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# China Exchange

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## SUNDAY EXAMINER

Catholic News of the Week VOL LXII NO. 33

HONG KONG

17 AUGUST 2008



*The spectacular, four-hour depiction of China's 5,000 year history was helmed by famed director, Zhang Yimou*

### Bishop Tong leaves Olympic opening with mixed feelings

**VATICAN CITY (CNS):** Coadjutor Bishop John Tong Hon of Hong Kong, said he had mixed feelings about attending the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Beijing because of the government's continuing mistreatment and mistrust of the Catholic Church.

In a commentary on the front page of the August 7 edition of the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Bishop Tong wrote that "the five rings of the Olympic logo are known throughout the world. I wish China would attach the same importance to the five interconnected principles of democracy, human rights, the state of law, justice and peace."

The bishop said he was honoured to attend the ceremonial opening, which some international figures have decided to skip in protest at China's human rights record. He said that "I've always appreciated the Olympic Games. This year, I'm proud of the fact that my country is hosting them. I feel honoured that our government has

invited me to participate in the opening ceremony."

But Bishop Tong said he was embarrassed by the fact that the government bypassed other leading church leaders, specifically, Joseph Cardinal Zen Ze-kiun, the bishop of Hong Kong, who has been a frequent and vocal critic of the government.

Bishop Tong said it would be good for the Chinese government to "be open-minded" and invite all religious leaders to attend and enjoy the fun of the games.

He cited a long list of Chinese Church leaders who were either under arrest, detained or harassed by the government and said they were "suffering for our Catholic faith and for loyalty to the Holy Father."

He also noted China's recent costly and socially disruptive efforts to clean up air pollution ahead of the games and wished that a similar effort had been made to understand the importance of "greater religious and social freedom."

On a positive note, the bishop cited China's collective and collaborative efforts to aid earthquake victims in Sichuan province in May. On the other hand, he called the government-imposed restriction on pilgrimages to the Marian shrine in Sheshan, near Shanghai, on May 24, designated by Pope Benedict XVI as a day of prayer for the Church in China, a "sad example."

He observed that "the authorities still don't trust Chinese Catholics and feel threatened when we practise our faith."

Bishop Tong ended his article with a prayer for the Olympic Games, noting that it is no sin for Christians to "have mixed feelings, but we also need to have faith, hope and love.- He asked that "the Holy Spirit may lead all who run in this race to a happy conclusion."

Bishop Tong, who at 69 years of age still plays basketball, said he was convinced that sport is an important social and physical activity for everyone. ♦

UCA News - [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)

## **VATICAN** Pope Encourages Hong Kong, Macau Prelates, Hopes To Welcome Mainland Bishops

By Gerard O'Connell, Special Correspondent in Rome June 30, 2008 | ZY05261.1504 | 694 words

VATICAN CITY (UCAN) -- Pope Benedict XVI praised the visiting bishops of Hong Kong and Macau for showing that "one can be authentically Catholic and authentically Chinese," and he prayed "the day will soon come" when mainland bishops too can visit the Holy See.

hongkong\_macau\_2\_1.gif On June 27, the pope first welcomed Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun of Hong Kong in his private library for a private audience and then invited Coadjutor Bishop John Tong Hon to join them. Next he received Bishop Jose Lai Hung-seng of Macau privately, and finally all three pastors met him as a group for almost an hour.

The pope and cardinal exchanged prepared texts and later gifts. Pope Benedict gave each a pectoral cross, and they presented him a crystal containing a picture of a flower emerging from the snow, symbolizing the resurrection of the Church in China.

"The Holy Father was very warm and kind with us," Cardinal Zen told UCA News in Rome afterward.

In his prepared remarks on behalf of the group, written in Italian, Cardinal Zen jokingly referred to Hong Kong and Macau as "orphan dioceses," since neither belongs to an episcopal conference. Hong Kong has 300,000 Catholics in a population of almost 7 million, and Macau about 20,000 Catholics among 543,000 people.

Local Catholics accepted the return of Hong Kong and Macau to Chinese sovereignty, in 1997 and 1999, respectively, "as the disposition of Divine Providence," the cardinal said. The absence of China-Holy See relations dampened their enthusiasm, but their territories' limited autonomy allows them "to enjoy the religious liberty that our brothers in the mainland cannot yet fully exercise."

Thanks to missionaries, he said, both communities have been able to influence society at large, and evangelization "has always been accompanied by a massive commitment in education and social justice."

