



THE CARDINAL KUNG FOUNDATION



The Cardinal Kung Foundation

Press Release – March 23, 2005

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Petition to China To Release All the Imprisoned Bishops, Priests, and Their Faithful and to Exonerate Their Criminal Charges

Stamford, Connecticut, U.S.A. --- In its letter to Mr. Yang Jiechi, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Washington, DC, The Cardinal Kung Foundation has joined forces with AsiaNews, the United States Catholic Conference, the European Parliament, and many others to appeal to China "to release all the Roman Catholic bishops and priests who have vanished under detention, or have been imprisoned or sent to the labor camps, or are otherwise kept from carrying out their ministry," according to the prisoners list that the Asia News has submitted to China.

However, the Cardinal Kung Foundation goes beyond the campaign led by Asia News on March 5. In its letter to Ambassador Yang, Joseph Kung, the President of the Foundation, wrote: "Since 1949 when your government took over China, literally tens of thousands of Roman Catholic bishops, priests and their faithful were imprisoned for 5, 10, 20, 30 , or even 40 years. Many of them.....died in jail.....Many of them.....are still in jail.....Many of them were released after a very long period in jail.....some of those released are still living.....Some have since died.....It does not matter to your government if they are dead or still living; they are still considered criminals because the "criminal" charges against them were never erased by the government.....The Cardinal Kung Foundation appeals to you that all these prisoners, both living and dead, be officially and posthumously exonerated of so called crimes of which the Chinese government falsely and unjustly accused them, some are as long as five decades ago. In doing so, the reputation of these living and dead religious prisoners of conscience in China can be restored. Those who are still living can at least once again enjoy equal treatment in the society. During the past decades, many political non-religious prisoners have been exonerated of their crimes by your government. We believe and urge your government to do the same for the religious prisoners....To do so.....will be a powerful testimony to the Chinese government's respect for and adherence to human rights and liberty."



The entire letter to Ambassador Yan Jiechi of PRC follows.

March 23, 2005

His Excellency Yang Jiechi
Ambassador of the People's Republic of China
2300 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

Recently, AsiaNews, Bishop John Ricard, Chairman of the Committee on International Policy of the United States Catholic Conference, Mr. Mario Mauro, Vice President of the European Parliament, and many others have sent you or other Chinese ambassadors elsewhere a list (attached) (henceforth called the List) of Chinese Roman Catholic bishops and priests who have vanished under detention, have been imprisoned, have been sent to the labor and re-education camps, or are otherwise kept from carrying out their ministry by the Chinese government. They indicated their grave concern about those imprisoned and restricted religious and clergy on the List and appealed to your government for their immediate release so that they could go back to their pastoral duty without any interference from the government.

We, the Cardinal Kung Foundation, representing thousands of Roman Catholics in the United States and Europe, are joining AsiaNews, Bishop Ricard, Mr. Mauro and many others, not only for the immediate release of these imprisoned religious (on the List), for the immediate relaxation of your very severe surveillance and house arrest of religious (also on the List), and for your release of all laity, religious, priests, and bishops who are nowhere listed, but also for the total and unconditional exoneration of all criminal charges against any of these religious (on or off the List) and against thousands of others as explained below.

Since 1949 when your government took over China, literally tens of thousands of Roman Catholic bishops, priests, and their faithful were imprisoned for 5, 10, 20, 30, or even 40 years. Many of them, such as Bishop Fan Xueyan of Baoding, Fathers Beda Zhang BaiDa and Chu ShuThe of Shanghai, and Bishop Guo Kexian of Shandong died in jail. Many of them, such as those on the List, are still in jail. Many of them were released after a very long period in jail. Some of those released are still living in China or in other parts of the world. Some, such as Cardinal Ignatius Kung Pin-Mei of Shanghai, and Archbishop Dominic Tan Yee-Ming of Canton (24 years in jail without a trial), have since died. It does not matter to your government if they are dead or still living; they are still considered criminals because the "criminal" charges against them were never erased by the government. For example, Cardinal Kung, released and exiled after spending 32.5 years in solitary confinement and house arrest, is still considered a criminal by the Chinese government, even though he is now dead. There are thousands more like Cardinal Kung and Archbishop Tang. They are all loyal citizens of China and they love China.

