



THE CARDINAL KUNG FOUNDATION



The Cardinal Kung Foundation

Press Release – June 17, 1996

Contact: Joseph Kung

PO Box 8086, Stamford, CT 06905, U.S.A

Tel: 203-329-9712 Fax: 203-329-8415 E-Mail: jmkung@aol.com

PERSECUTION OF ROMAN CATHOLICS IN CHINA EXPLODED **The Chinese Government Cracks Down on the Roman Catholics in Boading,** **Hebei**



Stamford, Connecticut, U.S.A. -

- Destroyed Our Lady of China Shrine at Dong Lu of the Diocese of Boading.
- Confiscated Our Lady of Lourdes Statue at the Shrine.
- Barricaded the pilgrim site with 5000 troops supported by 30 armored cars and helicopters.
- Jailed Father CUI Singang, Pastor of the Shrine.
- Jailed Bishop SHU Chimin of Boading. The government claimed the Bishop now missing.
- Jailed the Auxiliary Bishop of Boading, Bishop AN Shuxin.
- Jailed Fathers HU Duo and WEI Jing Kun, other Boading parish priests.
- Detained, house arrested or severely restricted the activities of dozens of other priests.
- Jailed ZHENG Da Peng, a lay leader of Boading Diocese. He is in bad health.
- Destroyed at least three underground churches and Sealed two others.
- Disbanded a Roman Catholic seminary with 150 seminarians and a novitiate with 35 novices.
- Physically forced Roman Catholics to register with the Patriotic Association, founded by the Chinese communist government.
- Coerce Roman Catholic students to leave their church, or risk dismissal.

This full-scale raid could not have happened without the direct mandate from the central government. It appeared to be a part of the carefully planned strategy to escalate the persecution to the Roman Catholics across the country in both large cities and small villages. Nor could this

raid have happened without the full knowledge of the Patriotic Association bishops who are parts of the Chinese government machinery. The government used brutality to force Roman Catholics to join the Patriotic Association. Villagers refusing to register with the Patriotic Association were subject to severe disciplinary action including beatings. The Patriotic Association bishops must bear considerable responsibility for condoning the government's repressive religious policy.

Dong Lu was consecrated as the Shrine for Our Lady of China in 1932 by Pope Pius XI. Although the communists regarded pilgrimages to Dong Lu as an illegal religious activity and exercised everything in its power to stop this annual pilgrimage, tens of thousands of people braved the physical abuses, roadblocks, and other restrictions to pray at the shrine each May. Last year, the government blocked all roads to Dong Lu, stopped the sale of bus and rail tickets to anyone suspected of being Catholic going to Dong Lu or its neighboring towns, and confiscated driver's licenses of any Catholics driving to Dong Lu. Yet, over 100,000 Roman Catholics (underground) came to Dong Lu in May 1995.

It would appear that Holy Mother came to comfort her children, rewarding them for their enormous sacrifice and risk in their fidelity to Pope and in taking this pilgrimage to Dong Lu, with a spectacular apparition of her image and of the Holy Family in the sky over Dong Lu in May 1995. This miracle, witnessed by over 30,000 pilgrims, was certified by the Bishop of Baoding.

The Roman Catholic Church in China, also known as the underground Church, is loyal to the Pope, but is illegal in China. In spite of its illegal status, the number of Catholics loyal to the Pope grew from 3 million in 1950's to 8 million at present. Patriotic Association is a pseudo church controlled totally by the Chinese government. Failing to destroy Roman Catholicism through persecution in early 1950's, the Chinese Government created in 1957 the "Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association" to replace the Roman Catholic Church. The government did not allow people to choose religion according to one's conscience, and did not respect true freedom of religion as other civilized states do. The bishops of the Patriotic Association are appointed by the Chinese government and are consecrated without the permission of the Pope.

As an expression of friendship and reconciliation, a number of Roman Catholic institutions in the free world have given well over US \$ 5 million to the Patriotic Association while donating practically nothing to the underground Roman Catholic Church, probably in order not to jeopardize the friendship with the Chinese government by assisting an illegal church. Scores of foreign priests and religious sister are assisting the Patriotic Association's bishops and the Chinese government as English teachers, social workers, medical personnel and lecturers in the Patriotic Association seminaries. In the United States alone, approximately 50 Patriotic Association priests and seminarians are studying in over 12 major seminaries on scholarships.

It is apparent that such goodwill and generosity offered by the Roman Catholic institutions in the free world not only have not been reciprocated, but also have not brought about religious freedom to China. This goodwill and generosity in effect were interpreted by the Chinese government and the Patriotic Association as an approval of their repressive religious policy, thereby indirectly prolonging the religious persecution to the underground Church.

Moreover, the United States government also actively supported these Patriotic Association bishops and other related personnel by funding their many visits to this country and awarded

China with the Most Favored Nation trade status, while assaults on Roman Catholic and other religions continue unabated. This policy, if not corrected, is tantamount to approving this repressive policy of the Chinese government to suppress religion and to abuse fundamental human rights. If the United States is truly concerned about universal human rights, It should not renew the MFN trade status for China this year because of its blatant violation of the universal right of freedom of religion.

Any Christian leaders, including Patriotic Association bishops, should speak with charity and fortitude against these direct attacks on Holy Mother and the shrine built to honor Her. They must not remain silent and condone such a brutal way of recruiting members for the Patriotic Association. Regrettably, the Patriotic Association bishops have yet to speak out.

It is precisely referring to these persecutions that Pope John Paul II said recently, "the great majority of Chinese Catholics precisely in order to live this fidelity in fullness, have chosen the path of suffering and silence. With deep affection, our hearts turn to these brothers and sisters of ours who suffer great hardship, thankful for their generous and heroic example..."..The Lord adds "blest are those persecuted for holiness' sake, the reign of God is theirs." (Mt 5.10)

We appeal to the Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States and of the free world, all people of God, all Christian brothers and sisters, and all human rights advocates to speak out against such atrocities to our Holy Mother and to the Roman Catholic Church in China.

PLEASE HELP TO STOP THE ALMOST 50 YEARS OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN CHINA.