Cardinal Zen said the bishops came to Rome bringing their people's love and gratitude "for the gift of faith" and Pope Benedict's "enlightened guidance." He presented good and "less good" news from both dioceses.

On the positive side he listed: "continuation of the work of evangelization and social commitment;" "a consoling number of adult baptisms every year;" prioritizing of pastoral care for

youths and families; and "great harmony" and "participation" within their communities.

On the negative side he mentioned "scarcity of local Church vocations" and "the alarming situation of families." He identified "promiscuous relations," lack of commitment, "easy abortion" and "the lowest birthrate in the world" among threats to the family.

Expressing "the gratitude of all the Chinese Church" for Pope Benedict's "special love and concern" for mainland Catholics, he said they pray bishops from mainland China too will soon be able to make ad limina visits to the Holy See and receive the pope on "a return visit."

Pope Benedict, in his prepared text, released by Vatican Radio in English, told the Hong Kong and Macau Church leaders that everyone has "the right" to hear about Christ, which implies a "duty to evangelize."

He urged the bishops to provide "adequate ongoing formation" for their clergy and give "special attention" to young priests and Religious.

Emphasizing the "important contribution" Catholic schools make, he praised Hong Kong and Macau Catholic schools for the "significant impulse" they have given to "social development and cultural growth." They "face new difficulties," he acknowledged, but asked the local Churches "to ensure that this important service will never fall by the wayside."

He urged the bishops to welcome and support new "ecclesial movements" as "one of the most important new realities fostered by the Spirit in the Church in order to implement the Second Vatican Council."

Meanwhile, the pope encouraged them to continue their "contribution to the life of the Church in mainland China, by offering personnel for formation purposes and by supporting initiatives in the field of human promotion and assistance."

Pope Benedict assured "the Catholic community" and "all the people of China" of his "prayers and affection." He concluded, like Cardinal Zen, by praying "the day will soon come when your brother bishops from mainland China come to Rome on pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, as a sign of communion with the Successor of Peter and the universal Church." ♦



*Great Wall of China*

AsiaNews - [www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it)

08/06/2008 12:39

## VATICAN - CHINA

Pope: May China open itself to the Gospel

Visiting the church of Oies, the birthplace of the missionary Saint Josef Freinademetz, Benedict XVI again considers Beijing, and stresses that "faith is not an alienation for any culture or any people".

Bressanone (AsiaNews) - May China "open itself to the Gospel". On the eve of the beginning of the Olympics, for which, just last Sunday, he had wished success, in "respect for common dignity", Benedict XVI yesterday afternoon again addressed the topic of religious freedom, this time speaking of it directly. The occasion for the pope's statement was his visit to the town of Oies, not far from Bressanone, in the mountains in Italy, where he is spending his summer vacation.

Oies is connected to the memory of Saint Josef Freinademetz, a Divine Word missionary who in 1879 went to Hong Kong to live "as a Chinese among the Chinese", and who, before dying of typhus in 1908, wrote to his friend: "even in Paradise, I want to remain Chinese".

Benedict XVI said he is "saint of tremendous relevance, because we know that China is becoming increasingly important in political, economic, and intellectual life. It is important that this great country should open itself to the Gospel. Saint Josef Freinademetz shows us that faith is not an alienation for any culture or any people, because all cultures are waiting for Christ, and are not destroyed by the Lord, but rather come to their maturity".

In a small mountain church dedicated to the priest, represented with the long narrow beard and round hat characteristic of the Chinese of his time, the pope emphasized that "Saint Josef not only wanted to live and die as a Chinese, but wanted to remain Chinese even in heaven". "Thus", he concluded " he truly identified himself with this people, and with the certainty that this people would open itself to faith in Jesus Christ".

This is a concept that Benedict XVI also presented, in German, in the visitors' book of the saint's childhood home: "May the Lord, through the intercession of Saint Josef Freinademetz, give many spiritual vocations and increasingly open China to faith in Jesus Christ".

"China", in the introductory remarks to the visit delivered by the director of Vatican Radio, Fr Federico Lombardi, "is present to the universal Church. The Chinese people is so important for all of humanity, and therefore also for the proclamation of the Word of the Lord, that the Church always has its heart turned toward China, and so does the Holy Father. The figure of Freinademetz is very important: his journey of understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture was such that he was extremely well loved by the Chinese, and therefore I believe that he is a very significant figure precisely for the possibility of understanding each other, of dialogue, of bringing a spiritual message to China in full respect for the extraordinary culture of this great country". ♦

UCA News - [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)

CHINA 'Underground' Hebei Bishop Detained By Security Officers On Last Day Of Olympics

August 25, 2008 | CH05620.1512

**HONG KONG (UCAN)** -- Underground Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo of Zhengding was taken away from his residence by public security officers and government officials on the closing day of the Beijing Olympics.

