maintain that there is only one true Catholic Church in China, that is, the underground Catholic Church. We once wrote: "*True ecumenism with the PA? Yes. Establishing dialogue with the PA? Yes. However, merging the underground Roman Catholic Church in China into the PA as the Chinese Government is brutally forcing the underground Church to do, so as to cut off Papal supremacy completely? NO! NO! NO!*" (July 2001 CKF newsletter – Under the section titled "The PA and the underground Roman Catholic Church are not the same church regardless of the remarks from His Eminence Cardinal Tomko")

PA and Vatican Jointly Approved Candidate List for the Bishops of the Official Church

The Communist government created the PA-controlled, independent, official Catholic Church, although using the name "Catholic" was never a correct name to start with. In its negotiations with the PA, the Vatican appears to have agreed to choose candidates from the Chinese government-approved list or from a PA-Vatican jointly-approved list. This jointly-

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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approval process for choosing a bishop in China could easily be misconstrued by the PA that the Pope's supreme non-negotiable authority, i.e., to appoint the successors of the apostles, may be negotiable after all. If carrying out such an important sacred authority as appointing bishops could be a joint decision with an atheist government, it will be interpreted that many other decisions of the Holy Father could also be shared by other Catholic or secular organizations also! Is this a dangerous precedent and strategy?

The Legitimized Bishops Must Provide Unequivocal and Increasing Signs of Full Communion with the Pope

Expedient Paths – During the past decades, it has been shown that one of the expedient paths to become a Roman Catholic bishop in China was first to be an official Church bishop without the Pope's mandate. These official Church bishop candidates knew that in spite of the canon law stipulating excommunication for receiving/conferring episcopal ordination without papal mandate, there were numerous precedents showing that through intermediaries, these official bishops may confidentially ask to be received into communion with the Pope, pledging confidentially their love and loyalty to the Holy Father. With very few exceptions, those official bishops have been legitimized with full episcopal jurisdiction. They now have the blessings of the Holy Father on one hand while, on the other, they function as official bishops receiving the financial and political support of the Chinese government. The additional benefits of an illicit bishop subsequently legitimized is the acceptance by the foreign religious communities, thereby obtaining large financial assistance.

Unequivocal and Increasing Signs – Although receiving episcopal ordination without the pontifical mandate is a public act against the Successor of St. Peter, the Holy See in the past has not requested these contrite bishops, until the issuance of the Pope's letter to China in 2007, to publicly announce their allegiance to the Pope for fear of placing these legitimized bishops in a difficult position. Haven't those underground bishops lived in the same difficult position for the past six decades? Now, the Pope has clearly said in his letter to China in 2007 that "*it is indispensable that legitimization, once it has occurred, is brought into the public domain at the earliest opportunity, and that the legitimized bishops provide unequivocal and increasing signs of full communion with the Pope*". After four years, I still have not seen or heard that these bishops have provided "*unequivocal and increasing signs of full communion with the Pope*" in accordance with the Pope's instruction. These contrite bishops continue their business as usual, functioning as official Church bishops and publicly advocating the independent policy of the Patriotic Association. Some legitimized bishops hold senior positions in the PA.

Independent Church – Throughout these diplomatic negotiations, the Chinese government has not indicated that it will abandon the PA that is in charge of the official Church. The Chinese government and the official Church bishops have continued to support and give credit to the policy of a Church independent from the Pope. **Bishop Aloysius Jin, S.J.** is the Bishop of Shanghai of the PA controlled official Church. He is one of the most well known later-legitimized bishops. Cardinal Kung was his bishop as the Vatican-appointed Bishop of Shanghai from 1950 until he died in 2000. Yet, Bishop Jin usurped and stole the Shanghai diocese from Cardinal Kung and became an illicit Bishop of Shanghai, while the Cardinal was still in a Chinese jail. Bishop Jin has also been receiving generous financial support from the world bishops and major religious community of the universal Catholic Church. However, he continues to be a strong advocate of the independent movement of the official Church. In his recent interview with a news reporter in June, 2011, he publicly confirmed his support of an independent Church in China. He said: "...The principle of an independent Church (from the Pope)...is correct...Now that the Catholic Church in China has insisted on being independent (from the Holy See), I hope that it will not be in name only. It must be vigorously implemented." Last December, the Patriotic Association convened the Eighth National Congress of Catholic Representatives. Pope Benedict XVI made his objection very clearly to this congress on account of its incompatibility with Catholic discipline and doctrine. The Pope's China commission in the meantime urged mainland bishops to avoid participation in this congress. Yet, in a separate meeting with a delegation of the Chinese religious bureau shortly after the Congress, Bishop Jin praised in public the Congress' "good ending and success"!

