

REPORT ON THE CHINA MEETING HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY, 1980

33 Sedos members representing 23 congregations were present. The first part of the meeting consisted of a report on the China questionnaire to which 23 congregations had responded. (Copies of the report were distributed at the meeting). A resumé of Fr. Lazzarotto's article was also distributed. (Cf. pages 92 to 99 of this Bulletin for the complete article).

In the second part of the meeting, Fr. John Cioppa, a member of the General Council of the Maryknoll Fathers, gave a report of the recent meeting of Catholic religious interested in China held in the United States. Below is an account of the meeting:

China Meeting, December 6-7, 1979, Maryknoll New York.

Organization

The Meeting was the first of its kind held in thirty years with U.S. Catholic Mission Groups. The purpose of the Conference was to enable a sharing by Mission Groups of their present thinking and plans regarding China and to broaden understanding of the Chinese reality.

The idea of having the Meeting with Catholic Mission Groups evolved from a meeting of a few Catholic representatives with the China Program Committee of the National Council of Churches in May, 1979. The purpose of that meeting was to discuss ecumenical collaboration in the study and possible involvement of church people in China. A major conclusion of the May meeting was that it is necessary to first know the present thinking of Catholic Mission Groups about China before we can discuss or have ecumenical collaboration.

Consequently, the U.S. Catholic Mission Council (CMC) was asked to assume leadership to bring Catholic Mission Groups together for an update and sharing of their Society/Congregation's thinking about China. In July the CMC conducted a survey of all U.S.-based Catholic Mission Groups formerly in China to ascertain the number of groups that still have an interest in China. Invitations to the December meeting were sent to all Groups that expressed interest in such a meeting. 45 U.S. congregations had missions in China. 38 responded to the questionnaire, expressing interest.

Participants and Agenda

There were thirty nine participants at the Meeting. Seventeen Mission Groups were represented, seven from men's Societies and ten from women's Congregations. All were from the United States except for representation from two Canadian groups and a visitor from Hong Kong.

The agenda for the Meeting was as follows:

Welcome by Eugene Toland of Maryknoll and Anthony Bellagamba
of the Catholic Mission Council
Orientation by Rose Marie Franklin of Maryknoll
THE PAST: BRIEF REVIEW by participants on the extent and
duration of previous experience in China
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM THE PAST by Richard Madsen, Ph.D.
of the University of California in San Diego
(Sedos Documentation No. 4/3694)
THE PRESENT: CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP TO TODAY'S CHINA by
Donald MacInnis of the Midwest China Research Center
(Sedos Documentation No. 4/3695)
PRESENT CONTACTS WITH CHINA by participants
CONTEMPORARY CHINA, film and discussion
THE FUTURE: THE CHALLENGE OF CHINA by John Cioppa
Comments by Theresa Chu, RSCJ of Hong Kong China Liaison Office
Small Group discussion and recommendations for the future.

Present Contacts with China

Of the Mission Groups represented at the Meeting, three are working on plans to allow a limited number to apply for contracts in China given professional competency, language facility and understanding of Marxism and Maoism. Several Groups have no firm intention of future involvement in China and the rest are interested given the right kind of opportunity. Two Congregations have started work on their histories in China.

Some discussion was held on the kind and numbers of China research centers in Hong Kong and it was noted that there are many though each has a different aspect that is emphasized. For instance, there are the Tao Fung Sang cultural research Center, Jonathan Chao's evangelical Center, Father Ladany's Center to monitor broadcasts and publications, and the Methodist Liaison Center. The Hong Kong diocese has recently initiated a China research group. It was noted that all research groups are dominated by men and clerics and while the principle of collaboration is adhered to, collaborative efforts have been minimal. It was agreed that collaboration among research groups is desirable and anyone starting research, hopefully will integrate and collaborate with existing groups rather than initiating a new group or series of studies. It was suggested that Hong Kong would be the best place for orientation and de-briefing for individuals/groups that go to China on tours or contracts. The question was also raised about anyone going to China at all until further study, research, and reflection has been done.

Presentation by John Cioppa

The presentation by Father Cioppa focused on the Maryknoll Society's response to thirty years experience in China and thirty years out of China. Research on China was begun only in 1979. John offered six essential qualitative elements of response to China as follows:

- response must be based on in-depth and on-going reflective analysis of the past and present in China, the world and the Church rooted in research and study;
- response must be based on keen sensitivity and appreciation of the identity and selfhood of the Chinese people and Christian Churches;
- response must be based on an understanding of the PRC's policy and attitude towards religion;

- response must be based on a cooperative and ecumenical approach in both message and witness as well as cooperation and collaboration within our own Catholic tradition;
- response must be based on an acute awareness and appreciation of the tension and delicate balance of the presence and nature of grass-root Christians, the Catholic Patriotic Church, the Church in Taiwan, and relationships with the Vatican. Research and reflection should lead to reconciliation not polarization;
- response must be based on a sympathetic presence with an approach that is slow, thoughtful, reflective, and sensitive and not based on an euphoria about China being open again. An oriental approach would be mostly "actively doing nothing", but it is necessary to also maintain hope and activity.

One Chinese participant said that if we want to know about the nature of the Church in China today we need to go to where the greater majority of Catholics are and see the kind of faith, attitude and behaviour they have. The Chinese can "smell" the sympathy a Westerner may have for China. In some cases there is little conflict between grass-root Christians and the Patriotic Church; each live their own lives and the people are not caught in an either/or bind. In supplying personnel we need be careful of participating in educational systems that may cater to the elite and not touch or help the ordinary people. We need to view evangelization and development, not as separate activities or phenomenon, but as related and interdependent. We would benefit by a more indepth understanding of the relationship between faith and Socialism, faith and Marxism. Socialism as it is lived today in China may be more Christian than Christianity of the West.

Small Group Discussions and Recommendations

The participants divided into small group discussions to brainstorm recommendations for the future. After sharing the discussion results the small groups met again to select three priorities. Of priorities given, the following were mentioned most frequently:

- to have a 1980 meeting similar to this one but preferably on an ecumenical basis;
- to have a Newsletter on China to share information, trip reports, research results, research papers, bibliography, etc.
- to have more collaboration in research;
- to encourage all Societies/Congregations to write their China histories.