Supporting but going beyond the goal of the AsiaNews campaign, the Cardinal Kung Foundation appeals to you that all these prisoners, both living and dead, be officially and posthumously exonerated of so called crimes of which the Chinese government falsely and unjustly accused them, some as long as five decades ago. In doing so, the reputation of these living and dead religious prisoners of conscience in China can be restored. Those who are still living can at least

once again enjoy equal treatment in the society. During the past decades, many political non-religious prisoners have been exonerated of their crimes by your government. We believe and urge your government to do the same for the religious prisoners referred to above. To do so, along with releasing all religious prisoners referred to above, will be a powerful testimony to the Chinese government's respect for and adherence to human rights and liberty. Thank you.

Yours truly,

/s/ (Original signed by Joseph Kung)

Joseph Kung

President
Cardinal Kung Foundation



AsiaNews List of Bishops and Priests in Prison Isolation or Labor Camps Follows.

5 March, 2005
CHINA - VATICAN

List of bishops and priests in prison, isolation or labour camps

Rome (AsiaNews) – Here is a list of bishops held in prison or prevented from exercising their ministry, and priests who were arrested and sentenced to forced labour. AsiaNews and other Christian websites are launching a campaign for their liberation.

The list, which is updated to March 1, 2005, is very likely incomplete.

Bishops arrested without leaving any trace.

Like Latin American 'desaparecidos' these bishops were arrested by the police without any charges brought against them. Any trace of them has been lost since the day of their arrest.

1. Mgr James Su Zhimin (diocese of Baoding, Hebei), 72, was arrested in 1996. Since then no one has heard anything about him except once when he was seen in a Baoding hospital under police escort receiving medical treatment for a heart condition and eye ailment. He was never seen again.
2. Mgr Francis An Shuxin (auxiliary bishop of the diocese of Baoding, Hebei), 54, was arrested in 1997. No one has heard from him since.
3. Mgr Han Dingxian (diocese of Yongnian/Handan, Hebei), 66, was arrested in December 1999. He previously spent a total of 20 years in prison. Since his detention he has been in isolation, unable to see anyone, whether a parishioner or a relative.

4. Mgr Cosma Shi Enxiang (diocese of Yixian, Hebei), 83, was arrested on April 13, 2001. Mgr Shi was ordained bishop in 1982. Previously he had spent 30 years in prison. The last time he was arrested was in December 1990. He was later released in 1993. Thereafter he was under forced isolation.
5. Mgr Philip Zhao Zhendong, (diocese of Xuanhua, Hebei), 84, was arrested in late December 2004.
6. Fr Paul Huo Junlong, administrator of the diocese of Baoding, about 50, was ordained in 1987. Arrested in August 2004, he has been detained in an undisclosed location without trial or charges brought against him. With him were arrested two fellow priests who were ordained at the same time: Fr Zhang Zhenquan and Fr Ma Wuyong (see below).

Bishops prevented from exercising their ministry.

Dozens of unofficial bishops are detained for certain periods of time only to be returned to their church, where they however remain under surveillance and are prevented from exercising their ministry.

Many of them are old and sick and not allowed to receive visits from priests, nuns or seminarians. Contacts with the outside are also closely scrutinised.

Among the younger bishops who are prevented from exercising their ministry there are:

- 1) Li Side, 78, unofficial bishop of Tianjin, is interned and cannot perform his pastoral duties. He was previously arrested in December 1989 and released in June 1991.
- 2) Mgr Julius Jia Zhiguo (diocese of Zhengding, Hebei), 68, has been arrested and released in quick succession several times. This year he has already been arrested twice. The Holy See has publicly appealed for his liberation on more than one occasion. Every month he undergoes forced indoctrination about government policies for weeks on end.
- 3) Mgr Zhang Weizhu (diocese of Xinxiang, Henan), 45, is an active pastor and the founder of two religious orders. He is prevented from visiting his diocese and is kept under surveillance in Hebei province.

Many underground bishops, who were harshly persecuted in the past, are now old. And yet they are still subjected to surveillance, isolation, and brainwashing. Others are so sick that they cannot move.