A Catholic source told UCA News that the 73-year-old bishop was resting in his room in the Christ the King Cathedral compound and talking with some Catholics there when the officers took him away at 11:20 a.m. Zhengding diocese is in Hebei province, which mostly surrounds Beijing.

The incident, the source said, occurred after the prelate celebrated Sunday Mass on Aug. 24 at the cathedral in Wuqiu, a village near Shijiazhuang, the provincial capital, 270 kilometers southwest of Beijing.

The officers, from the Shijiazhuang area, told the Catholics at the scene that the authorities have arranged "a summer tour for the bishop" and that "he will not be back soon," the source added.



Some of the hundreds of Catholics who attended the bishop's Mass that morning were still in the cathedral and saw security officers lead Bishop Jia away.

A press release from the United States-based Cardinal Kung Foundation dated Aug. 24 said "six government officials in two automobiles arrested Bishop Jia" at the cathedral at about 10:45 a.m.

As of Aug. 25, the prelate, who is in ill health, has been under house arrest in Shijiazhuang, the source told UCA News.

Local Catholics do not know the reasons for removing their bishop, the source said, but surmise that it could be linked to the upcoming Paralympic Games in Beijing, which run Sept. 6-17. Bishop Jia runs an orphanage that also cares for disabled children, the source noted.

Earlier, on Aug. 15, Bishop Jia had presided in Wuqiu at the Mass celebrating the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother. More than 1,000 Catholics attended even though public security officers had warned Catholics in the diocese to stay away from the feast-day Mass at the cathedral.

Underground Catholics reject affiliation with government-approved administrative structures for the Church.

♦

## *EDITORIAL*

*(in their own words)*

**“Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one wins the prize?**

**Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one.” (I Cor, 9, 24)**



**“I am happy to address my cordial greetings to the host country, to the organizers and those participating ... in the first place to the athletes ... with the good wish that each may give the very best of themselves in the genuine Olympic spirit. I follow with deep feelings of sympathy this great sporting event, the most important and most looked forward to at the world level. And I strongly hope that it will offer the international community a valid example of coexistence between persons from most different countries, in respect for their common dignity. May sport once again be a pledge of brotherhood and peace among all peoples.”**

Pope Benedict XVI – 3<sup>rd</sup> August, Bressanone, Italy. [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)



**“There is a lot of pressure on the Chinese team, which is 639 strong, the largest ever.**

**Seventy per cent of them will be first time Olympians. While the home crowd will be looking intensely at their medal count, the country understands that the ultimate judgement for success lies in how well Beijing hosts the Games. It is sincerely hoped that the Olympics will leave a strong legacy of friendship and understanding between the Chinese and people across the world.”**

**(Fu Ying, China’s Ambassador in London) – *The Telegraph*, UK. 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2008.**



**“America stands in firm opposition to China’s detention of political dissidents, and human rights advocates and religious activists. We press for openness and justice, not to impose our beliefs but to allow the Chinese people to express theirs. This trip has reaffirmed my belief that men and women who aspire to speak their conscience and worship their God are no threat to the future of China.”**

**US President George W. Bush – 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2008. AFP [china.infodoc@online.be](mailto:china.infodoc@online.be)**



**[www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it) – 13th August, 2008.**

**The truth about China and the Olympic Games by Bao Tong.**

***Bao Tong, 75, is one of the most prominent non-violent pro-democracy dissidents in China today. A former member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and personal secretary to former Party Secretary Zhao Ziyang, he opposed the army intervention in 1989 that led to the massacre in Tiananmen Square. For this opposition he spent seven years in prison. Since 1997 he has been under house arrest, under 24-hour surveillance. His phone is bugged and often disconnected. Before his fall from grace, he worked closely with China’s current Prime Minister Wen Jiabao.***

***Chinese leaders need the Olympic Games to be legitimate in the eyes of the world and to show off their successes. However, the stability they achieved is a consequence of the Tiananmen massacre. More importantly, keeping up appearances and saving face cannot hide the fact that the government in Beijing is incapable of providing justice to its people. This is an extract from an essay by one of the most influential dissidents in today's China.***