It was also decided to set up a committee for follow up work of the Meeting in conjunction with the Catholic Mission Council. The members of the committee tentatively are:

John Cioppa and/or Rose Marie Franklin of Maryknoll
 Kathleen Keefe of Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
 Carita Pendergast of Sisters of Charity
 Charles Flaherty of the Columbans

The committee and CMC will meet periodically throughout the year.

For further information and communication write to: U.S. Catholic Mission Council, 1302 18th Street, N.W. Suite 702, Washington, D.C. 20036.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CHURCH IN CHINA TODAY

By Angelo S. Lazzarotto, pime

(A talk given to the Associations of Superiors-General, Hong Kong)

Jonathan Chao, a protestant pastor who heads the Chinese Church Research Center in Hong Kong, wrote recently: "There are mission groups who are anxious to join the China bandwagon and be the first to launch a dramatic China evangelistic beachhead. It is this kind of uninformed zeal that will hurt the prospects of the Gospel in China most."

I think we can agree with him, knowing how fashionable it is today to get involved with Chinese problems; and this applies also, no doubt, to certain well meaning Christians who seem to have suddenly discovered their missionary vocation to China.

As for the religious groups with a long standing tradition of mission service there, it is only natural that they should feel such concern. This may even be a specific duty for the congregations, both of men and women, who still have members living there, now that some contacts have again become possible.

This concern is shared at the highest level of the Church, as was revealed by the appeal made by Pope John Paul II on Sunday, 19 August, 1979. Earlier, last May, at the annual study session of the USG at Villa Cavalletti near Rome, Card. Agnelo Rossi of Propaganda Fide urged the Superiors of all Orders and Congregations to be open and alert to the possible demands of the new situation in China.

Already in October 1976, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the ordination of the first Chinese Bishops, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples had called a special meeting of Bishops, Superiors of Religious Orders and experts to study this problem. But it was difficult to foresee the developments which were then just shaping up.

In fact only recently, with the new regulations concerning oversea visitors, it has been possible for a number of Christians and even some priests and religious living abroad to go back to their native land, sometimes for the first time in 30 years. These eyewitnesses have brought back the first precious glimpses on the real situation of the scattered Catholic communities in different parts of China.

From this point of view, Hong Kong is a privileged listening point; its position at the gate of China, places on the local Church here a more specific responsibility. In fact, some people are convinced that perhaps not all is being done that could be done from here, to help the Church in China today and to witness to the millions of people who never heard the name of Jesus there.

It may be recalled that in 1969-70, after Bishop Francis Hsu succeeded Bishop L. Bianchi as the head of the diocese, a group of major superiors of both women and men met a few times to discuss proposals for fresh presentation of the gospel to the Chinese people. A tentative working programme was also drawn up and sent for consideration to the Union of the Superiors-General in Rome. But the whole idea had to be dropped when a news agency got hold of the issue and blew it up, headlining a "secret plan" by the Vatican to stage a comeback to China.

Even today, uncalled-for publicity may cause a lot of misunderstandings on the issue. Nor can we overlook the danger of giving to the Christian communities in the west a slanted idea of the new opportunities offered, thus evoking the sort of unrealistic expectations and undiscerning enthusiasm mentioned above. A balanced and realistic approach will be better ensured if this problem is studied and tackled together, as a common endeavor, by the groups and persons more directly interested.

Some missionary institutes have recently assigned a person to work specifically on this project. Bishop J. B. Wu of Hong Kong, backed by the priests' council, has appointed one of his priests to coordinate the effort of the local Church. The study team that has been formed intends to cooperate as closely as possible with other research centres sponsored by Christian bodies in Hong Kong.

The challenge that confronts us unfolds along two main lines: our communities have specific duties to their brethren, the fellow-Christians who live in China; but, straight from the words of Jesus in the Gospel, comes the more general task of making the good News heard to some at least of the 900 million people living there, although religion appears to be so irrelevant in their present social context.

This paper is limited to the first aspect of the issue, considering it mostly from the point of view of the Hong Kong Church and of the religious groups working here.

1. We know very little on the situation of the single dioceses in China. All contacts with the Church in mainland China were abruptly interrupted in 1966. Only now we are slowly coming to realize how disastrous the experience of the cultural revolution was for most believers, as for many intellectuals and even local cadres.

- After the disruption of that period, it is not an easy task to re-establish the contacts with the various dioceses of the continent. Working to reconstruct the map, so to say, of the Church in China is like putting together a destroyed mosaic: it takes patience and loving attention.
- But only by reaching out in a friendly effort to the bishops, priests, religious and lay people, men and women, who have survived the trials of these long years, can we come to know their real needs and the way we can be of some help.
- To this end we should enlist the cooperation of the local parishes, since there are so many Catholics going from here to different areas in China. It is very important for the religious congregations of men and women to cooperate closely: as it happens now, occasional visitors to certain areas may bring back some news about members of this or that congregation, but the information may not reach the group directly concerned.

2. We should not judge superficially the conditions of the Church in China. From the scattered bits of information so far available, one can see great differences in the concrete situations, with some common pattern. But it is still too early to try and make any sort of assessment of the overall condition of the Christian communities living there.

- Some people, particularly in the western countries, have expressed certain misgivings about the quality of Catholicism that is slowly surfacing in China today. Having been cut off for a long time from the rest of the world, our Chinese brethren have hardly heard of the many changes which occurred in the Church during the past 30 years and particularly since Vatican Council II.

- It would, therefore, be ungenerous to look down on them because of the old fashioned devotional life that most of them display today. It should be remembered, after all, that this very "traditional devotion" has kept most of them generous and faithful in the most difficult circumstances.
- Our contacts with them should, therefore, be very delicate and respectful. While helping them to grow in understanding ever more the essential aspects of Christian life, we should certainly encourage them to appreciate the new theological insights brought about by the recent Council. However, we ought to be careful to avoid imposing on them theories and opinions which are at variance with the established tradition and with the magisterium of the Church.
- We should also refrain from using the expression "underground Church", that some people in the West seem to like. It is in fact misleading, since these Christians as other believers are not doing anything unlawful or "underground": they simply try to be loyal to their faith. One could better call it a "silent Church", because it has no way, in most cases, to express itself, being denied all possibilities of public life.

