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Pope Invites China's President Meeting on World Peace

Pope Francis has invited the President of China, Xi Jinping, to meet him in the Vatican to discuss world peace, but he has also expressed his own willingness to travel "tomorrow" to Beijing for this same purpose if that were preferable.

The decision of the pope to send the letter of invitation to the Chinese leader arose out of a 90-minute meeting held at *Santa Marta*, the Vatican guesthouse where Francis lives, on the evening of Sept. 3. The meeting focused on the geopolitical situation and the conditions for bringing about a lasting peace in the world. Besides the pope, those at the meeting included **Ricardo Romano** and **José Lujan** from Argentina, and two of the most senior Vatican officials: the Italian **Cardinal Pietro Parolin**, Secretary of State (a rank equivalent to that of Prime Minister), who knows the situation in China very well, having held that brief in the Secretariat of State for several years in the first decade of this century, and **Archbishop Dominique Mamberti**, the Moroccan born Secretary for Relations with States (the Vatican's "Foreign Minister").

Ricardo Romano recalled that one of the conclusions reached at the meeting was the **importance for the Vatican to develop good relations with China and its leadership** so as "to contribute to the taking of decisions of a multi-polar nature that would guarantee a greater degree of governability in the service of a more fraternal world society and with a greater level of social equity." They also concluded on "the need to consolidate a multi-polar world as an element to support a **new governability that would reduce the conflicts, the violence and the suffering** inflicted on peoples through this 'piecemeal' Third World War which the Pope has denounced." *Mr. Romano* recalled that during their discussion at *Santa Marta* the Jesuit pope repeated what he had said on the plane from Korea on Aug. 18:



Xi Jinping in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing

"Yes, I said **I would like to go to China. Tomorrow!**" He then added, "I am a general doctor but, on themes that relate to Asia, Monsignor Parolin is the surgeon!"

The *Argentine* news-site, *Infobae*, reported that three days after that meeting in the Vatican the Chinese Government in Beijing designated one of its diplomats with broad Latin American experience, who had organized the visits of the Chinese leader to Latin American countries and who is said to have the total confidence of President *Xi Jinping*, to receive the pope's letter from *José Lujan* and *Ricardo Romano*.

After handing over the letter to the Chinese diplomat, *Mr. Romano* told *Infobae* that he had come to the conclusion that "in spite of the conflicts between Beijing and the Vatican the recognition that the stature of the Holy Father has reached (in the world) is such that, sooner or later, the President of China will visit Francis in the Vatican or receive him in Beijing."

[Ashley McKinless /America Magazine]

Church News

Pope Francis Pursues a Thaw in Relations with China

Facing mixed signals coming from the government on the Chinese mainland regarding dealings with the Vatican, **Pope Francis hopes to warm their relationship and establish a diplomatic representative in Beijing.** A thaw has seemingly flourished between the People's Republic of China and the Holy See, following the nearly simultaneous accessions of Pope Francis and Xi Jinping, president of China – March 13 and March 14, 2013, respectively. Free from any bond with past policies, Xi has re-opened the frozen channel with the Vatican by responding in written form to the well-wishes Pope Francis sent him after his election – a first for a Chinese president.

After that, for the first time China allowed a papal flight to utilize Chinese air space, for Bergoglio's visit to South Korea last month. Not by chance, on the eve of the papal voyage, **Cardinal Pietro Parolin**, Vatican Secretary of State, underscored in an interview that "the Church in China is lively and active," and that **"the Holy See is open to dialogue** and only requests to be able to exercise its ministry with freedom." *Cardinal Parolin's* request that the Church be able to freely exercise its ministry was an allusion to the illicit ordinations that take place in the Chinese People's Republic.

In his in-flight press conference held on the return from Korea, Pope Francis mentioned his desire to visit China, affirming he would go there "even tomorrow morning," and mentioning **Benedict XVI's 2007 letter** to Catholics in China, calling it a "milestone." The Pope's mention was not by chance. The letter showed Benedict's affection for Catholics in China, and opened a way to dialogue with the authorities, while also maintaining resolve on the principles of the Church's autonomy. After the publication of the letter, there had been signs of thaw between the Holy See and Beijing, though relations have fluctuated.

Between 2007 and 2008, the Archbishop of Beijing had been appointed with the twofold approval of Rome and Beijing. Then, relations cooled again in 2008 and 2009.