Illicit Ordinations

Alas, the Chinese government is now so confident of its relationships with the Vatican that it has once again treacherously conferred upon itself the ultimate authority to appoint and consecrate bishops without the papal mandate. So far, there were three illicit consecrations since November, 2010. An Associated Press release on July 22, 2011, cited that China's bishops' council was considering seven more candidates, some, or all, could, without papal mandate, be consecrated bishops "when the conditions are ripe." The PA even threatened on June 23 that they planned to do forty more such ordinations, with or without papal mandate, to fill empty posts in many vacant dioceses in China.

Non-negotiable Issue

This arrogant and divisive, illicit consecration of bishops in China proved that the Chinese government does not have an iota of sincerity and respect that would foster a trustworthy relationship, be it diplomatic or spiritual, with the Holy See. The PA simply does not have the authority to call itself Catholic while they willfully break one of the most fundamental disciplines of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Benedict XVI represents Christ on earth. Therefore, by the power of the

“keys” given to him through Saint Peter by the Son of God, he is the only one on earth who has the authority to appoint bishops. The Vatican must let the Chinese government know clearly, without the slightest doubt — and if needed keep repeating it — that certain issues in the Catholic Church are simply not negotiable. Appointing bishops with the pope's mandate is one of these.” (Canon Law # 1013)

The War Against the Authority of the Pope Begins Again – The First Illicit Consecration

This assault on the pope's authority to appoint the official Church's own bishops was in November, 2010, when Father **Gao Jincui** was illicitly ordained by legitimate (Vatican approved) bishops for the Diocese of **Chengde**. Rome issued a protest and declared the participants, consecrators and consecrated, to be under the canonical penalty (#1382) of *ipso facto* excommunication. Nothing further was said. Dialogue continued hoping that this would not happen again and, by repentance, the wound would quickly be healed. That hope faded quickly.

Archbishop Savio Hon Taifai

What did happen shortly after, however, was the elevation of Hong-Kong native, **Father Savio Hon Taifai**, the Provincial Superior of the Salesian order, to Archbishop and to Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. In our last Easter newsletter, I related the news of this crucial and timely appointment. With Archbishop Hon's personal first hand knowledge of Catholic Church in China, there is great potential for him to clear up confusions and to right the wrongs that have afflicted many in the Catholic Church in China. It is my hope that the Archbishop, together with his mentor **Cardinal Zen**, will be a tour de force, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in purifying and strengthening the true Catholic Church in China.

A Licit Consecration for the Underground Church In The Midst – But the Bishop Candidate Was Kidnapped

Father **Joseph Sun Jigen**, appointed by the Vatican, was to be licitly consecrated co-adjutor to underground Bishop **Stephen Yang Xiangtai of the Diocese of Handan, Hebei**, on June 29, the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Bishop Yang is age eighty-nine. The government objected to this licit ordination by objecting to the date being too near that of July 1, the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. To prevent this ordination, the government kidnapped Father Sun. (Coincidentally, Bishop Yang suffered a heart attack as if it was due to hearing about the kidnapping. He is now in the hospital.) What the government did not know was that Father Sun was already secretly consecrated eight days prior to the scheduled “consecration” on June 29. This secret ordination rite with papal mandate was presided by the same Bishop Stephen Yang on June 21 before he suffered the heart attack. The newly ordained Bishop Sun has now returned to Handan, but under surveillance by three “men” in plainclothes.

The Second Illicit Consecration And Personal Excommunication

Then, the CCPA had gathered seven legitimized bishops to illicitly consecrate **Father Paul Lei Shiyin for the diocese of Leshan** on June 29. So much for that date being “too near” to the July 1, 90th anniversary of the Chinese Communist party. Father Lei is a communist all the way, is publicly known not to be living a celibate life. He stood no chance of ever receiving papal approval. Nevertheless, Archbishop Hon, the newly appointed secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, sent Lei a letter pleading with him to do the right thing and to cancel his ordination plans. Hon was never answered. Reacting quickly to the sundering abuse and with gusto, Archbishop Hon and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples issued a warning urging Catholics in China not to receive sacraments administered by Father Paul Lei Shiyin, who was being illicitly consecrated Bishop of Leshan without a pontifical mandate, nor from the seven bishops who consecrated him. “Father Lei has already incurred the *latae sententiae* [automatic] excommunication which is further ‘declared’ publicly by the Holy See,” the Congregation noted, and the Holy See “is the only place he can go for reconciliation.” This warning had followed quickly upon the Holy See's personal excommunication (*nominatim*, by name) in the Vatican, issued July 4, upon a Chinese bishop. More may be coming, once it is determined whether the co-consecrators participated without coercion.