3. We should not forget the past trials and sufferings undergone by Christians in China.

- It is well known fact that during the past years many Christians were ostensibly condemned for alleged political or common motivations. But the local communities knew very well that they were actually witnessing, under the most trying circumstances, their faith in God and love for the Church.
- It may be our moral duty to collect the available documentation, preserving it for future memory. As in the past centuries, the trials and generous stand of so many lay Christians, religious and priests of our generation have a great significance for the whole Church.
- Surely today, when the climate has changed so much with regard to dialogue and cooperation with the marxist forces, many people would not hesitate to dismiss with a smile of compassion those old fashioned believers who earned their fate by an unperceiving and intransigent stand. However, no satisfactory solution has so far been reached to the theoretical issue about the extent of a common ground and of viable concrete cooperation.
- Besides, there is growing evidence that, at least during the cultural revolution, Catholics were often forced to renege their very faith in God and in Christ. In the concrete reality of today's China, most believers do not seem to hesitate showing their solidarity with these coherent and dignified Christians. And this is often coupled with a unconcealed admiration by common people and even cadres and intellectuals. The persistent voices reporting conversions to the Christian faith in several parts of China seem to confirm the intrinsic power of attraction that this witnessing commands even where no organized evangelization is possible.
- At a large gathering of religious leaders held in Shanghai on 9th January 1979, the "gang of four" was publicly accused of having "ruthlessly persecuted religious workers...", and it was announced that "false charges and slanders forced on patriotic personalities in religious circles must be redressed..." The slow pace of this rehabilitation process, one year after, is disturbing, and the fear grows that it may never reach most of the religious persons condemned in the past.

4. We ought to get ready to respond to the needs expressed by Chinese Christians. While in the past any religious literature was rejected by the authorities as "poisonous weed" and any contact with people (even relatives) living abroad was forbidden, things have improved a lot in the past two years.

- In theory, there is nothing in China today preventing Christians from possessing a Bible or a prayer book or a catechism. But the fact is that they have none, and there is nowhere for them to buy a copy if they wish to. Some protestant leaders have mentioned a project to prepare a revised Chinese version of the New Testament; but it will take quite some time and the shortage of printing paper may well prevent it from being a large edition.
- It is not infrequent now to have priests or simple Christians from China writing to relatives or friends abroad, particularly in Hong Kong or Southeast Asia, and asking quite openly for religious articles and books. We can understand that they may be so eager to receive such material if we remember that practically everything was destroyed during the dark period of the cultural revolution.
- Answering specific requests appears today quite legitimate. At present there is in fact no knowledge of regulations forbidding the import of religious books into China. But as stated above, no clear green light has been given either, so that it often depends on the good will of the local cadres, whether these publications pass or not.
- The concrete possibility of introducing items of a religious nature to China cannot be taken for granted. There have been cases even recently of small parcels of religious books rejected by the customs office; this may well be due to the excesses of some protestant organizations creating a type of Bible invasion.
- Generally the Chinese authorities are quite open-minded now, letting in many things that the faithful there require. For oversea visitors things seem to be even easier. It might be good to tell oversea Christian visitors coming through Hong Kong on their way to China, particularly priests and religious, that they may get some relevant information here on the current regulations regarding the matter.

5. We need to study seriously the evolution of the "religious policy in the P.R.C. For some years, under the so-called "gang of four" and particularly from 1967 to 1974, in the official press there was practically no mention of religion; things have started to change in the last two years.

- The present policy of the central authorities allows more religious freedom, but one should not imagine that the fundamental attitude of the Chinese Communist Party towards religion has also changed.
- The new Chinese Constitution approved in March 1978 has reconfirmed the right of the citizen "to believe in a religion or not to believe" (art. 46). But anything that amounts to evangelization or to "religious propaganda" is still likely to be considered a breaking of the law, since the same article consecrates only the "right to propagate atheism".
- It is also to be remembered that the official policy of the higher authorities is not always interpreted and enforced in the same way at lower levels. For these reasons it is important that serious research be undertaken by a study team, both on the official policy and on the way this is practically applied; the relevant documentation should then be shared with all people concerned.

6. It is also necessary to understand and assess the social thinking and behaviour in today's China.

- The decision of the authorities (1978) to establish a Research Institute on the great World Religions within the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was a bold one, reversing the previous radical stand. Whatever their aim, this is a challenge for us to make a serious research on some important aspects of the reality of China at the beginning of the fourth decade since "liberation".
- In particular we may need to study the incidence of an all-pervading social structure on the attitude of believers with reference to some fundamental issues. Here are some examples.
- What is the understanding of a Chinese believer today, as to the duties he has to his country and to the community? In a society based on the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat", how far can a believer go in accepting the "revolutionary" stand that has been guiding China for all these years? Or, conversely, how far can a believer go in his or her dissent to the theoretical foundations on which the country is being built, specifically to the materialistic official philosophy, without becoming a disloyal citizen and without risking becoming margined?
- Christians in China, and particularly Catholics, have often been accused of lacking in social awareness and love for their country. The great division within the Church developed precisely when this delicate issue was forced on them and brought to its extreme consequences.
- Lay Catholics, as well as priests and bishops, true to their conscience, were labelled as non-patriotic and had to spend years in labour camps. Many of them could today claim to have contributed to the progress and development of their country and to the four modernizations more than others who, in the name of an alleged patriotism which bent with the blowing of the political wind, let themselves be pushed into contradictory positions...
- Another issue in need of a serious research and reflection is the amount of independence that a local Church can postulate while claiming to be part of the one Catholic community. This should be concretely studied in the context of a totalitarian society, which seems unable to tolerate any social reality structurally linked with what may appear as an exterior power-centre.
- In other words: it is obvious that there could be no true Catholic Church if there was no will to maintain certain hierarchical bonds with the Church of Rome, recognized by 20 centuries of history as the visible centre of unity. We know also the reluctance of any communist regime to allow the sort of open supernatural relations which are normally expected in the Church. In view of this, what would be the minimum amount of hierarchical communion deemed necessary to assure a viable Church life, and how far would the present regime in Peking be prepared to let the Chinese Catholic Church go in its sharing with the universal Church? Of course, there are also diplomatic and other political considerations bearing on this issue, but the fundamental question has to be clarified first.
- The present condition of the Church in China poses another serious problem. How long can a declericalized and non-structured Church continue to exist as a community, without losing its identity? The Chinese Catholics, for so many years deprived of bishops' guidance and priests' service, had to stand on their feet, learn to take their decisions by themselves and to pray only in the secret of their hearts.
- Today, in the main cities, a few churches are being reopened. These apparently will be the only Church structures available in China for quite some time, and they are assigned to clergy which the authorities consider "patriotic" enough. Most faithful seem determined to keep away from them, refusing any relation with them, to the point of abstaining from the sacraments.

