



THE CARDINAL KUNG FOUNDATION



The Cardinal Kung Foundation

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Underground Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in China "Lost" for More than 6 Years Found Very Ill in Government Detention



Stamford, Connecticut, U.S.A. - Bishop SU Zhimin 蘇志民主教, the underground Roman Catholic Bishop of Baoding 保定, Hebei 河北 in China, was arrested and jailed on October 8, 1997, and had not been heard from or seen ever since. Inquiries to the Chinese Government from various U.S. government and non-government agencies about Bishop Su's whereabouts and his well being were never answered satisfactorily. For six years since October 8, 1997, we, as well as many other concerned organizations, could not be certain if Bishop Su was still alive.

The Cardinal Kung Foundation 龔樞機基金會 has just received information that on or around November 15, 2003, Bishop Su Zhimin was taken to the Officers' Ward of the Baoding Central Hospital in Baoding, Hebei for an eye operation and for heart ailments. He was heavily guarded by approximately twenty plain-clothes government security personnel, including Mr. JIA Ruiqi 賈瑞琪, who is a high ranking officer of the public security bureau of Baoding. It was reported that the name of SU Zhimin is not officially registered in the hospital record.

Bishop Su is a prominent leader of the underground Roman Catholic Church in China and is probably the only underground bishop who has met a US Congressman. He met privately with Congressman Christopher Smith (NJ) in January 1994 during Congressman's official visit to China. Immediately after the departure of Congressman Smith from China, Bishop Su was arrested and detained for 9 days.

Bishop Su has been arrested at least 5 times and spent approximately 27 years in prison thus far. He was once beaten so savagely in prison that he suffered extensive hearing loss. He escaped

from police detention in April 1996 and remained in hiding until October 1997. While in hiding, he wrote to the Standing Committee of the People's National Congress requesting it "to thoroughly investigate the 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 religious believers are protected." He was rearrested in October 1997.

Joseph Kung, the president of the Cardinal Kung Foundation, said: "During the past six years, the Chinese government has been consistently denying that it knew the whereabouts of Bishop Su Zhimin while in fact Bishop Su has been held continuously by the Chinese government. Denying Bishop Su's contact with his family and concealing his whereabouts from them are blatant violations of the prisoner's rights. Now that Bishop Su has reappeared and found very sick, the Chinese government should immediately release him to the care of his family. While preparing for the Olympic Games, China would do well to demonstrate to the world that it sincerely respects all principles of peace and humanitarianism, and not perpetuate such a violation of human rights just eighty miles from Beijing. We request prayers from all people of good will for this brave leader of the underground Roman Catholic Church in China. We also urge all leaders of free countries to speak out for the release of Bishop Su."