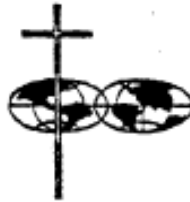


# China Exchange



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## EDITORIAL

Catholics all over the world have been focused on Rome for the last two months at least, concerned with the failing health of Pope John Paul II, his death, funeral and the ensuing brief conclave which culminated in the election of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI. The Catholic people of China were no exception at this important time for both the Universal and local Churches. As many as could came together to mourn the late Pope and pray for the cardinals as they assembled to discern and elect the successor of the late Pope.

This issue of *China Exchange* features articles about the Catholic people of China and how, like other Catholics around the world, they took a vital interest in the events unfolding in Rome and their elation at the choice of Pope Benedict XVI. The new Pope is not unknown in China, Hong Kong and Macau. The writings of the former Cardinal Ratzinger are known there – though not widely – while the faithful of Hong Kong and Macau fondly recall his visit in 1993 and look forward to a return visit some time in the future, when conditions, hopefully, may have improved.

Sometimes we hear it said that there are two Churches in China – the underground church - loyal to the Pope - and the official church under the control of the Patriotic Association. This is a distortion of the true situation of the Church in China. There are certainly two groups of Catholic people in the Church in China, but among both groups the Pope is acknowledged as head of the Church by all - and is prayed for in all Masses celebrated there. Together with the local bishop, the Pope is included in the official Missal and Mass texts used in China today. The government does actually recognize the Pope as spiritual head of

the Church – despite the question of episcopal nominations and diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

Even before the Second Vatican Council, ecumenism has been a high priority for Christian people around the world. This was one of the areas of concern focused on by the Council and since then much progress has been made in mutual respect and understanding among different, worldwide religious traditions. Clear evidence of this was the attendance of so many religious leaders at the recent funeral of the late Pope John Paul II, who had worked tirelessly over many years towards this goal.

Even at this early stage of the new Pope's pontificate, Benedict XVI has indicated that ecumenism will continue to be a high priority in the work of the Church. China has several millions of loyal Christian (Protestant) faithful throughout its vast territory. Significant numbers have come to the faith in quite recent years. There are mainstream groups and minor, very local groups of believers. Some have fairly traditional ways of belief and practice, while others have more radical expressions of their beliefs. The appearance of 'house churches' is a significant phenomenon among Christian communities in China today, and a cause of concern for the government.

*"Jesus in Beijing"* – a recent book by David Aikman – formerly a correspondent for *Time* magazine in Hong Kong, and later *Time* bureau chief in Beijing - speaks freely about the Christian movement in China, its recent history, its prospects and challenges in the time ahead. An excellent review of this book appeared in Volume 14.3/4, 2005 issue of *Amity News Service*. In due course we would like to share this review with our friends. ✱

# SINO-VATICAN RELATIONS AFTER THE POPE'S DEATH

Bishop Joseph Zen Ze-kium  
sunday Examiner 10 April 2000

All the Chinese faithful, who have had a chance to meet John Paul II, kiss his hand or talk with him, could confirm that he always assured us that he prayed for China everyday.

When Bishop Tong and I were received by His Holiness shortly after our Episcopal ordinations, the Holy Father kept repeating almost like a little child pleading with its mother, "I want to go to China, I want to go to China!" In mourning the Holy Father, I said his one regret must have been that he never had the chance to visit China, or even Hong Kong. This was his deepest longing and greatest dream.

Recently, at a press conference, I explained in detail how the then chief secretary, Anson Chan, did her best to help obtain permission for the Pope to come to Hong Kong for the conclusion of the Asian Bishops' Synod. The answer from Beijing was that since there were no diplomatic relations between the Vatican and China, it was inappropriate for the Pope to come.

When asked if, with John Paul II's going and a new Pope coming, there would be a new setting to the establishing of Sino-Vatican diplomatic relations, my answer was that "objectively" there should not be any difference. The Vatican's policy to work for speedy establishment of Sino-Vatican diplomatic relations is well established and will not alter with the change of the person of the Pope. Unfortunately there seems to be little interest on the part of Beijing authorities in recent years.