- How long can this situation last? How will the Chinese Catholic communities end up? We cannot forget that while most survivors of the old generation passed through so many trials with their faith unscathed, the new generation of Christians lacks generally the leadership and formation the old one had.
- Episcopalian bishop K. H. Ting, speaking from the protestant experience, suggested that we are heading towards a double type of Church in China: one that carries on with informal, occasional "family meetings" and the other that treasures a more formal even if controlled structure in the newly opened buildings. What could that mean for the Catholic Church?
- These and other problems do require a thorough study with interdisciplinary approach. We believe this most important. A scientific and open approach might provide perhaps also the opportunity for some sort of serious dialogue with the academic circles of Peking, thus opening hopefully an avenue for some relevant considerations to reach also the persons responsible for the "religious policy" in the country.

7. How can we help re-establish unity and confidence within the Chinese Church? This is surely a most urgent and delicate issue.

- The authorities, in their present effort to bring back some measure of religious freedom, are trying to reorganize the Catholic Patriotic Association. Established with great difficulties in 1957, it was practically disbanded during the cultural revolution.
- As it happened, also the so-called "patriotic" priests, religious and lay leaders, who had accepted the guidance of the political authorities in the running of the Church affairs, suffered severe persecution at the hand of the red guards. Still, the efforts of the newly reconstituted Bureau of Religious Affairs to set up again the Association is proving a rather difficult task, for lack of support and confidence from the Catholics at large.
- Most of the oversea Catholic visitors to China are coming back with a strong impression that the great majority of the Catholics there, although loyal to their country, did not accept the heavy handed political interference in the Church life. As a consequence, they were treated in most cases as "non-people", losing their basic civil rights with all the consequences of such a condition in a structure where the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is applied.
- The deep split, which has plagued the Church for many years now, seems very difficult to bridge. Some think that it may be almost impossible to reconcile the thin, officially backed, visible structure of the Church and the rest of the silent and suffering Church. Still, this is certainly going to be a decisive factor for the survival of the Church in the new reality of the P.R.C.
- With the feeling that we really cannot help much towards the solution of this sad situation, we should at least multiply our prayers and be open to extend our sincere charity to everybody, including those of the official structure who show signs of understanding the demands of Catholic unity and the need for a gesture of reconciliation.
- One other important contribution would be to offer to both sides of the split community the instruments they need to grasp the riches of the renewal brought about in Catholic life by the Vatican Council II and which is slowly absorbed into the conscience of the Church in general.
- The liturgical and structural aspects are only part of this far reaching renewal. Perhaps, the Council Document, "The Constitution on the Church in Modern World" and other recent Church documents might help our Chinese brothers to ask themselves with greater confidence: how can we as believers and as Christians better serve God through our love for others, that is through our service to the needs of our fellow countrymen, in the concrete situations in which we find ourselves?

8. Christians in China are lacking the basic instruments for their own renewal and for the development of their communities.

- As long as Christians in China are not in a position to provide for their own needs, it appears to be a clear duty of their brothers abroad to help them, putting at their disposal the liturgical and pastoral instruments they may require.
- Mention has already been made of the requests more often received, for religious articles and books. With regard to religious literature, it would be an error to think that anything would do. And on this account we must confess that no serious, coordinated effort was made up to now to answer the specific needs of our Christian brethren in China.
- A few practical steps could be mentioned, which require urgent attention in this matter. The easiest thing to start with would be to compile a list, taking it from among the publications already available in Chinese (published in Hong Kong or elsewhere by CTS, Kwang Chi, Hua Ming, Vox Amica, Studium Biblicum etc.), of books particularly suitable for the older generation of Catholics in mainland China.
- The younger generation of Catholics, who have generally grown up in great ignorance about the doctrine and under an assiduous antireligious propaganda, would need special editions in simplified characters. Perhaps some basic books (as prayers or Bible readings) could be made available by simply utilizing some existing editions. But a serious effort ought to be made to have a team of persons work on some new books specially designed to strengthen the faith of these young Catholics and help them see their place and responsibility in the social reality in which they live.
- Even this minimum programme requires a combined effort of different religious congregations. An ecumenical approach, extended to other Christian groups who have the same concern, would make it possible to start working on a common edition of the Bible in simplified characters.
- Christians are often dispersed without any possibility of being helped in their need for up-dating and renewal; diocesan units are still paralyzed and utterly understaffed; at the national level, there is as yet no structure able to provide any pastoral instruments; even the Patriotic Association's central unit is just trying to feel its way, with hardly any contact with the local Churches.
- In this situation, radio religious programmes from abroad can provide a badly needed help both for confirming the faithful and for evangelization. As a matter of fact, there seems to be no regulation, at present, forbidding the people in China to tune in to such broadcasts. But the producers must proceed with a great sense of respect and humility, trying to understand the real needs of the people they intend to speak to.
- For this, they may have to get together more frequently to exchange information and experiences gained through the listeners reaction, in order to improve continually the substance and the form of their programmes. And the religious congregations should not hesitate to make the suitable personnel available for this highly qualified task.

9. An effort should be done to help our Catholic communities abroad to realize their responsibility. This refers first of all to the oversea Chinese communities, but touches also the rest of the Catholic family in the free world.

- One gets the impression that only some of the many oversea Catholics, going back to China to visit relatives and friends or on business, feel the duty or see the opportunity to witness their faith and the Christian way of life, thus bringing some sort of encouragement to their

fellow Christians there. Too often people seem concerned only about the material welfare of the relatives they visit, making great sacrifices sometimes to take with them a full load of food, clothing, radios, fans television sets, etc.