From 2009 to 2011, a series of new episcopal appointments with the twofold approval followed Benedict's invitation to then-Chinese president Hu Jintao for a meeting to be held in the Vatican in 2009. The meeting with the Pope could not be held, but the invitation was appreciated.

Fr. Taddeo Ma Daqin, a member of the Patriotic Association and at the same time faithful to Rome, had been appointed as auxiliary bishop. On the day of his episcopal consecration, July 7, 2013, Bishop Ma Daqin announced he did not want any longer be part of the Patriotic Association, since this would be in contrast with his episcopal ministry, thus following the guidelines provided in Benedict's 2007 letter. *Bishop Ma Daqin* was then confined by Chinese authorities to the shrine of Sheshan, and he was forbidden to celebrate the funeral of the late bishop of Shanghai.

Pope Francis hopes to overcome this stalemate, with a series of steps that was initiated even before the big trouble in Shanghai. **Cardinal Fernando Filoni**, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, wrote an article in 2012 marking the fifth anniversary of Benedict's letter which looked for a response to the issues the Pope had raised. The cardinal clarified points of departure between the two camps, and emphasized the need for a constructive dialogue.

Pope Francis' policy is likely to follow two paths, both diplomatic and pastoral. The diplomatic model would be that of Vietnam, which has lacked a delegate from the Holy See since 1975, when the communist North overran South Vietnam. But subsequent talks with Vietnam led to the establishment of a non-residential pontifical representatives, and now the Holy See is hoping for a permanent representative, in order to have full diplomatic ties in the future. A hurdle for Chinese, however, authorities is that the Holy See has a pontifical representative in the Republic of China, known as Taiwan.

[CNA/EWTN News]



Pope's New Olive Branch to Beijing

Pope Francis made an apostolic journey to South Korea from Aug. 13 to 18. On his way to Seoul, his plane passed over the sky of the People's Republic of China and he sent a message to Chinese President Xi Jinping wishing that God bless the Chinese people. On his return flight back to Rome, the pope composed another telegram to Xi. "Returning to Rome after my visit to Korea, I wish to renew to your Excellency and your fellow citizens the assurance of my best wishes, as I invoke divine blessings upon your land," the pope wrote, as he flew through Chinese airspace again.

The pope extended an olive branch to Beijing, suggesting **his readiness to start dialogue** to normalize relations between the Holy See and the People's Republic, which expelled Catholic missionaries right after Mao proclaimed it on Oct. 1, 1949.

His gesture received a positive response from China, with its foreign ministry spokeswoman, **Hua Chunying**, replying: "We have noticed the remarks of Pope Francis. China has always been sincere in improving relations with the Vatican and has been making positive efforts for that." **Mathew Zhen Xuebi**, an unofficial spokesman for the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, spoke of "a step forward in advancing communication: We have hope that one day the two countries of China and the Vatican will establish diplomatic ties."

The Holy See and the Republic of China established diplomatic relations in 1939. When Chiang Kai-shek moved his Kuomintang government from Nanjing to Taipei at the end of 1949, the Vatican moved its apostolic nunciature in China to Taipei. The Holy See has since tried to move that embassy back to Beijing.

Difficulties abound, however. As a sine qua non for normalization of relations, **Beijing demands that the Holy See cut off diplomatic ties with the Republic of China in Taiwan**. But the Vatican has never severed official ties with any country of its own accord. So popes have downgraded their representative in Taipei from the nuncio to a mere charge d'affaires at interim, but that doesn't satisfy Beijing.

Another difficulty is **the appointment of bishops**. The appointment is the pope's privilege, but the People's Republic has created the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, which rejects the primacy of the pope and ordains bishops in China. As a result, those Catholic churches that are not supervised by the CPA have to go underground and their congregations are persecuted.

This difficulty may be overcome by following the Polish formula. **Pope John Paul II** was prepared to dump Taipei in 2000. He wished to apply the formula that gives the temporal ruler the power to nominate bishops who, however, have to be appointed by the Vatican. These overtures continued after the installation of **Benedict XVI** as pope. **Now Pope Francis is following in the footsteps of John Paul II and Benedict XVI**.

But *Pope John Paul II* did one thing that has made it all but impossible for the Sino-Vatican normalization of relations. He hastily beatified some 100 Chinese martyrs. Beatification is a step before canonization and Beijing demanded that it be repealed, because the beatified Chinese were officially regarded as good-for-nothings killed in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. The problem is that Pope Francis cannot revoke Pope John Paul II's beatification. The pope is infallible. No one can revoke the beatification, but Pope Francis can put off canonization to appease Beijing.