The desire for dialogue, which may lead to the establishment of diplomatic relations, is so strong that it prompted Vatican secretary of State, Cardinal Sodano, to make the following statement on 11 February 1999 – "Our nunciature in Taipei is the nunciature in China and if Beijing agrees, we can move it to Beijing. I don't say tomorrow, or even tonight."

The statement offended the sensitivities of the Taiwanese people, as I dared to point out publicly at the time. It may also have misled Beijing into believing that the Vatican was ready for a complete surrender. Actually, what it did raise was a wave of expectation. However, with the realization that the Vatican was not ready to surrender the stalemate continued.

During the Holy Father's recent illness and then upon his death, kind words came from Beijing, which raised some new optimism about the re-establishment of Sino-Vatican diplomatic relations. Along with the good wishes and later condolences, the two conditions for eventual rapprochement were reiterated; firstly to sever ties with Taiwan and secondly to stop interfering in Chinese affairs, even in religious matters. Before any dialogue or eventual consensus, we could not expect any Chinese spokesperson to say anything else. But people must know that the problem is not about Taiwan, it is about interference.

Severing ties with Taiwan would be problematic, because, never in history has the Holy See taken the unilateral action to sever diplomatic relations with any state. It could be remembered that it was the authorities in Beijing who expelled the nuncio from China at a time when Taiwan was recognized as being the legitimate government of China by the United Nations. Nevertheless, Cardinal Sodano's words made it clear the Holy See is ready to take that step. This is public information. I am amazed the media is treating it as if I had revealed a secret.

The Holy See's rationale in making such a decision, albeit reluctantly, has also been accepted by the bishops in Taiwan. The Holy See is facing a dilemma; either to keep the status quo and abandon the faithful in mainland to their fate, or try to help them to achieve a state of normal religious practice and come to terms with the Beijing government. Even within the Taiwanese government there are people who sympathise with the Holy See, and the Holy See is confident that, in any situation that may develop, the Church in Taiwan would continue to enjoy religious freedom.

When we, the vicars-general of the Hong Kong diocese, officially visited the United Front Branch of the Communist Party in Beijing in 1997, the then vice-director of the branch talked about the first condition. Of course, if Beijing demands that the Holy See sever its ties with Taiwan before they will even start talking, in other words, before they will even give any assurance of a possible normalization of the religious situation, that would be unfair.

Calling the appointment of bishops by the Pope an "interference in the internal affairs of China" is obviously a misunderstanding. The appointment of bishops is the pastoral duty of the Holy Father. It is, by nature, a purely religious matter. All big nations accept this. Nobody else regards this as a breach of either national dignity or sovereignty. I would like to ask if multinational companies would accept having the managers of a branch office in China appointed by the Chinese government? Some governments, which in the past wanted to have a say in the appointment of bishops, have now confidently renounced such a privilege. However, I understand that in fact, before full mutual trust can be built, the Holy See may accept some participation of the Beijing government. And as Beijing knows that, there should be no problem. It is not insoluble. There is a Vietnamese way of doing things and a Cuban way, surely some way can be found and agreed upon.

On the evening of April 3, the vice-chairperson of the Chinese Patriotic Association, Liu Bainian, said something on television with which I strongly disagree. He said that obviously Bishop Zen was ignorant of how the Chinese side is working for the establishment of Sino-Vatican relations. I would really like to have an opportunity to check the facts with Liu. He then said

that Bishop Zen would do better to persuade the conservative forces in the Vatican not to create obstacles to negotiations. Is Liu really so ignorant of the situation in the Vatican? Talking of conservative forces in this context is tantamount to living in an era long gone. But more seriously, insinuating that John Paul II yielded to the conservative forces, or became a conservative force himself, would be a grievous unfairness and expression of disrespect for the great, wise leader of the Church.