- Our Christians and particularly the members of our Catholic organizations, should be aware of the danger of giving the wrong impression that our opulent society in the so-called free world holds the secret to assure happiness and meaning to life. This consideration is particularly important with regard to the many Chinese youth, even of Catholic families who disillusioned with many shallow ideals offered to them in the past, are easily tempted to dream of a paradise outside their country.
- Christian foreign visitors also have their share of responsibility. They need to be helped understand correctly the evolution of Chinese society. For instance, today's China is believed to be eager to squeeze as much money as possible out of the tourists coming from the capitalist world. This is partly understandable, in view of the gigantic effort to finance the four modernizations projects; and the spending frenzy of many westerners visiting China may seem to justify their attitude. But the restraint of a Christian who treasures moral values above material things may be easily understood and appreciated by most people.
- Also, a friendly and sincere attitude should not prevent foreign visitors from asking pertinent questions whenever the opportunities arise, about the real condition of believers and more specifically about the Catholics: but they need to be well informed, if they do not wish to be silenced with generic and non-committal answers.
- Is there something else the religious congregations could do to help the Christians in China? While any evangelization attempt by foreign missionaries is to be ruled out, Chinese members of religious congregations can render a precious service to the local communities by simply spending some time in their native villages, when visiting their relatives. But oversea Chinese are today welcome also to offer some contribution to the modernization programmes of Mainland.
- Among the Chinese members of the religious congregations there are highly qualified persons in scientific or technological fields, as well as teachers, nurses and medical staff. This fact should make the religious congregations think seriously about the possibility of making some of this personnel available to China. This may be only as individuals, not as a community, and without being able to engage in any full time religious activities. So it would require persons who, in the strength of their faith and love, volunteer to offer their services with these limitations. It may happen that such assignment be seen as a dead loss to the general programmes of the congregation; but would it really be a loss?

A programme aiming at the needs of the small Catholic community in China, or better at the single Catholics that can be reached in some way, is certainly not a simple and easy one. But this is not perhaps the greatest challenge confronting us today as followers of Christ. There remains the formidable task of an evangelization programme for the millions of Chinese who never heard of the Gospel. But this would require a much deeper study and a definitely ecumenical approach.



RELIGION IN CONTEMPORARY CHINESE POLITICS

By Leo F. Goodstadt

Since 1976, China's citizens have enjoyed far greater personal freedom than at any time since 1966. The amount of open debate about political ideals and the quality of life has grown steadily. The volume of information about the nation and its problems has expanded sharply. The authorities have proclaimed their respect for individual civil liberties very extensively. In this more liberal atmosphere, the fate of religious belief and liberty of worship is an important topic. A crucial test of personal freedom in any society is the degree to which the citizen is allowed to follow without penalty his own conscience even when his beliefs do not reflect the ruling ideology.

For the Chinese Communist Party, the question of belief ought to cause no great problems. Chairman Mao Zedong laid down very clear principles on toleration for religious opinions. He stated: "We cannot abolish religion by administrative order or force people not to believe in it." He described "patriotic people in religious circles" in these terms: "They are theists and we are atheists. We cannot force them to accept the Marxist world outlook." (Selected Works, vol. V, pp. 389, 424.) The Chinese Constitution of 1978 guarantees under article 46 freedom of religious belief to reflect the continued adherence of Peking to Mao's doctrine on the matter.

Difficulties arise over the way in which private religious belief is to be expressed in practice. The amount of freedom of public prayer, worship and religious instruction which Peking feels it can permit is very limited. This restriction is clear even in statements which promise a new deal to Christian citizens. For example, Xiao Xienfa, Director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs of the State Council, explained in June this year: "Freedom of religious belief is a longterm and fundamental policy of the Communist Party and the state." He admitted that this policy "was seriously sabotaged" in the past. After 1976, he continued, "we have done some work to implement the freedom of religious belief". Xiao is reported officially as showing how religious toleration had improved by quoting "the opening and renovation of some temples and the rehabilitation of religious believers who were victims of framed up cases fabricated by Lin Biao and the gang of four". (Xinhua News Agency 29 June 1979.)

Frank admission that, in the decade after 1966, religious liberty was drastically curtailed is a hopeful sign. But the evidence Xiao Xienfa brought forward to prove circumstances had improved is depressing. Temples are reopened as part of the general campaign to restore cultural relics, preserve scenic spots and encourage tourism. Official accounts of the restoration of famous shrines refer to small numbers of mainly old pilgrims. The reports suggest very strongly that the religious aspect of ancient temples has become a very minor consideration. (Xinhua News Agency on Mount Omei is a good instance. 4 November 1978.) The great exception is Tibet where Buddhism remains a powerful force. The Chinese authorities in 1979 have sought to win the support of the Tibetan population and thus granted concessions to its religious practices. In part, this freedom has reflected the general policy of winning over to Peking all groups attacked by the extremists after 1966 in the Cultural Revolution. But another factor is the diplomatic importance of Tibet. The region is of great concern to India and the Soviet Union with both of whom China has border disputes. Tibet's Dalai Lama has visited the Mongolian Republic in 1979 to Peking's dismay and after a long campaign to persuade him to avoid the Soviet Union's Mongolian satellite and to make even a short trip to China. (Xinhua New Agency 8 & 27 December 1978, 21 February 1979.)

International problems have been the main pressure on Peking when it comes to religious affairs. An obvious example is the reopening of a handful of places of Christian worship. Without such facilities some distinguished personalities would have found a journey to China politically embarrassing. Spain's King Juan Carlos might have offended a majority of his fellowcountrymen if China had no High Mass for him to attend. (Xinhua News Agency 18 June 1978.)

But the close connection between religion and foreign affairs in Peking's eyes is brought out most strongly in its comments on the Papacy in the last two years. Peking reported factually the deaths of the last two Pontiffs and the elections of their successors. Pope John Paul II inevitably inspired Peking's official news media to extensive commentary through his June trip to Poland. The official Chinese account was relatively objective. The power of religion in Poland was noted. "A rapturous welcome from his Polish followers" was stressed. The contrast between Catholic and Communist Party views on life was recorded. The opposition of Pope John Paul II to "Soviet control over Poland" was illustrated. Peking and the Vatican are on the same side when it comes to Eastern Europe. Both view Moscow's presence beyond its national frontiers as serious oppression of the peoples of Eastern Europe. (Xinhua News Agency 12 June 1979.)

Diplomatic considerations affect internal policy with equal force when hostility towards the Soviet Union arises. Peking shows special tolerance of religious practices in areas where there is a danger of Soviet subversion. Such regions lie along the Sino-Soviet frontier and are inhabited often by ethnic minorities who cling to religious traditions. In the case of the Moslems, toleration is relatively extensive, notably in Ninghsia Hui Autonomous Region. The explanation is partly that this toleration seems to imply no more than respect for the social customs and dietary practices of a national minority. (Xinhua News Agency 16 & 19 October 1978.) A second factor is almost certainly Sino-Soviet rivalry for influence among the Moslem nations of Asia and the Middle East.