***“For decades, some people have referred to the Olympics as the end-all and be-all, as (China’s) engine, for the sole purpose of showing off (our) splendour, doing all that is possible irrespective of its cost in human or economic terms. Obviously the splendour in question is not that of the Mothers of Tiananmen, (this association includes the families of those killed in the Tiananmen Square massacre of 3-4 June, 1989. Ever since the group was founded it sought justice for the victims of the crackdown. For the Communist Party, however, they were but ‘counterrevolutionaries’. Ms Ding Zilin, a former professor at Renmin (People’s) University in Beijing, is among its most prominent members. She lost her 17-year old son on that fateful night.) or that of the people who submit petitions demanding justice, or that of migrant workers. The splendour that China wants to show is that of a stability that has steamrolled over everything, out of which the current greatness and harmony have oozed. Everyone must understand that this is the result of the massacre. Without it the country would not have risen to new heights; without it there would not have been the existing harmony.”***



**The Associated Press – Sunday August 17, 2008.**

**Paris:** Asked in an interview Saturday with TF1TV about the situation in Tibet during the Games, the Dalai Lama responded: “Unfortunately, the Olympic spirit is not at all respected by the Chinese officials inside Tibet.” He said there was “very strong censorship” by the Chinese authorities. “And often civilians are arrested and tortured very violently, to the point where they die,” he said. “It is very, very sad.”



**The Associated Press – Beijing (AP) - 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2008.**

**“The Chinese government puts people first, and is dedicated to maintaining and promoting its citizens’ basic rights and freedom. Chinese citizens have freedom of religion. These are indisputable facts. We firmly oppose any words or acts that interfere in other countries’ internal affairs, using human rights and religion and other issues.” – (Text of a statement by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang in response to President Bush’s speech, posted on the Ministry’s website translated by The Associated Press.)**



**The ideas and views reported in *China Exchange*  
do not necessarily reflect the opinions of  
*The Columban Centre for Promoting Communion with the Church in China.* (Ed.)**

AsiaNews - [www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it)

08/12/2008 14:18

**HONG KONG - CHINA**

Hong Kong bishop Tong in Beijing for Games, without meeting city's bishop

A visit to the bishop of Beijing was judged as "inconvenient".

Beijing must work harder to improve the life of the population, including from the spiritual point of view, beyond the moment of the Olympics.

Hong Kong (AsiaNews) - Bishop John Tong, coadjutor bishop of Hong Kong, says he is content to have attended the opening ceremony for the Olympics, but hopes that the government will above all improve the daily lives of the Chinese, beyond the most prominent events; and he is disappointed not to have had the chance to meet the bishop of Beijing. His request met with the reply that the encounter would be "inconvenient".

Bishop John Tong Hon, 69, is one of the many religious authorities who were invited to attend the solemn opening ceremony at the "Bird's Nest" stadium last August 8. The invitation was issued by the office for relations between Hong Kong and China, a sort of Chinese consulate in the territory, but also involved the office of religious affairs in Beijing.

Bishop Tong tells AsiaNews that "I wanted to take the opportunity to meet for the first time the archbishop of Beijing, Joseph Li Shan. I asked a few priests - who had studied theology in Hong Kong - if I could do this, but after some research, they replied that it would be 'inconvenient' to visit him, and that they hoped 'I would understand'. Despite this, I was at least able to greet him by telephone, although - out of fear that the line was being monitored - our conversation was a bit generic. I told him that we support him and pray for his diocese. Through those priests, I sent him a gift of two vestments for the Eucharistic celebration, as a sign of fraternity".

For Bishop Tong, "the [opening] ceremony was very beautiful, and we should congratulate the Chinese government for preparing all of this in such a solemn manner".

But he adds: "as I have said a number of times, I hope that the government will make even greater efforts in other

because life is not just sports, medals, fanfare, material success.

The people are looking for something more, they are looking for spiritual values". The coadjutor bishop of Hong Kong also points out the widespread poverty that characterizes Beijing beyond the Olympic Village. "All of these efforts [for the opening ceremony] must be addressed to values and realities more important than the glory of a moment".

Bishop Tong arrived in the Chinese capital on the morning of August 8, and had to depart the following day. The hotel reserved for him by the organization was the New Millennium, opened just a few months ago for the Games. The price is about 2,300 Hong Kong dollars (about 230 euros per night, which each guest had to pay out of his own pocket). But the hotel accepts guests only for a minimum of two nights. So Bishop Tong had to find his own accommodations, which were offered to him by a Catholic from Hong Kong who has a house in Beijing, a few minutes from the "Bird's Nest".