I am afraid it is the so-called faithful of the Patriotic Association, like Liu, who are actually the conservative forces that, until now, have failed to help the central government understand the pastoral nature of the office

of the Pope. For obvious reasons, if real normalization of the religious situation became a reality, they, and especially Liu, would no longer be able to go over the heads of the bishops and sustain control of the Church in their own hands.

Liu and myself are not young anymore and not far from the day we have to give an account of our life to God. Let us put aside any short-sighted interest and do something really beneficial for the Church and for our country.

**+Joseph Zen Ze-kiun. \***

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## **THE POPE SPEAKS TO CHINA**

Observations on China from the Holy Spirit Study Centre - An interview with Father Elmer Wurth, MM  
(China Bridge – Sunday Examiner 17 April 2005)

Father Elmer Wurth has worked at the Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong since 1980, and has done invaluable work in the field of documentation. His outstanding contribution has been the gathering of papal statements dealing with the New China. In 1985, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, together with the Holy Spirit Study Centre in Hong Kong published a volume, edited by Father Wurth, entitled: *Papal Documents Related to the New China*. These documents covered the period from 1937 to 1984.

Since that time, Father Wurth has assiduously followed, collected and analysed Pope John Paul II's statements on China. The second volume of Papal documents will deal entirely with John Paul II's pontificate. The Holy Spirit Study Centre hopes to have this second volume ready by the end of the year. The Pope's death brings to a close his unceasing and untiring and seemingly unsuccessful efforts to bring about unity in the Church in China and reconciliation with the Chinese government. The resolution of these two thorny problems is now left to a new Pope.

Following is an interview with Father Wurth conducted by the editor of 'China Bridge', Maryknoll Sister Betty Ann Maheu, following the death of our Holy Father, John Paul II.

**Q:** *Father Wurth, you have faithfully followed and recorded all of our Holy Father, John Paul II's statements on China since he became pope on 16 October, 1978. Would you say that at the beginning of his pontificate the Holy Father was hopeful about effecting reconciliation between the Vatican and Beijing?*

**A:** His early statements revealed that he was very hopeful that he would be able to make a breakthrough in the strained relations that had characterized Sino-Vatican relations since 1951. He immediately made overtures of friendship and showed an understanding for China's unique situation. During his 26- year reign, he made no fewer than 30 important references to China, each one an expression of his deep love and concern for the Chinese people.

**Q:** *Pope John Paul II became pope in 1978. When did he first address the Chinese people?*

**A:** He first mentioned China on Sunday, 19 August 1979 during the weekly recitation of the Angelus. The message he wanted to give from the outset was that China is never absent from his prayers. He was hopeful about China's new openness and he wanted to stress that the bond of love between Chinese Catholics and the Holy See had never been broken. He was telling them that he was with them in his heart and in his prayer. And he referred to them as "the great Chinese people," a phrase that he would repeat often during his pontificate

**Q:** *On several occasions the Holy Father expressed his desire to meet the Chinese people directly and on their own soil. Would you comment on this often-expressed wish?*

**A:** The fact that the Holy Father was not able, personally, to go to China and meet and speak with the Chinese people was a great disappointment to him. He wanted to convey, personally, to the Chinese his sentiments of respect and love. Not being able to realize this desire was certainly a cross very difficult to bear.

Pope John Paul II was a pope of unity. He knew that unity within the China Church and unity with Rome depended greatly on the possibility of everyone in China being able to enjoy full religious liberty. In one impassioned plea he prayed: "O hearts of our brothers and sisters in the far-off land of China! Be united with us in the Sacrifice of Redemption, as we are united with you." He wanted the Church in China to be one and read every little sign of hope as a positive development.

**Q:** *In the introduction to the second volume of your work, you mention overtures of friendship, assurances of prayers and love for the people. What other concerns did the Holy Father express in relation to China?*

**A:** He has often expressed concern for peace in the China Church and, of course, the desire that the entire Catholic community would be completely free to rejoin the Universal Church. This division, imposed politically, weighed heavily on the Holy Father throughout the whole of his reign.