Other minority nationalities are not treated quite so generously, even in Tibet. The general impression made by reports of local official attitudes to religion is that overt religious practices in the form of worship are regarded with great suspicion. Thus, stress has been laid on the need to prevent "counter-revolutionary activities under the cloak of religion" even when calling for respect for religious beliefs. (Tibet Radio Service 4 December 1977; Hebei Radio Service 5 December 1977; Qinghai Radio Service 28 November 1977.)

In daily life in China, the Government's concern has switched from the religious convictions of the individual to open practices of a religious nature. During 1978, attention was focussed on religion and death. For unexplained reasons, even senior Communist Party officials find it difficult to refrain from honouring the dead with traditional rituals, including the participation of Taoist clergy. A number of places published accounts of scandalously elaborate and pious funerals for parents and spouses. (Hunan Daily 12 April 1978; Hebei Radio Service 20 April 1978; Shandong Radio Service 23 April & 16 September 1978.) Some elements of popular religion also crept back into marriages but less widely. (Xinhua News Agency 29 December 1978.) One province has lamented this year that nursery staff and parents keep alive traditional beliefs among children, which shows the importance of oral tradition in a peasant society. (Anhui Radio Service 10 May 1979.)

In 1979, a concerted drive has been made to eradicate traces of popular religion. The main targets have been superstitions, particularly those connected with fortune telling. Reading palms and faces and use of the I-ching have been bitterly attacked. (Hunan Daily 22 March 1979; Qinghai Radio

Service 11 April 1979.) In one province, the current campaign has been justified in the following language: "Feudal superstition is a rather stubborn, evil and backward practice. An arduous and important task on the ideological front is to destroy feudal superstition." (Xinhua Daily 23 March 1979.) To some extent the 1979 anti-superstition drive was inspired by a tragedy in September 1978. Allegedly, two women undertook to cast out demons. In so doing, two children were first beaten and then burned to death. (Jiangsu Radio Service 23 March 1979.)

An additional significance of the anti-superstition drive is the distinction which the Government drew between religion and superstition. Peking resisted the temptation to denounce all forms of religious belief as equally evil. Feudal superstition was defined as "all intrinsically absurd and preposterous beliefs in which nobody with the slightest cultural and scientific knowledge would believe." Religions are "superstitions" Peking explained, but "religions refer mainly to such world religions as Christianity, Islam and Buddhism". (People's Daily 15 March 1979.) Once more, awareness of the links between religion and the outside world has persuaded Peking to adjust its attitude to religion.

Foreign relations are not the whole of the story, nevertheless. In this context, it is interesting how much space was given at the 1978 Atheism Symposium of the World Religions Research Institute to Chinese philosophy. (Guangming Daily 6 January 1979.) Religion and theology have a direct relevance today to the development of Chinese Communist Party ideology.

For the Chinese Government, the legacy of Mao Zedong has become a major crisis. Some elements in the leadership wish to treat Mao Zedong Thought like Divine Scripture. Orthodox Communist Party members condemn this view. The Maoist extremists have been condemned because "they used borrowed religious rites to force people to treat their leaders the way religious believers adore god." (Guangming Daily 11 March 1979.) Worse still, "they tried to monopolise Mao Zedong Thought like mediaeval popes monopolised the Bible, doing their utmost to establish the absolute authority of Mao Zedong Thought." (People's Daily 26 December 1978.) The Maoist extremists perpetuated a Chinese tradition: "Political power in China was often given a theological connotation." (Red Flag 3/1979, Guo Luoji.)

The irony of the situation is that references to Catholic history in the current Chinese political debate ensure a new status and importance for Catholic doctrines. The Catholic Church is not just a relic of the past or an object of purely cultural interest. The Church has a direct relevance, in the opinion of the Communist Party theoreticians, to a full understanding of the way in which Marxism was perverted after 1966 in Peking. The role given to the Catholic Church by the Communist Party is not an honourable one. But at least the Church is not being ignored. It is still one of the forces which the Communist Party believes must be overcome to establish the Marxist utopia. Unhappily, the Catholic Church remains the symbol of the persecution of Galileo and of the excesses of the Inquisition, which are frequently recalled by the official press. For the present, intellectual awareness of the Catholic Church by the Communist Party is kept at this unfavourable level. Perhaps there is some room for hope that the situation may improve since most of the Communist Party objections to the Church appear to have been overcome. The Party now claims to "have cut off the churches" ties with imperialism, carried out democratic reforms of religious procedures and abolished feudal privileges." (Xinhua News Agency 18 February 1979.)

A possible sign of an easier regime for Catholics could be the rehabilitation of leaders of the National Church and their appointment to public offices. Large numbers of the members of this pitiable body fell victim to ideological extremists in the Cultural Revolution. The false charges against

them have been dropped, and they have been restored to their former positions, treatment enjoyed by large numbers of those purged in the Cultural Revolution. (Xinhua News Agency 5 June 1979; Shanghai Radio Service 11 January 1979.) But these rehabilitations have been caused by factors other than respect for freedom of religion. The first is the desire to discredit totally the Maoist extremists and the opponents of Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. (Shanghai Radio Service 21 March 1979.) The second factor is the desire to restore the reputation of the Communist Party officials responsible for propaganda and united front activities including work among religious circles. (Xinhua News Agency 18 March 1979.) The post-Mao era is not filled with reverence for religion.

The prospects for the freedom of religious believers in contemporary China seem clear enough. The public practice of religion will be tolerated under very restricted circumstances. Popular religious activities are particularly suspect. Private beliefs are tolerated as a matter of law and practice, more so than for many years. However, there are no signs that overt expressions of such beliefs are any more acceptable than in the past. What public worship is permitted can be explained very largely in terms of concern to influence opinion overseas or to compete with the Soviet Union. The status of the Catholic Church has been enhanced by the election of a Polish Pontiff who has made a very successful foray back to his motherland. As long as Peking maintains its concern to contain the Soviet Union's thrust beyond its own frontiers, China and the Vatican have certain shared diplomatic interests. The Catholic Church also benefits from the revival of academic interest in its history because of its relevance to political heresy in China. For the rest, the Catholic Church and its Chinese members are to the Government no more than pawns in the overall calculations by the Communist Party of national interests.