Various observers have seen the invitation issued to the coadjutor bishop of Hong Kong (but not to Cardinal Zen, the ordinary of the city) as a positive sign in relations between China and the Vatican.

Bishop Tong comments briefly: the Vatican, he says, expressed all of its "good will" toward China, and "the ball is now in China's court".

In recent days, the pope expressed his best wishes for the Beijing Games. On the occasion of a visit to the birthplace of the missionary Saint Josef Freinademetz last August 5, he said: "China is becoming increasingly important in political, economic, and intellectual life.

It is important", he added, "that this great country should open itself to the Gospel. Saint Josef Freinademetz shows us that faith is not an alienation for any culture or any people, because all cultures are waiting for Christ, and are not destroyed by the Lord, but rather come to their maturity". ♦



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## SUNDAY EXAMINER

Catholic News of the Week VOL LXII NO. 27

HONG KONG

6 JULY 2008

# Pope prays that mainland China bishops can visit Rome soon



*Pope Benedict XVI, left, with Bishop Joseph Zen, centre, and Bishop John Tong, right.*

*Photo: L'Osservatore Romano*

by Father Lanfranco M. Fedrigotti son

**VATICAN** (SE): Pope Benedict XVI met with Joseph Cardinal Zen Ze-kiun, the bishop of Hong Kong, and coadjutor Bishop John Tong Hon, together with Bishop Josè Lai Hung Seng of Macau, when they made their *ad limina aposiolorum* visit on June 27.

The pope encouraged both dioceses to "continue your contribution to the life of the Church in China." He said that Christ is also a teacher, pastor and loving redeemer for China and that the Church "must never allow this good news to remain unspoken."

Pope Benedict also expressed his hopes and prayers that "the day will come soon when your brother bishops from mainland China come to Rome on pilgrimage to the tombs of the apostles, Peter and Paul, as a sign of communion with the successor of St. Peter and the universal Church."

While Bishop Tong and Bishop Lai returned to Hong Kong and Macau, Bishop Zen remained in Rome for the inauguration the Year of St. Paul at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls during the first vespers of the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul on June 28.

The basilica, which can hold 10,000 people, was filled to overflowing and many had to wait outside for an opportunity to enter. At 6.00pm, while the *Laudes Regiae* was sung by the choir, the pope, accompanied by Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, and representatives of other Churches and Christian communities, together with cardinals, bishops,

and Benedictine monks, processed around the great quadri-portico. Before entering the basilica, the pope stopped in front of the great statue of St. Paul to light the flame that will burn for the duration of the Pauline Year.

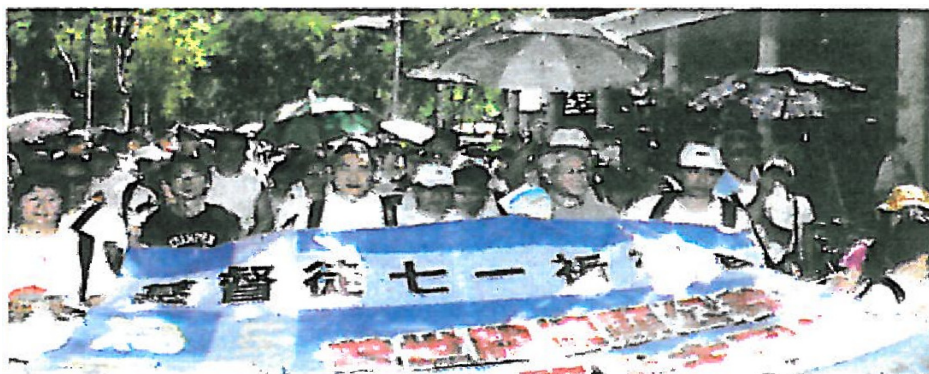
The procession entered through the great wooden Pauline Door and the hundreds waiting outside followed. Pope Benedict spent a few moments in veneration at the recently excavated tomb of St. Paul, before celebrating first vespers, greeting all in the words of the apostle: "grace

and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ."

Patriarch Bartholomew spoke of St. Paul as the one who inspired "the classic Fathers of the Church like St. John Chrysostom in the east and St. Augustine of Hippo in the west" and "hopefully continues to inspire us so that all peoples may come to the obedience of faith in Christ."