**Q:** *Over 150 countries around the world have established normal diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Why is it so difficult for Rome and China to do this?*

**A:** The difficulty lies in the fact that both sides have set up pre-conditions that the other must meet before any progress can be made. I will only give a couple of examples. The pope expects to be allowed to choose and contact his own bishops. The Chinese government considers this to be interference in its internal affairs. The government feels it alone has the right to control all aspects of its citizens' life.

Then there is the Vatican's relations with Taiwan. The Vatican has already downgraded its diplomatic status, but China demands total abandonment of diplomatic relations. In spite of strained relations, I am still optimistic and hopeful that these issues will be resolved.

The new pope's statements on China during the first few months of his pontificate could offer a wonderful breakthrough. He may be able to establish dialogue with Chinese leaders, if he accepts that China has changed dramatically and now occupies a leading political role on the world scene.

**Q:** *Throughout the years of John Paul II's pontificate, the Vatican seems to have misread some of China's attitudes. I am thinking of their reaction to the appointment of Bishop Tang as archbishop of Guangzhou, for instance. Would you comment?*

**A:** Yes, on several occasions when Rome felt that it was honouring China, China again reverted to the idea that Rome was interfering in its internal affairs. The situation of Bishop Tang was particularly painful since Rome wanted to reward a man who had suffered long for his faith and he ended up not being able to return to his diocese. There was also the case of Bishop Ignatius Gong Pinmei, who was made a cardinal *in pectore*. This also displeased China.

In more recent years relationships became very strained after the canonization of the China martyrs. In speaking about these canonizations the Holy Father said, "With this canonization, the Church most certainly does not want to pass an historical judgment on those years and still much less to legitimise some of the conduct of the government of the time that weigh heavily on the history of the Chinese people. On the contrary, the Church wishes to show the heroic fidelity of these worthy sons and daughters of China, who did not allow themselves to be intimidated by the threats of a cruel persecution." So what was meant to be an honour was construed by China to be totally blameworthy.

**Q:** *Throughout his life as head of the Catholic Church, the Holy Father has often encouraged the faithful "not to be afraid". Like Jesus he often repeated, "Fear not!" How did he himself set an example of fearlessness?*

**A:** The Holy Father always spoke his truth without fear when his truth may not have been popular with many around the world.

He will long be remembered for his respect for human life. He consistently spoke strongly against abortion and the death penalty. His unbending position on these two life issues certainly could not have pleased China

In line with his culture of life, he was strongly opposed to war for solving enmities between nations. When the war between China and Vietnam escalated in 1979, he said, "Anyone who shares Christ's love for men cannot but be

saddened and tremble at the lives that are sacrificed or in danger and at the sufferings and hardships of combatants and populations. I am thinking in particular of children, the old and the sick.” He also spoke out fearlessly against the US war with Iraq. He made an unpopular decision when he denied women the possibility of ordination. Many women openly disagreed with him. Not only was he not afraid to make unpopular choices, but he also had the courage of his conviction to admit that some choices made by previous Catholic leaders had been wrong and hurtful to people.

He often tried to reassure the Chinese authorities that there was no dichotomy between being authentically Chinese and authentically Christian. “The civil authorities of the People’s Republic of China should rest assured: a disciple of Christ can live his faith in any political system, provided there is respect for his right to act according to the dictates of his own conscience and his own faith... The Chinese nation has an important role to play in the international community. Catholics can make a notable contribution to this, and they will do so with enthusiasm and commitment.”

**Q:** *What in your opinion, would best characterize Pope John Paul’s wish for the Chinese people?*

**A:** I will answer your question with a quote from the Holy Father spoken on 6 May 1984 in Korea: “May the great and wise people of China... seek as true Chinese, to live that faith in full communion with the Universal Church, to the joy and enrichment of all.” \*

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## UNOFFICIAL CHURCH PLEADS WITH POPE NOT TO FORGET THEM

(SUNDAY EXAMINER – 8 May 2005)

HONG KONG (UCAN):

Apart from official congratulatory messages from government and official Church officials in Beijing, Catholics from the unofficial Church in various parts of China have also sent greetings to the new Pope

However, members of the unofficial Church also urged Pope Benedict XVI not to disregard them. In a message from one community in northwestern China, the faithful asked him “not to forget the suffering Church in China” because it struggles “with no freedom at all.”