Personal Excommunication – In fact, this is the first personal excommunication since 1955. I recalled the personal excommunication on **Li Wei Guang**, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of **Nanking** (the old capital of China) on March 16, 1955. At the request of the Vatican, Bishop Ignatius Kung (later Cardinal Kung) delivered and announced the excommunication; because, the Papal Nuncio to China, Archbishop Riberi, was expelled by the Chinese communist government in September 1951. By executing this excommunication, Bishop Kung's courageous act and unquestionable loyalty to the Pope probably confirmed the communist government's determination to eliminate Bishop Kung in order to implement this independent Catholic church movement.

The Third Illicit Consecration

The third illicit consecration occurred under mounting tension on July 14. The day prior to that, Cardinal Zen and his successor, Bishop Tong of Hong Kong, issued two appeals for an end to these illicit consecrations. Zen's appeal was by

way of an advertisement in a Hong Kong newspaper. It was addressed to President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao. He asked the two leaders to “*take the time to care about our Catholics in China*” and restrain “*rogue civil servants who violate the state constitution, use violence to help the scum of the Church, and to force the mainland bishops, priests and laypeople to do things that go against their conscience. . . . God is merciful, but He cannot bless those who make life difficult for the people.*” And, a few days before the scheduled consecration, four of the eight bishops summoned for the ordination were kidnapped and subjected to coercive intimidation. One of the summoned bishops, **Mgr. Paul Pei Junmin of Shenyang**, who was slated to be the main celebrant, received the physical protection of the priests of his diocese. A number of them moved into his house and, taking shifts, remained with him to guard him. Bishop Pei had been forced in November to participate in the illicit consecration of Bishop Guo Jincui of Chengde. He was fortunate to escape this time, thanks to the bravery of his clergy.

So, the July 14 consecration of Father **Joseph Huang Bingzhang** as Bishop of **Shantou (Guangdong)** took place with eight legitimate bishops illicitly laying their hands upon him. What makes matters even worse in this violation of justice is that Shantou already has a Vatican-appointed underground bishop, **Monsignor Peter Zhuang Jianjian**. Bishop Zhuang had tried by letter and phone to persuade Father Huang not to go through with the consecration, but Bishop Zhuang was ignored.

On July 16, therefore, the Holy See issued another Statement of excommunication, this one on Father Huang Bignzhang. The Statement also made note of the merit before God of those bishops who offered “various forms of resistance, yet were reportedly obliged to take part in the ordination.” And, too, “Equal appreciation is also due to those priests, consecrated persons and members of the faithful who have defended their pastors, accompanying them by their prayers at this difficult time and sharing in their deep suffering”

Patriotic Association’s Reaction on the Two Excommunications and Cardinal Zen’s Rebuttal

Having violated one of the most basic Catholic disciplines by ordaining its priests to bishops without the Papal mandate, the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) of the Chinese Government did not apologize to the Pope, did not ask for forgiveness, and did not ask for repentance from the two illicitly ordained bishops. Instead, it interfered with the internal policy of the Vatican by calling the two personal excommunications “extremely unreasonable and rude,” “brutal,” “threats,” and demanded for their revocation! These words have “*reached the extreme of absurdity*” and are “*preposterous and ridiculous*” said Cardinal Zen in a statement published by UCANews on July 26, 2011. Cardinal Zen continues: “*....They (SARA) completely disregarded the authority and the kindness of our Holy Father, and still they dare to say that they have sincere will of dialogue. That is the biggest lie in the world! Only the self interest and cowardice of the nations prevent them from saying a fair word of disapproval....They have no right to usurp the name of ‘Catholic Church’*”

It's a War

The retired Cardinal Joseph Zen, now that he is retired from episcopal duties in Hong Kong, has been on a mission to set the record straight concerning the situation of the Church in China. When he was here in the United States in April during a press conference at Washington, D.C.'s Hudson Institute, his words were somber and critical.