On the other hand, normalization of relations with the Vatican is on China's diplomatic backburner, just like Chinese unification to bring Taiwan back to its fold. Beijing certainly wants to normalize relations with the Vatican but will wait until the time is ripe. It may take years, even a decade or longer.

That is the reason why President Xi did not reply to the two messages of Pope. If Xi were ready just as Pope Francis was, he would acknowledge the receipt of the messages and accept the blessing on behalf of the people to cue up the start of dialogue for normalization. All he has to do is retract the demand for the revocation of the beatification his predecessor *Jiang Zemin* had made. The Holy See won't be forced to cut off official ties with Taiwan by announcing its apostolic nunciature in China will be reopened in Beijing after having remained in Taipei for more than six decades.

[The China Post, Taiwan]



Religious Issues

Growth of Protestants in China

As news about churches being demolished in Zhejiang and Christians arrested and tortured makes global headlines, the Beijing government vows to continue to promote the development of a Chinese Christian theology according to the national policy on religion. This was stated by **Wang Zuoran, head of the State Religious Affairs (SARA)**.

Speaking at a seminar in Shanghai, he stressed that "over the past decades, the Protestant churches in China have developed very quickly with the implementation of the country's religious policy. In the future, we will continue to boost the development of Christianity in China". However, quoted by the China Daily, "**the construction of Chinese Christian theology should adapt to China's national condition and integrate with Chinese culture**" compatible with "the path of socialism."

The study seminar, titled "*The Sinicization of Christianity in Shanghai*", he also pitted different figures: the Protestants in China are between "**23 and 40 million**," or between "1.7 and 2.9% "; Every year 500 thousand people are baptized; There are about 139 thousand registered religious places of worship, of which at least 56 thousand churches. The seminar was part of an event to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, the body that unites all denominations of Protestant churches under the auspices of the Communist Party.

But Wang Zuoran's careful proclamations and the glitter of the celebrations mask a certain frustration. **First**, because in recent decades the Protestant communities have grown much more than Wang claims and most importantly they have grown in communities outside state control. According to Protestant sources there are about 80 million Christians in China but only about 20 million congregate within registered religious places, so much so that since 2007 there has been a campaign to dissolve the underground Protestant communities or to absorb them into the official community.

The rejection of these Christians to join the Three-Self movement lies in the fact that it is too subservient to the Communist Party and does not guarantee a true freedom of the Gospel.

A **second** element of frustration is due to the fact that now many official Protestant Christian openly criticize the Party's religious policies. This became even more acute after the campaign of demolition and destruction of crosses and churches in Zhejiang, which has seen the active resistance of many of the faithful.

Finally, many Protestant pastors have asked the government to confess to the crimes of Tiananmen as a condition to their adapting "to the conditions of the nation"; Protestant believers join the movement of New citizens to request an end to corruption among

Control of Religion in China

The political framework provided for people to practice their faith in China since 1978 is tight and limiting, resulting in tensions between Church and state.

Brent Fulton comments on China Source Blog that he does not subscribe to a common theory held outside of China that if this box-type control system could be dismantled that there would automatically be religious freedom on the mainland. "It is important to note that control over religion has been a feature of Chinese society for nearly 1,400 years," Fulton writes.

He cites an article by **Daniel Bays**, A Tradition of State Dominance, as saying, "The point here is that in terms of the most fundamental level of assumptions of the state towards religion, there has hardly been a Chinese political regime from the Tang Dynasty (718 to 907) to the present that has not required a form of registration or licensing of religious groups, or has not assumed the right to monitor and intervene in religious affairs." He says that the current control body over religion in China today, the State Administration for Religious Affairs, functions in an almost identical way that the Board of Rites did up to the end of the Qing Dynasty in 1912.



The Enemy Within

Bays' article forms part of a book, **God and Caesar in China: Policy Implications of Church-State Tensions**, edited by Jason Kindopp and Carol Lee Hamrin, published by the Brookings Institute.

In the forward, it notes that one of the mechanisms that China has used in recent times to keep a tight hand on religion is to appoint unpopular Church leaders, thus creating doubt among congregations as to where their leaders' true loyalties lie. This further aggravates the already in-built tension over split loyalties, as officials continually accuse Church people of not being patriotic citizens because of their religious faith, a charge which Christians continually deny.

However, *God and Caesar in the Church* suggests that in recent times, government repression of religious groups has increased, with patriotic education being one of the major weapons employed by the authorities. Bays says that the religious monitoring and regulation by the state in the recent past and the present is not only a Communist thing, but intricately connected with the Chinese state.