Their message says that ever since China’s Religious Affairs Regulations came into effect on March 1, priests from the unofficial community must report weekly to religious officials on their activities. It also points out that they must ask public security officials for permission to leave their parishes.

In a message dated April 20, Catholics in Wenzhou diocese, in Zhejiang province, eastern China, pledged allegiance to Pope Benedict XVI and expressed their hope that he would visit China soon, bring them “light and freedom” and lead them “in love and truth toward full communion with the Universal Church.”

Many from the unofficial Church went to great lengths to watch the television broadcast of the Pope’s inauguration on April 24. Some in eastern China rented rooms in selected guesthouses to watch through a broadcast made possible by a Hong Kong-based station.

A Catholic source said on April 25 that “a Catholic website also presented the inaugural Mass, but the Internet connection was slow, so viewing quality was not good.”

At a Mass on April 25, unhindered by the authorities, the unofficial Catholic community marked

the official start of Pope Benedict XVI’s pontificate. The same source added that local Catholics plan to print the new Pope’s photos, with a biographical sketch on the back, to commemorate the inauguration.

The source remarked that the papacy’s transition, from the illness and death of Pope John Paul II on April 2 to the election of Pope Benedict XVI on April 19, drew so much attention “even government officials came to ask if we were going to celebrate” the selection of the new Pope.

“Benedict,” the name Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger chose upon becoming Pope, has a special significance for some Catholics in China as Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) paid special attention to localizing the Church in China, leading to the first ordination of Chinese bishops in 1926 under his successor, Pope Pius XI.

Retired Bishop Casimirus Wang Milu of Tianshu in Gansu province, northwestern China, cited Pope Benedict XVI in his congratulatory message. He mentioned that *Maximum Illud*, Pope Benedict XV’s apostolic letter of 1 November 1919, called on the Church in China to develop local clergy to manage the Church and to proclaim the Good News.

Bishop Wang also noted that the apostolic letter urged Chinese Catholics to sacrifice for evangelization, not to indulge in court disputes, not to ask for compensation, but to forgive with love.

“Pope John Paul II had hoped to visit China but never realized his dream,” he pointed out. With that in mind, the bishop said he prays that God will bless Pope Benedict XVI and that a papal visit to China will materialize. \*

**CATHOLICS IN CHINA:  
“WE KNOW HIM FROM HIS BOOKS.  
WE LOVE BENEDICT XVI’S HUMILITY.”**

[china.infodoc@online.be]

Catholics waited up late into the night to follow the outcome of the Conclave on Internet and satellite TV. They are now praying to welcome the Pontiff to Beijing one day.

From homes, parishes and seminaries in Hebei province, Catholics received “with joy and emotion” news of the election of Benedict XVI. “We have been waiting for this moment for days and now receive with joy, emotion and hope news of the new Pope and his speedy election.” A priest from the diocese of Zhengding told AsiaNews that Catholics were tuned in to the final moments of the Conclave via a Chinese Internet site which showed live footage of smoke from the Sistine Chapel which signaled voting results. “In our heart, we felt ever close to Saint Peter’s, together with the rest of the world.” “We are happy that Cardinal Ratzinger was elected,” the priest went on to say, “we felt strongly that he was the right choice.” “We have read many of his texts and appreciate the solidity of his faith,” he added.

Chinese Catholics are struck by the simplicity and humility of the new Pontiff: “these qualities make us feel even close to him.” The priest explained that efforts are dedicated now “to praying for better relations between China and the Vatican with the new Pope and that the Pontiff may finally be able to visit Beijing.” “If this dream were to come true,” he stated, “we would all be ready to go as pilgrims to the capital to greet the Pontiff whom we await as always.”