- 4) Mgr Bartholomew Cengti, 74, is bishop of Hanzhong (Shaanxi), Since December 2001 he has been under house arrest. He lives in isolation with his priests unable to meet him. He is ill and cannot perform his pastoral work.
- 5) Mgr Li Hongye (diocese of Luoyang, Henan), 83, was arrested in 1997. He is also ill.
- 6) Mgr Liu Guandong (diocese of Yixian, Hebei), 84, is not free to move. He cannot exercise his ministry anymore because of illness.

7) Mgr Joseph Fan Zhongliang (diocese of Shanghai), 85, is ill. He is always under surveillance but has some freedom.

8) Mgr Han Jingtao (diocese of Sipin, Jilin), 82, is under police surveillance despite being ill and cannot work in public.

9) Mgr John Yang Shudao (diocese of Fuzhou, Fujian), 84, is archbishop. Altogether he has spent 30 years in prison. He was arrested in 1955 for refusing to join the Patriotic Association. Released in 1981 after 26 years, he was rearrested in 1988 and spent another three years behind bars. He is regularly arrested and under surveillance. He, too, is very ill.

10) Mgr Thomas Zeng Jingmu (diocese of Yujiang, Jiangxi) is 83.

11) Mgr Xie Shiguang (diocese of Mingdong, Fujian), 86, was arrested in October 1999. In taking him into custody the police told him that he was being invited to a talk with government representatives. He was brought to an undisclosed location. He had always refused to register his underground church in Mindong with the authorities. He was released soon thereafter but has remained under surveillance.

12) Mgr James Lin Xili (diocese of Wenzhou, Zhejiang), 84, was arrested in September 1999 and freed in 2002. He is still under surveillance and is not free. Catholics from his diocese say that his arrest and that of several priests was due to a campaign launched by the local Patriotic Association to force the bishop and his clergy to join the association. Usually, such campaigns include violence and blackmail. In the bishop's diocese, the unofficial church is permanently under threat, its personnel risking arrest and its property, destruction. In April 1999 three churches were blown up in Wenzhou; in mid-December 1999, another two received the same treatment. In the village of Linjiayuan the local church was built three times and destroyed three times, the last time in October 2001.

13) Shi Hongzhen, 75, is coadjutor bishop of Tianjin. This year he celebrates 50 years since his priestly ordination. He cannot work, especially since he is ill, but he is not interned.

Priests who were arrested or sentenced, or both.

A) Zhang Zhenquan and Ma Wuyong (diocese of Baoding, Hebei) were arrested in July-August 2004 during a ceremony celebrating the anniversary of their ordination along with Fr Huo Junlong, administrator of the diocese of Baoding.

B) Fr Li Wenfeng, Fr Liu Heng, and Fr Dou Shengxia (diocese of Shijiazhuang, Hebei) were arrested on October 20, 2003, with some seminarians, attending a spiritual retreat in Gaocheng.

C) Fr Chi Huitian (diocese of Baoding, Hebei) was arrested on August 9, 2003, whilst celebrating mass at a youth summer catechism camp.

D) Fr Kang Fuliang, Chen Guozhen, Pang Guangzhao, Yin Ruose, and Li Shujun (diocese of Baoding, Hebei) were arrested on July 1, 2003, because they were visiting Fr Lu Genjun, who had just been released after spending three years in a labour camp for 'evangelisation'.

E) Fr Lu Xiaozhou (diocese of Wenzhou, Zhejiang) was arrested on June 16, 2003, as he was giving a dying person the last rites.

F) Fr Lin Daoming (diocese of Fuzhou, Fujian) was arrested on May 3, 2003, on a visit to his mother, who had just been released from prison where she had been sent for being the cook of an underground seminary in Ch'angle.

G) Fr Zheng Ruipin (diocese of Fuzhou, Fujian) was arrested on April 12, 2003, with 18 seminarians. The latter were all released but Father Zheng remains in prison at an undisclosed location.

H) Fr Pang Yongxing, Fr Ma Shunbao, and Fr Wang Limao (diocese of Baoding, Hebei) were arrested respectively in December 2001, and March 24 and March 31, 2002 (Palm and Easter Sunday). On July 7, 2003, all three were sentenced to forced labour.

I) Fr Li Jianbo (diocese of Baoding, Hebei) was arrested on April 19 2001 in Xilinhot (Inner Mongolia) and sentenced to a labour camp to be re-educated. He is said to be very ill.