"Attitudes of suspicion and systematic policies of regulation or suppression toward grassroots religion have characterized the mind-set of all Chinese political regimes," he notes.

However, he concludes that simply dismantling the current system of control will require more than simple legal reforms, so a deeper reflection on the role of religion in Chinese society and culture is called for.

[Sunday Examiner]

The constant persecution narrative being run in the media about China portrays a hostile, repressive regime posing what could be considered a huge threat to the Church on the mainland.

Writing in China Blog, **Brent Fulton** believes that the primary problem is not the government, but the greatest **enemy lies within the Church** itself. He says that while his sample is by no means scientific, it does represent a diverse cross-section of pastors. He adds that of the many responses he has received, only one had to do with external constraints that are placed on the Church. Most of the replies centered on factors within the Church, the most common being **materialism**.

Church leaders consistently pointed to China's rampant consumerism - including a trend toward **religious consumerism** - and to the desire for wealth and status among young believers as presenting the most serious danger to the future of the Church. "The responses I heard reflect that unlike in past decades, when being a Christian in China carried a huge personal price, today it is relatively easy, even fashionable in some circles," Fulton says.

The contexts from which the various leaders are speaking may be worlds apart, but the challenge facing the Church in China today brings to mind the words of the 18th century British reformer and anti-slavery advocate, **William Wilberforce**. "Christianity especially has always thriven under persecution. At such a season she has no lukewarm professors; no adherents concerning whom it is doubtful to what party they belong." "The Christian is then reminded at every turn, that his master's kingdom is not of this world. When all on earth wears a black and threatening aspect, he looks up to heaven for consolation; he learns practically to consider himself as a pilgrim and stranger."

Fulton concludes by commenting, "The greatest threat to Christianity in China today is perhaps not a lack of freedom, but the complete opposite."

[Sunday Examiner]

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U.S. Catholic China Bureau,
1646 Addison St., Berkeley, CA 94703
Tel: 510-900-2015 E-mail: director@uscatholicchina.org



Social Issues

China Says No to Western-style Reform

President Xi Jinping dismissed notions of **Western-style political reform** and underscored the importance of one-party rule in a speech delivered at the Great Hall of the People.

In remarks celebrating the 60th anniversary of the National People's Congress, Xi said China must have a unified leadership to ensure the country's development would not be diverted. Xi said cadres must "adhere to the central leadership of the party" and improve "overall coordination" to prevent the government from becoming "leaderless and fragmented".

Jacques deLisle, professor of law and political science at the University of Pennsylvania, said political reform appeared to be low on Xi's agenda. "The picture that has emerged in Xi's first two years in power is that either he does not have a political reform agenda with liberal or democratic elements, or that it is not his priority. It ranks below economic reform, anti-corruption, and other issues related to the legitimacy of the party," *deLisle* said.

Since then, Xi has relentlessly cracked down on corruption, publicising the demise of "tigers and flies". After its third plenum, the party released its most extensive statement so far on the direction of the world's second-largest economy. The statement dealt with market-oriented economic reform, law, and corruption, but offered no blueprint for political change. Xi seems to think the party faces a lot of challenges, and to believe those challenges need to be dealt with by furthering economic reform and strengthening discipline and order," *deLisle* said.

DeLisle said the leadership believed "in a **centralized, strong and effective government**". "One part of the now long-standing Chinese leadership critique of Western-style democracy is that it is prone to paralysis and gridlock and ultimately governmental weakness," he said.

[South China Morning Post]

Three China Universities

Three prestigious mainland universities have vowed to **strengthen ideological control over students and teachers**, according to statements in the latest issue of *Qiushi*, the Communist Party journal. The statements, by Communist Party committees of **Peking University, Shanghai's Fudan University and Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou**, appeared in the article "How to carry out ideological work at universities under new historical conditions".

Peking University said it would tighten control of the "internet battlefield" and build a sound monitoring and management system for online public opinion. The school has set up a task force to monitor online opinion on a 24-hour basis. "In recent years, some people with ulterior motives have added fuel to the flames on the Internet ... ultimately targeting the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist system," the *Qiushi* article read. Peking University also vowed to fight any comments that sabotage the Communist Party and socialism.

Fudan University, meanwhile, put its focus on teaching staff under 45 years of age, saying that some of them do not have "correct understandings" of the problems China is facing in its transitional stage. The Shanghai-based university said it would strengthen training for the teachers and that the evaluation system for them would be reformed.

