



THE CARDINAL KUNG FOUNDATION



The Cardinal Kung Foundation

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Another Arrest of Roman Catholic Priest in China



Stamford, Connecticut, U.S.A. - The Cardinal Kung Foundation, an advocate of the underground Roman Catholic Church in China, reports that Rev. Father Gao Yi Hua of Shang Chen Tang, Jinfengzhen township, Changle County in Fujian Province, was arrested by the Chinese government at about 9:00 in the evening of August 19, 2000.

Father Gao, an underground Roman Catholic priest, was arrested by approximately five police officers in the home of his friend after he celebrated a private Holy Mass there. We do not know where he was taken and where he is detained now. Although no reason for his arrest was announced by the Chinese government, we believe that his arrest is the result of his priestly work in the underground Roman Catholic Church and of his refusal to register with the Patriotic Association.

Father Gao is 44 years of age. He was forced to work in a labor camp for two years because of his missionary work and was released in 1991. He was ordained an underground priest sixteen years ago in 1984.

Joseph Kung, the president of the Cardinal Kung Foundation, said: "The Patriotic Association was founded by the Chinese communist government in 1957. Why should an atheist government like China establish a church, as it was never the agenda of an atheist government to propagate religious faith? The objective of the Communists in creating the Patriotic Association was therefore to replace the Roman Catholic Church and to control the church entirely by the government. The Patriotic Association does not recognize the supremacy of the Pope in the Catholic Church, and is autonomous from and not obedient to the Pope. The Patriotic Association also appoints its own bishops without a mandate from the Pope. There are

approximately four million followers in the Patriotic Association. In contrast, the population of the underground Church, in spite of its suffering severe ongoing persecution by the Chinese government for the past 50 years, increased from approximately 3 million in early 1950 to approximately 12 million today. In his speech on December 3, 1996, the Holy Father proudly proclaimed the underground Church as 'a precious jewel of the Catholic Church.' Unlike the Patriotic Association, the underground Roman Catholic Church recognizes the supremacy of the Pope and is obedient to him.

Currently, the Chinese government is exerting efforts to force the members of the underground Church to register with the Chinese government, thereby forcing them to join the Patriotic Association. Because of the stiff resistance by the underground Church to register with the government, the government intensified its persecution of the underground Church by punishing it most severely. As a result, hundreds of underground bishops, priests, and catholic faithful are still in prison or labor camp. Father Gao is apparently one the latest victims."

A copy of this release with Chinese names will be faxed to you upon request.