Since April 2, day of John Paul II’s death, all Chinese bishops invited the faithful to pray for the late Pope, but also for the Conclave. Catholic communities throughout the country followed the main events and read the Chinese translation of Cardinal Ratzinger’s

homily for John Paul II’s funeral and for the ‘eligendo pontifice’ Mass. So great was the desire to participate directly in these important Church moments that one young woman said with regret, “Too bad the doors of the Sistine Chapel are kept closed.”

According to AsiaNews sources, after John Paul II’s funeral on April 8, state media were no longer offering news from the Vatican. Over recent days, all attention has been concentrated on anti-Japan protests. Nevertheless, Catholics tried to stay informed via satellite TV: “Even if broadcasts were in foreign languages, it didn’t matter: we wanted to see the images, feel that we were part of the events just like the rest of the world.

To have watched the election of the Pontiff in real time was something “extraordinary” for the Catholics of this country. Following the death of John Paul II, government pressure on the community became even stronger. “In the diocese of Zhengding,” an anonymous voice said, “government authorities gave parish priests the following ‘advice’: refrain from holding processions, curtail prayer and celebrate Mass inside churches.”

During this period, Msgr Julius Jia, non-official bishop of Zhengding, received several “visits” from government officials, but he was permitted to celebrate Mass and to lead prayers for the Conclave, and asked the entire diocese to observe the Novendiali (9 days of mourning).

Churches throughout Beijing were packed with members of the faithful, seminarians and nuns for John Paul II’s funeral on April 8.

In Chengdu (Sichuan), participants at the Mass wore white flowers in their left lapel as a sign of mourning, in the Chinese tradition. ✱

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**Funeral Mass for Pope John Paul II  
at St. Ignatius Cathedral, Shanghai**

Catholics from near and far around Shanghai came to pay respects to Pope John Paul II on Saturday, April 9th, at a Funeral Mass held at St. Ignatius’ Cathedral. The morning Mass was led by Bishop Aloysius Jin.

*“Father, eternal shepherd, hear the prayers of your people for Your servant John Paul II, who governed your Church with love. In your mercy bring him with the flock entrusted to his care to the reward you have promised your faithful servants.”*

## POPE BENEDICT REACHES OUT TO CHINA

Associated Press, May 12, 2005.

VATICAN CITY – Pope Benedict XVI sent a veiled message to China today, inviting countries that don't have diplomatic relations with the Vatican to establish ties soon in a move that could complicate the Holy See's relations with rival Taiwan.

Benedict didn't name the countries he was reaching out to, saying only that he appreciated messages and gestures that came following the April death of Pope John Paul and his own election as Pope. But ambassadors and Pio Cardinal Laghi, a Vatican diplomatic troubleshooter, said Benedict was clearly talking about China.

"It seems he has an invitation, a certain desire to open up ... a certain openness to arrive at solutions for conflicts through dialogue," Laghi told Telepace, a Catholic television station.

Benedict made the comments in a speech in the Apostolic Palace to diplomats of the 174 countries accredited to the Holy See, his first since being elected Pope on April 19.

"I'm, thinking also about the nations with which the Holy See still hasn't entered into diplomatic relations," Benedict told the ambassadors. He said he appreciated the fact that some of those countries sent messages or otherwise "associated themselves" with the Vatican following the death of John Paul and his election.

"I want to express my gratitude and address a deferential greeting to the civil authorities of these countries, expressing the wish to see them soon represented at the Apostolic See," he said.

China didn't send any official condolences to the Vatican following John Paul's death, but a Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed condolences during a news conference with foreign reporters and Premier Wen Jiabao said on April 21 that China was willing to build relations with the Vatican if Benedict breaks ties with rival Taiwan.

Beijing's communist government ordered Chinese Catholics to break ties with the Vatican in 1951. Roman

Catholic churches in China are run by a government-sanctioned group that recognizes the pope as a spiritual leader but has no formal relations with the Vatican and appoints its own priests and bishops.