(Leo Goodstadt is a lecturer of Political Philosophy at Holy Spirit Seminary, Hong Kong. He was formerly on the Staff of The Far Eastern Economic Staff).

Reference: The Theology Annual of the Holy Spirit Seminary, Hong Kong, No.3, 1979, pp. 120-128.

.....

Now available in the Sedos Documentation Centre: La Cina Contemporanea edited by Giorgio Melis and Franco DeMarchi. This is a one volume reference work on China (1260 pages). Sedos Documentation No. 6/739.

Recently received: Church and China: Towards Reconciliation? by Joseph Spae published by the Chicago Institute of Theology and Culture, 1980. The work includes an account of Bishop Ting's visit to America and Bishop Moser's visit to the People's Republic of China among other topics.

Course: CHINA 1980 to be held at the High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts, 15th to 18th May. This is organized by the China Study Project, an ecumenical project sponsored by the major churches and missionary societies in Britain. For further information write to China Study Project, 6 Ashley Gardens, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. TN4 8TY.

.....

"PARIS-PEKIN", REVUE DES ECHANGES FRANCO-CHINOIS

Nº 1 sept-oct. 1979. B.P. 82. 75662 Paris Cedex 14

(Abt. France un an: 120 F, étranger 150 F).

par Léon Trivière

Dirigée par un sinologue et ouverte aux enseignants, chercheurs, étudiants, témoins aussi, cette revue se veut indépendante des institutions politiques et universitaires, en même temps qu'un moyen propre d'échanges ou d'informations sur la Chine, dont le sort continuera à marquer le nôtre, qu'on le veuille ou non.

Voici un document capital du Comité central, qui fait le procès du Béria chinois, Kang Sheng, redoutable chef des services secrets pendant près de 40 ans, mort en 1975, disgrâcié à titre posthume. Un autre document intéressant du parti raconte l'échec du coup d'état avorté par Mme Mao en 1976, éclaire les mœurs dans les milieux artistiques et littéraires, fixe les limites à ne pas dépasser dans la campagne de critique. Un article montre le déclin croissant de Wang Dongxing, ex-garde du corps de Mao Zedong, responsable de la répression sanglante du mouvement populaire du 5 avril 1976.

Condamné à la réforme par le travail pendant 21 ans, Ding Ling, romancière, Prix Staline, réhabilitée en 1979, nous offre ici une nouvelle "L'Hôpital", que précède un article "Je pense à Beiping", du grand romancier de Pékin, Lao She, qui s'est suicidé pendant la Révolution culturelle. animateur du Mouvement démocratique, Xu Tenli révèle dans une interview comment naît, se finance, se développe, se fabrique, se vend la "Tribune du 5 avril", dont il est le rédacteur en chef, un des journaux parallèles, "ni autorisés ni interdits". Dans "Printemps de Pékin", autre journal parallèle, est parue une intéressante nouvelle de politique fiction "Tragédie 2000", décrivant le retour des "gauchistes" en l'an 2000, les bouleversements qu'ils provoquent, l'épuration des "droitistes" d'aujourd'hui, les suicides par le feu des contestataires devant le Mur de la Démocratie, à Xidan, les condamnations comme "contre-révolutionnaire" d'auteurs de "dazibao" de 1980.

Un sinologue et économiste montre par des références au "Quotidien du Peuple" les causes et moyens du redressement économique de la Chine. Pierre Cardin donne ici ses "Impressions de Chine" et son projet de coopération franco-chinoise. Suivent un essai sur "Les Jésuites en Chine", des chroniques sur la vie à Nanjing, l'évolution du cinéma, le retour des opéras historiques, la réhabilitation du quotidien, du romantisme, du comique, les principales sources d'information concernant la Chine, les articles importants parus dans la presse à ce sujet, les livres nouveaux touchant la République populaire, les émissions radio, les conférences, les concerts se rapportant au monde chinois.

Par ses documents, ses biographies, ses études, ses essais, ses articles, ses chroniques, "Paris-Pékin" est assurément une revue indispensable à qui-conque veut progresser dans une approche sérieuse de la Chine.

Reference: ECHOS DE LA RUE DU BAC, No. 135, Décembre 1979.

.....

SEDOS AFRICAN MEETINGS

These meetings, five in all, were held to discuss two matters of some urgency. The first was the recruitment of African men and women into international/missionary congregations. While several participants felt concern for the building up of the local church through the promotion of vocations to diocesan groups; at the same time it was felt that African young people should be provided with a choice in the types of religious institutes which they might join. Also some are attracted to a particular spirituality. Is it right to refuse such a person? Others may have a missionary vocation and there may be no way locally to fulfill this. International congregations also felt they should give witness to being open to all. It was realized that while these are valid reasons for accepting local African vocations, by no means did it solve some of the difficulties such as the adjustment to a dominant western style religious life, defining mission in an African tribal context, etc.

Two meetings were held to discuss this topic in relation to men's congregations and another set to discuss the topic in women's congregations. At the fifth meeting both groups came together to discuss the second aspect: inculturation of African values in religious life, this being the basis of any type of formation. This was seen as an urgent challenge owing to rather rapid increase in the number of African vocations in the past 20 years. For example, there is a questioning of the three vows as they have been traditionally expressed, especially that of poverty. (The word "poverty" is regarded as an anachronism for many in the Third World where people are contending with poverty as an evil to be eradicated). Africans bring with them a deep sense of the sacred which questions the secularism and materialism which is often unconsciously accepted by European and American congregations. African religious also have a deep sense of universal brotherhood based on their realization that the earth belongs to all of us and God means us to share in its fruits.

It was suggested that Africans have a generosity and a facility in personal relationships which can greatly contribute to community life and the apostolate, their knowledge of the local church and their experience of a developing country provide us with new insights and inspire us with new zeal. One discussion group mentioned that perhaps their greatest contribution is in the form of a question mark forcing us to ask ourselves all types of questions about our life, our attitudes, our apostolate and our concept of mission.

What are some of the problems of incorporating these gifts into congregations? First of all, there is the reality that today we often deal with two groups of African religious in one congregation: an older group trained in, and often deeply committed to, a "Western" concept of religious life and a younger group concerned with the need to inculturate African values. This can make the process slow, difficult and painful. Language is another difficulty. In an international congregation they will often be using a second language. Tribal differences should not be overlooked; being "inter-tribal" is often more difficult than being international. One participant questioned whether we are mistaken in applying our "nation" concept in Africa--are not tribes more like "nations"? This has considerable ramifications for missionary congregations who think in terms of personnel going to another country or nation.