“*Recently, unfortunately, the people in the Congregation for Evangelization even followed a wrong policy, the wrong strategy – which is the old ‘Ostpolitik,’*” he observed. “*This policy of Ostpolitik – which is compromise at any cost, to please the government always, to always avoid confrontation – led to the present situation, the events at the end of November and the beginning of December,*” Cardinal Zen said. Continuing:

“*In November of 2010, the Chinese government ordained a bishop without the approval of the Holy See, at a ceremony in which several bishops loyal to Rome were reportedly forced to participate. In December, police officers rounded up a large number of bishops and escorted them to a state-sponsored meeting of an unauthorized ‘bishops’ conference.’*”

“*It is no more our Church,*” Cardinal Zen lamented. “*They carried out one more illegitimate ordination, and then they had a big assembly. . . . It was like a slap in the face of the Holy Father.*” (CNA/EWTN News, April 12, 2011)

Zen gave an even more forceful overview on April 7 with EWTN. The Vatican policy, he said, has “*frustrated the underground Church,*” which has been made to feel “*inconvenient*” and “*forsaken.*” (Please read our Christmas 2008 newsletter on the same subject, available on our web site). He took great pains to show how the pope's Open Letter to the Church in China of 2007 was “*wrongly interpreted.*” He said that some had the impression that they were being asked to come out and unite with the open Patriotic Church, which, they knew would amount to a betrayal of their Faith and loyalty to Christ's Vicar. Without naming names the cardinal did go so far as to complain about a certain “*Triumvirate*” in Rome who were frustrating the plan of Pope Benedict by pursuing a policy of “*compromise at any cost.*” “*That wrong interpretation said that the Holy Father wants everybody to come into the open,*” the cardinal explained. “*This is*

Not true at all". Although the PA contains many bishops in communion with Rome, Pope Benedict warned "underground" bishops to be careful in approaching it. "*The Holy Father cautioned people in the underground,*" Cardinal Zen pointed out. "*Because when you want to come out, the letter says: in no few instances, indeed almost always, the government will impose conditions which are not acceptable to the Catholic conscience.*"

On April 20, 2010, Cardinal Zen made a statement during an open forum in Hong Kong as published in the Apple Daily newspaper in Hong Kong. He said that "*the Vatican has reached the bottom line in compromising with the Chinese Government... the Pope has clearly stated that the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association has the elements of anti-ecclesial structure of the Roman Catholic Church and appeals all the faithful in China to unite together to topple the PA*". Also, on April 4, 2011, Archbishop Hon, the Secretary of the Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples, told the Italian Catholic newspaper Avvenire, "*The clandestine (underground) communities still have a reason to exist.*" This agrees with our long held position that the only way for the Catholics in China to be faithful to the Universal Roman Catholic Church is for the underground Church in China to continue, even it has suffered persecution for the last sixty-plus years.

In fact, if there is no underground Church that is staunchly loyal and in communion with the Pope and with the universal Church, there would be no reason for the Chinese government to even negotiate with the Vatican. Many people appear to have forgotten that it is not a function of an atheistic government to promote religion. It founded the independent official Church, because it hoped to replace the underground Church and turned its loyalty to the Pope to the Chinese communist government!

Just four days before the illicit consecration of Father Huang in July, Cardinal Zen was back again in the United States for an event at the National Basilica. His mission was to visit certain Chinese Catholic communities in the United States and Canada to appraise them of the situation.

In a press conference on July 14 in New York, called after the third illicit consecration, Cardinal Zen offered three words when characterizing the current standoff between the Vatican and Beijing: "*It's a war.*"

It Cannot Be Denied Now: There are Two Catholic Churches in China, One True, One False

In light of what is happening now in China, I would like to refer our readers back to my Open Letter to the Vatican in March, 2000 more than ten years ago. You can read it on the Cardinal Kung Foundation website. In that Letter, I documented declarations from Pope Pius XII to Pope John Paul II condemning the Chinese Catholic PA. Every one of these popes (except for John Paul I of short reign) affirmed that episcopal consecrations without papal mandate were acts of schism incurring *ipso facto* excommunication, both for the one being consecrated and for the consecrators, unless participation in the rite was forced by coercion. It is now eleven years since I sent that appeal to the Vatican and to His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger as the first among five addressees. In that Letter I quoted Ignatius Cardinal Kung, who said, without hesitancy, upon hearing about the illicit consecration of five bishops by the CCPA in January, 2000, that "The PA is a schismatic Church." Now that the disastrous result of this unrealistic optimism that I described in the beginning of this news letter, paraded by so many "China experts", has manifested itself once again, my open letter may be read with even more urgency. A number of issues in this letter have been inadvertently answered by the Pope in his letter to China in 2007.