In June, a senior party discipline inspector criticized the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, one of the country's most influential think tank, for being "*infiltrated by foreign forces*".

People's Daily, the party mouthpiece, said the following month that the academy would be built into a stronghold of orthodox Marxism, and *scholars at the think tank should be assessed by its loyalty to the ideology*. China on Saturday ordered journalists of both traditional and online media to learn "Marxist news values" and uphold the principles of news as prescribed by the party.

[South China Morning Post]



大家好！

*A quick hello from the new Executive Director of the U.S. Catholic China Bureau
Father Robert E. Carbonneau, C.P., Ph.D.*

As this *China Church Quarterly* newsletter goes to press allow me to share with you some introductory thoughts. Just last month the Board of Directors appointed me to a three year term as the Executive Director beginning October 1, 2014.

I am most grateful for the leadership of provided by Father Michel Marcil, S.J. He coordinated the move from our long time home at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ to our new home at Berkeley, CA. Father Michel will continue with to be associated with the Bureau as Director Emeritus. I will rely and value his continued insight. Noteworthy as well has been the staff work provided Teresa Mengpin Hsiao. She too made the cross country relocation to Berkeley. Through her efforts we have been able to stay connected with so many of you. Given this change in administration and the new directives given me by Board of Directors Teresa felt it was time to move on. We all owe Fr. Michel and Teresa our thanks.

In the next *China Church Quarterly* I will provide you with greater details about how the US Catholic China Bureau can all help all understand the historic and present day realities that pertain to the Chinese Catholic Church. Indeed we are part of a universal church with common pastoral, educational and scholarly and general interests. May our faith and witness sustain each other.

Since there are so many ways we can learn from one another I invite you to:

- 1. Contact me at director@uscatholicchina.org Please feel free to introduce yourself and offer your observations about how you are connected to China.***
- 2. Please look at our new website: www.uscatholicchina.org . Know that it is a work in progress as directed by the Board. We welcome suggestions to make it better.***

Please mark your 2015 calendars:

**US Catholic China Bureau National Conference
Friday, Oct. 9 - Sunday, Oct. 11, 2015
Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA**

(Details on program and price forthcoming via the website. Registration limited to 130 participants. See email to director@uscatholicchina.org to register your name)



Reading Notes



This issue we pay attention to some journal articles on Chinese Catholicism and Christianity.

- Fathers Rob Carbonneau, CP, and Michael Agliardo, SJ co-authored "U.S. Catholic China Bureau Conference 2013: The American Catholic Church and China in an Era of Globalization" in Tripod Volume 34 (Spring 2104): 47-53. It provides a summary of the US Catholic China Bureau conference of October 2013. Go to the Holy Spirit Study Centre website to read it. www.hsstudyc.org.
- Father Rob Carbonneau, C.P. also published "The Passionist China Collection Photo Archive" in Trans Asian Photography Review Volume 4, Issue 2: In Translation, Spring, 2014. The photo essay explains the joint effort between the Passionist Congregation and the Ricci Institute at U of San Francisco to digitize the twentieth century mission collection from Hunan province. Search: Tap Review (the common name for Trans Asian Photography Review)
- Center on Religion and Chinese Society (CRCS) 中國宗教與社會研究中心 at Purdue University <https://www.purdue.edu/crcs/> is directed by Yang Fenggang. A speaker at the US Catholic China Bureau October 2013 National Catholic China Conference., we advise you to look at and subscribe to the new CRCS journal Review of Religion and Chinese Society. A newsletter is also published. <https://www.purdue.edu/crcs/publications/e-newsletter/>
- In case you missed it, former Executive Director of the US Catholic China Bureau Sr. Janet Carroll, M.M. has published "My Pilgrimage in Mission" in the International Bulletin of Missionary Research Vol. 38 Issue 1 (2014): 30-34. Also in the same journal is Gloria S. TSENG, "Revival Preaching and the Indigenization of Christianity in Republican China." Vol. 38, Issue 4 (2014): 177-82.

Please send information to our new contact email director@uscatholicchina.org if you know of any publications of interest. We welcome your feedback.

Fr. Rob Carbonneau, C.P., Executive Director.



天主教中美交流中心

United States Catholic China Bureau

2015 Matteo Ricci Award

Honoring

Most Rev. John Cummins,

Bishop Emeritus of Oakland

Most Rev. Ignatius Wang,

Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of San Francisco