The Catholic Patriotic Association of China and the Chinese Bishops College – both part of the government-controlled church sent a telegram to the Vatican expressing "deep condolences" over John Paul's death.

Laghi said the fact that Benedict referred to "Catholic communities" without distinguishing between the Chinese-controlled church and the Rome-based church was significant. "He puts them all together because he doesn't want to make any contrasts," Laghi said.

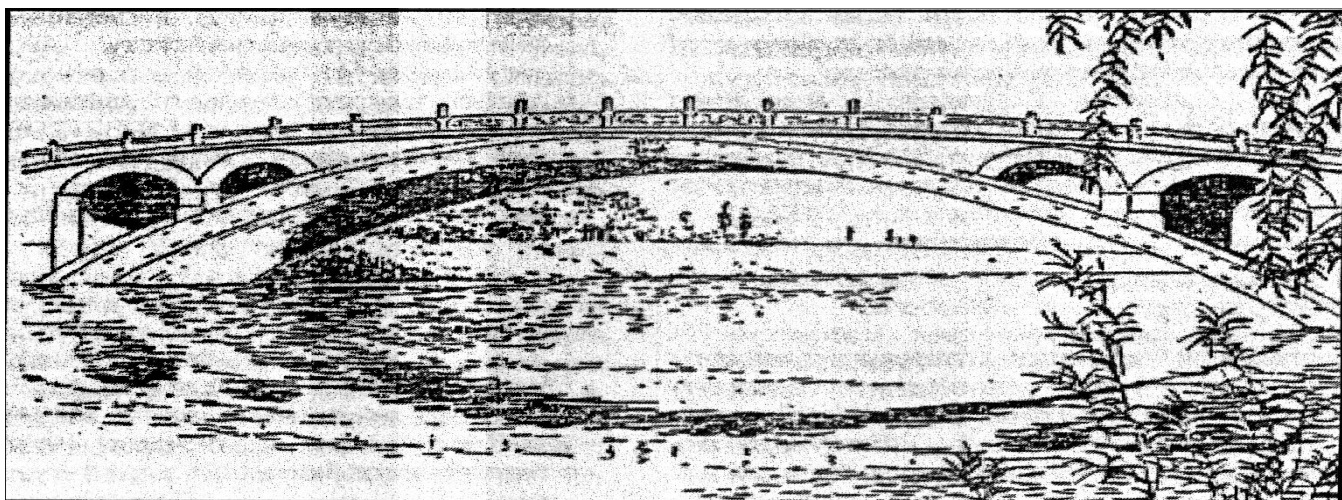
The Vatican is the only European government that has official relations with Taiwan. China still claims the self-ruled island as its territory and refuses to have any official contact with governments that recognize its rival as a sovereign country.

Taiwan's ambassador to the Holy See, Tou Chou-Seng, said Thursday that he realized the Vatican wanted to establish relations with Beijing because of its concern over the fate of Catholics there. But he said he didn't expect a rupture with Taiwan anytime soon.

"It is their intention to normalize relations with Beijing," he told *The Associated Press* 'Would they sacrifice relations with us? Would they sacrifice the hundreds of thousands of Catholics in Taiwan? It's a long way to go.'

He said that in negotiating with Beijing, the Vatican would insist on being able to appoint bishops and guarantee the fundamental rights for Chinese believers to practice their religion. "I don't think they (Beijing) are ready to do this."

Vatican Officials said Benedict may also have been reaching out to Saudi Arabia and Vietnam, which both sent representatives to Benedict's inauguration despite not having relations. \*



## CHURCH IN HONG KONG AND MACAU OPEN TO A REVISIT FROM THE POPE

Hong Kong (UCAN) – Sunday Examiner – 8 May 2005

Catholic leaders in Hong Kong and Macau have welcomed Pope Benedict XVI's election and hope he will soon revisit them. The new Pope visited both territories in March 1993 when he was still Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Hong Kong and Macau were still British and Portuguese territories.

Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated in Hong Kong on April 25 to mark Pope Benedict's inauguration (*Sunday Examiner*, May 1) with about 1,400 people, including consulate representatives and leaders of various religions and Christian denominations, attending. Bishop Joseph Zen Ze-kian was joined by about 80 concelebrants including auxiliary, Bishop John Tong Hon, and Archbishop Joseph Ti-Kang retired head of the Taipei archdiocese.

In Macau, Bishop Jose Lai Hong-seng presided at an afternoon Mass on April 24, just as the Pope's inaugural Mass was under way in the Vatican. About 1,000 people, including government officials, attended. Macau's churches and chapels rang their bells three times to welcome the new Pope and give thanks to God. The diocese also declared a holiday on April 25 for all Catholic organizations and schools.

Bishop Lai said on April 21 that Pope Benedict XVI "was close to Pope John Paul I I because they worked together for 26 years." The bishop said he expects him to continue his predecessor's "unfinished mission(s), such as ecumenism, inter-religious dialogue and concern for Catholics in China."

Father Pedro Chung Chi-kin, vicar general of Macau diocese, said on April 26 that the new Pope, "with his wisdom," will cooperate with bishops "to lead the Church's evangelization ministry in the new generation."

Both of Macau's Church leaders hoped the Pope would set foot on Chinese soil.

During his 1993 visit to Macau, Father Chung recalled that the then Cardinal Ratzinger met retired diocesan head Bishop Domingos Lam Ka-tseung, and also visited some famous places, including the Ruins of St. Paul's Cathedral.

In Hong Kong, Cardinal Ratzinger spoke at a meeting held by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in early March, telling the bishops that the Church's mission is more a matter of "inter-culturality" than "inculturation." He coined the new term and urged its use, he explained, to express more precisely "the meeting of cultures" that should take place when the culture of Christian faith encounters other cultures.

Bishop Tong recounted that he brought Cardinal Ratzinger to meet the then-governor, Christopher Patten, himself a Catholic, at Government House. The bishop also recalled that the future Pope met with the late John Baptist Cardinal Wu Cheng-chung and visited Hong Kong's Holy Spirit Seminary and Holy Spirit Study Centre.

Vicar-general, Father Dominic Chan Chi-ming, expressed his hope that the new Pope would visit Hong Kong again. However, Father Louis Ha Ke-loon, director of the Hong Kong Catholic diocesan Archives, cautioned that this would be hard to arrange until the Holy See established diplomatic ties with China, but said that a visit to Hong Kong or mainland China may "not be impossible for Pope Benedict XVI."

The only Pope to visit Hong Kong was Pope Paul VI who presided at an open-air Mass in Hong Kong Stadium before a crowd of about 15,000 on 4 December 1970. ✽

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## TAIWAN WILL ACCEPT CHINA RECOGNITION

- The Tablet, 14 May 2005 and [china.infodoc@online.be]

Taiwan would not object if the Vatican wanted to switch diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing, according to a retired Taiwanese archbishop. Speaking to a Hong Kong newspaper last week, Joseph Ti-kang, who retired as Archbishop of Taipei only last year and still lives in the bishop's palace, said the Taiwanese Government would not try to block the Holy See from ending a diplomatic relationship dating back to the 1950s.

The Vatican is the only European state to recognize the sovereignty of Taiwan, an island 95 miles off China's coast and claimed by it. Speculation has mounted recently that the Vatican might be about to

build bridges with Beijing that could allow China's 8 m. Catholics to practice freely for the first time in 50 years. The report in the Apple Daily quoted Archbishop Ti-kang as saying the move would not have a major impact on the 300,000 strong Taiwanese Church.

Bishop Joseph Zen Ze-kian of Hong Kong said last month that the Holy See might be willing to re-establish relations with China (*The Tablet*, 16 April). The death of Pope John Paul II – whose canonization of 120 Chinese martyrs caused Chinese unease – raised speculation that China might be more open to dialogue with the Vatican under Pope Benedict XVI.

- Ellen Teague.