Various congregations are at different stages of structural adjustments to facilitate inculturation. Many require an initial formation in Africa, some (especially missionary congregations) provide inter-African contacts. Others feel an international setting is necessary to prepare for a future international community living situation. Since the greater proportion of African members are young, the future changes have not yet been experienced. The leadership personnel in the provinces is fast becoming African and this means that inculturation and structural adjustments are beginning to take place on the provincial level. Within 10-20 years the leadership on the generalate level will begin to change and this will have effects on the total orientation of the congregation.//

Everyone is concerned with the enriching of their congregations with African values, and it would be valuable if Sedos members would share knowledge of various experiments tried. Perhaps the final comment on this vast subject might be the answer of one discussion group to the question, "How are you going about incorporating the African contribution into your congregation? "Laboriously!" It was generally agreed, most congregations are just beginning

(Members were asked to provide names of study/formation centres for Religious in Africa. A list will be published in a Bulletin in the near future).

// The UISG representative pointed out that 5% of the women's congregations have their generalates in Africa. 34 representatives from Africa attended the recent UISG meeting in Rome.

.....

MOZAMBIQUE

The Church and the Revolution

Maputo, 15th February 1980 - (D.I.A.) -

The religious and missionary problem is still referred to in all official and governmental discourses. The evaluation by politicians of the missionary work is extremely negative. According to the Mozambican authorities, the Church remains irreparably linked to the colonial regime.

The Church is made responsible for the crimes perpetrated against the colonized people because she was entrusted with the running of schools, remained on good terms with the colonial authorities and put chaplains at the disposal of the armed forces. According to the regime in power, the Church is but a reactionary power at the service of capitalism. Some measures were taken shortly after the proclamation of independence in 1975. A month later, church schools, hospitals and social works were nationalized. The process of nationalization and confiscation of properties still goes on.

However, this trial has effectively led the Church to promote the autonomy of Christian communities by training a responsible laity.

Reference: DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION FOR AND ABOUT AFRICA, 15 February, 1980, 16th Year, No. 60.

.....

SEDOS MISSION RESEARCH SEMINAR

Report on the second phase of preparation

Persons from 6 continents with special experience in the life of their local churches have been invited to write papers for the second phase of the research seminar. More than half the answers are in now--in spite of the mails! This is how it looks at the moment:

- of the 71 letters sent in January, 50 (70 4%) have answered.
- of the 50 who have answered, 38 (76%) have accepted the invitation to send a paper, 12 (24%) have refused.
- 25 letters have been sent in February; no statistics on these yet.
- of the total 96 invited to write papers, 72 (75%) are indigenous to their local churches.
- of the acceptances: from Latin America = 4; North America = 5; Oceania = 4; Africa = 6; Europe = 6; Asia = 13 (includes those writing on China).

Some comments from those invited to participate in the 2nd phase:

"One reason for accepting your challenge is, I feel the experience of the Church in Melanesia has not been treated with the seriousness it deserves. If I can make a small contribution in correcting this deficiency, the effort will be well worthwhile." Jim Knight, svd - Papua New Guinea.

"My sincere congratulations for the daring step, very timely step. I do assure you of my full cooperation...the points raised were questions that kept coming up in the dialogues we were organizing here in India..."
A. Nambiaparambil, cmi.

"I gladly accept...It is with deep pleasure that my close collaboration with SEDOS, and with your generalates, which flourished during my years at Justice and Peace, begins anew on a subject still wider and deeper than that 'constitutive dimension' of evangelization. Please express my admiration and gratitude to your directors and co-workers."
J. Gremillion, USA.

"I will very willingly collaborate...But kindly send me the Holy Spirit of Pentecost and his gift of tongues! If so, I will surely write in English; if not, do not make any grimaces if I write in French..." Boka di Mpasì Londi, sj - Zaire.

"Thank you for including me in your program which seems to be really very well planned and meaningful." H. Bortnowska, Poland.

"I am grateful...for your invitation...But I regret I will not be able to contribute to it. I already have too many assignments till 1982, and my life here among the Hindus--we are only two Christians living in this sacred place--is not conducive to getting the records and books, etc., your seminar would demand. I shall certainly pray, however, for the success of the SEDOS undertaking that the local Church and inculturation may really get to be understood by your 45 'missionary' institutes."
Vandana, rscj - India.

Consultations are underway concerning the planning of the actual ten-day session of the research seminar. More details will be given in the next report. Meanwhile, thanks for your interest and collaboration!

Fr. J. R. Lang, mm, & Sr. M. Motte, fmm

OUR FATHER

The Lord's Prayer: inspiration and pattern for the evangelizer

On April 21, 22, 23, from 4 to 6 p.m., in the Assembly Hall at the Jesuit Headquarters, Borgo S. Spirito 3A --just outside St. Peter's Square:

Three evenings of spiritual preparation and intercession for the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism--on the theme 'Your Kingdom Come' - to be held by the World Council of Churches at Melbourne, Australia, in May 1980.

This programme is offered to Christians in Rome by a committee set up by the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity with the cooperation of the Women's and Men's Unions of Superiors General for promoting Catholic participation in the work of Conference. The sessions have been organized by the Jesuit Mission Secretariat in collaboration with Faculty members of the Gregorian University and the Biblical Institute.

The main item each day will be two series of reflections presented in English, dealing successively with the petitions of the Our Father, followed by a brief meditation and exchange, and concluding with a common act of worship.

April 21, Monday:

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME

- experience of God's fatherhood and holiness - prayer of praise and sense of mission: Ary Roest Crolius

THY KINGDOM COME

- evangelization as witness to the coming of the Kingdom - the prayer of expectation: William Newell

April 22, Tuesday:

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

- obedience to mission - prayer of surrender to God's plan of salvation: William Dalton

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

- the prayer of the poor - concern of the evangelizer for those in need: Paul Steidl-Meier

April 23, Wednesday:

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US -

the prayer of reconciliation - new relations among people and peace in the world: Generoso Florez

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

- the struggles of this life and trials of the evangelizer - prayer and liberation: Carlos Soltero

You are cordially invited to attend and to bring your friends.

.....