Annual Day of Prayer for the Church in China

I believe that Pope Benedict XVI must be well aware before the illicit consecration of the Bishop of Chengde last November that storm clouds were looming ominously over the horizon for the Church in China. On September 12, 2010, the Assembly of Chinese Catholic Representatives, summoned by the government through the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA), was held in defiance of Rome's objections. Many Vatican-approved bishops were rounded up and forced to attend this fiasco with its fixed elections. I also believe that more intelligence of a possible tidal wave of schismatic consecrations was coming to the Holy Father's attention as the year 2011 progressed. This dire scenario led the pope on May 18 to call upon the universal Church and the Chinese faithful to offer up prayers for China on May 24, the feast of Our Lady Help of Christians. May 24 is officially a papally-established annual Day of Prayer for the Church in China. He reminded the faithful and their shepherds that the Catholics of China "*have a right to our prayers; they need our prayers.*" The Chinese need our solidarity.

The Pope has now spoken. He wanted the world to pray in justice and charity for our brothers and sisters who are in the heat of the battle. He wanted us to pray for the faithful in China, that their bishops would be firmly united to Christ and His Vicar, as the Apostles were to Jesus. I did dream and hope for an enthusiastic response from the Church dignitaries worldwide, like the Apostles' immediate response to Christ's call to "Follow me" (Mark. 2:14) and "Come after me" (Mark 1:17), to roll out red carpets for the prayers and high Masses for the Church in China. Thus, with one voice, under the leadership of the Holy Father, the prayers and Masses of the universal Church on that great feast day of Our Lady, could have ascended as a sweet aroma to the throne of God and extended mightily as a wave eastward through the gates and into the halls of the government offices in Beijing. This unified Catholic prayer of petition surely would have given the Communists pause. Not so.

Similar to previous years, the Cardinal Kung Foundation sponsored a Mass for China on May 24. Many of our benefactors also offered Masses for China on May 24. As far as I know, with the exception of the Catholics and the bishops of Vietnam, Italy, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Vatican, no other countries, or their conferences of bishops, or dioceses, including those in the United States, rallied to the pope's request to officially pray for the Church in China. The earnest plea of the Vicar of Christ went, with local exceptions to be sure, largely unheeded. This is sad.

What worried me the most is that this less than enthusiastic response to the Pope's appeal to pray for China could be considered by the Chinese government as an indication that the Pope's China policy has little or no support even within the church. If this were so, we may have a double whammy on hand. They are 1) the PA's belligerence to ordain bishops illicitly and 2) the seemingly indifference of the worldwide bishops on illicit ordinations and China's continuing persecution of the Catholic Church. We need to pray to St. Michael.

What Is in the Future – Be Not Afraid

Finally, I ask this question: What is the Holy Father going to do with this snowballing *de facto* schism when the fortieth illicit bishop, as planned by the PA, is consecrated in China? My prediction is that China may quickly ordain many more illicit bishops unless the worldwide public opinion, which China may fear, especially that from the world body of Catholic bishops, could unite together strongly to support the Pope's China policy. In the meantime, I pray that His Holiness the Pope himself will make very clear the consequences if China keeps ordaining bishops illicitly.

Let us go to basics. For obvious reasons, those who have suffered, shed blood, and were martyred for the Church in China, for the Christ, and for the Pope should be rewarded with strong words of encouragement and timely canonized by the Pope. By the same token, those who willfully violated the Church's dogma and disciplines should be punished firmly, severely, and swiftly also by the Pope. Jesus taught us: "No servant can serve two masters..." (Luke 16:13) "Whoever disowns me before men I will disown before my Father in Heaven..." (Matt 10:33) Couldn't the Catholic media start ventilating these two gospel lessons to China so that the bishops in the official Church in China may hear the message and start meditating on it in the hope that the Holy Spirit may strike them and wake them up so that, like St. Paul, they may return to holy mother Church.

Otherwise, to be sure, Mr. Liu Bainian, or whoever is in charge of the PA at that time, will just be sitting back on his easy chair with a self-assuring smirk on his face, waiting. He has accomplished his mission from the Chinese government, i.e. to completely control the Catholic Church. He has nothing to lose, possibly his soul. He might just say: "let us now negotiate!" when there will appear nothing left to negotiate.

I am confident that Our Lady of China will see her children through these trials. I trust that she has blessed China with two courageous ambassadors in Cardinal Zen and Archbishop Hon. But, most precious of all, are the faithful champions of the true Church in China, which we call the "underground Church," together with our innumerable martyr friends, and all others whose sufferings have gained them a crown in Heaven. With the help of God's grace and our prayers, may they never surrender. For, we know by Faith, that "the gates of hell will never prevail against the Church (Matt. 16:18)"; she will survive until the end of time. That is the promise of Our Savior. **"BE NOT AFRAID"**.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely in Christ



Joseph Kung
President, Cardinal Kung Foundation

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