The service concluded with a final blessing in Latin by Pope Benedict and in Greek by Patriarch Bartholomew. ♦

## Tens of thousands turn out for July 1 protest march



*Reverend Ralph Lee, of the Hong Kong Christian Council, centre-left, and Bishop Zen, centre-right, flanked by people at the conclusion of the prayer service & fire the protest march on July 1,*

HONG KONG (SE): Under the heat of a July sun, more than 47,000 people marched from Victoria Park, Causeway Bay, to the Government Offices in Central on July 1 to press demands for universal suffrage and give voice to other social, political and livelihood issues.

"Same dream, Equal rights! Power to the people! Better livelihoods!" was the unifying cry. There were calls for the government to address rising inflation, discrimination against minorities and establish a minimum wage.

At a prayer service before the march, Bishop Joseph Zen Ze-kuin expressed regret that, after 11 years, the promises of real autonomy and democracy were still unfulfilled. ♦

UCA News - [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)

## HONG KONG Catholic Commission Highlights Human Rights Abuses In China

August 15, 2008 | HK05505.1510

**HONG KONG** (UCAN) -- The Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) of Hong Kong diocese has used the occasion of the Beijing Olympics to highlight China's human rights record.

On Aug. 13, the commission demonstrated outside the Chinese government's Liaison Office here, and placed an envelope containing a statement addressed to the Chinese government on the iron railings in front of the office.

The statement urges the government to improve human rights and allow greater religious freedom in the mainland, and to honor the promises on human rights and press freedom it made when it applied to host the Games.

The statement includes a list of people detained as a result of trying to protect local residents' farmlands and houses, which Chinese officials took over for construction work relating to the Olympics, as well as human rights activists such as Hu Jia, who was sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

It also calls for the release of underground Catholic priests and bishops, including Bishop Su Zhimin of Baoding who has gone missing since October 1997, and detained Bishops Shi Enxiang of Yixian and Yao Liang of Xiwanzi.

In late July, to mark the occasion of the Aug. 8-24 Olympics in Beijing, JPC distributed 6,000 copies of China's Human Rights to local parishes and Catholic schools. The booklet highlights human rights violations such as evictions due to construction of Olympic facilities, the maltreatment of people petitioning the central government, labor rights, press and religious freedoms, use of the death sentence, and democratic development in Hong Kong.

JPC says in the booklet's preface that it hopes the Beijing Olympics will be a starting point for the improvement of human rights in the country.

Or Yan-yan, JPC's project officer, told UCA News more copies may be printed and sent to schools in early September when classes resume after the summer break. That also would coincide with the Paralympic Games for disabled athletes, set to take place Sept. 6-17 in Beijing.

At Hong Kong's St. Francis of Assisi Church on Aug. 2, JPC held a games day consisting of competitions, group sharings and faith reflections. The special day attracted

about 30 participants from various parishes and Church schools.

Or said the games day activities hopefully would help trigger concern for human rights victims and the country. The games, she pointed out, were designed to reflect the plight of various vulnerable groups, including land evictees and rural migrant workers whose plight the Chinese government deliberately ignored when it spent a lot of money hosting the Olympics.

In one activity, Patrick Poon Kar-wai, a JPC member, played the role of a mainland reporter who had to tell a petitioner of the central government in Beijing he "cannot report" news about the petition.

Poon told UCA News his performance expressed the frustration of mainland reporters who want to reveal the truth but were prevented from doing so by authorities. If news reports affect the vested interest of officials, he said, the reporters could be suppressed or even convicted.

Another participant, Janet Leung, president of the Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students, told UCA News that contestants who drew lots containing the words "human rights" were barred from taking part in the tug-of-war game. This signified that human rights activists are prevented from living a normal life in the country, she said.

A catechumen surnamed Kwok, who also joined the games, told UCA News the Beijing Olympics honor all Chinese people, but injustices linked to the event must be addressed. Otherwise, she said, "the event will remain superficial." ♦

AsiaNews - [www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it)

08/26/2008 14:16

## CHINA

China, human rights activist subjected to forced labor Beijing (AsiaNews) - Forced to work seven hours a day under the burning sun, in spite of the serious cirrhosis of the liver from which he has suffered for some time: this is what human rights activist Hu Jia must undergo in Chinese prison, in addition to the confiscation of letters from his relatives and of a book about prisoner rights sent to him by his wife.

The charge comes from Chinese Human Rights Defenders, according to which "Hu has been ordered to rake up leaves in the prison grounds under the hot sun". The measures were taken against him after he pointed out that "certain punishments used by Chaobai Prison, where Hu is held, violate basic human dignity". His health condition remains "critical" (the cirrhosis is undermining his overall health), and he "requires plenty of rest and regular check-ups with liver specialists", both of which are denied to him by prison officials. ♦