

Church contributes to the Unity in China

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FATHER ALBERTO ROSSA, CMF

Catholicism helps strengthen national unity in China

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Argentine priest Alberto Rossa believes that Catholicism has contributed to promote the unity of China due to its moral values. The missionary also demystified the problems of the Catholic Church in the PRC and adds the example of the good will of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association toward Claretian Publications, a publishing house managed by him.

You were born in Argentina and for 27 years you did pas-

that members of its Church would be always attacking China's regulations.

Is it because of the concept that Western powers want to bring to China, and since Catholicism is really strong in the West, then China doesn't understand the real intentions of this religion?

Not really. One of the problems now is that the Catholic Church has no control of the opinions of the people in the Church. You can have a Bishop or a person in the United States saying something very strong against the Government of China and since they are Bishops, somehow they represent the Church. On the other hand, we have seen from the Vatican recent signs of building bridges with China.

O Clarim, the local newspaper of Macau in one of its November issues carried an interview of Fr. Alberto Rossa. Here are the excerpts:

A priest from Argentina, Fr. Alberto Rossa believes that the Catholicism has contributed to to promote national unity in China. Born in Argentina, Fr. Alberto has worked for 27 years in the the Philippines, before settling in Macau. During his service in the Philippines and now in Macau, he was instrumental in developing the Claretian Publications, a subsidiary of the Claret Publishing Group, with offices in Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Bangalore, Chennai, Manila, Barcelona, Madrid and in Macau.

Why Macau?

Fr. Alberto Rossa: Between 1920 and 1949, We had missionaries of our congregation in Anhui Province, in the People's Republic of China. They Were Expelled, like all other [Catholic missionaries due to the Cultural Revolution], but in our Congregation there was always the desire to do something for China. And as we where in estern part of the world [in the Philippines], near China, I became a volunteer for the mission in China. Later on, other misionaries arrived and now we are in Macau and Hong Kong.

O Clarim - Talk about the Claretian Publications?

Alberto- Claretian Publication in Macau is established under the aegis of the Pastoral Bible Foundation, registered in the Philippines. We publish the Bible in twelve languages. Several books are in traditional Chinese for Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan, while in mainland China we publish the Bible in simplified Chinese.

O Clarim- What is the Importance of this work?

Alberto - It's my basis to Work With teams from China and other parts of the world, Especially for the publication of the new translation of the Bible in Chinese. We Recently Launched the New Testament and other books for use of Seminarians or pastoral workers. Since we can not do direct missionary work in mainland China, we indirectly help in the formation of evangelizers.

O Clarim - There is some institutional bridge Between the publisher and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association?

Alberto - Publishing books is an open ministry Because it can not be hidden. In the 90s, while I was still in the Philippines, it was Necessary to ask for authorization if I wanted to do something Involving publications. I have simply asked for permission from the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and, to my surprise, were always generous. They saw the content we wanted to publish and said there was no problem. Since the regulations in PRC prevents us from making the distribution of books in China, we are cooperating with the the largest Catholic publishing house in the country, The Faith Press. Even they can not sell the books on the open market, but they are allowed to publish and distribute books to the six thousand parishes and associations in China

O Clarim - Catholicism've Helped the unity of China?

Alberto - Definitely! Catholics want to preserve the culture and accept people as they are. Even the government officials find that the moral values of the people are encouraged by the Catholic Church. Through our publications, we try to help as we can so that the values of the Gospel is spread throughout China.

O Clarim - But why are so many Difficulties in Establishing the relationship Between China and the Vatican?

Alberto - It's very complicated. There were times that were close. Recently, a Catholic writer [Shueng Chiaretto Kin Yan] presented a manuscript called "Sharing the Joy of the Gospel in China." The last part of the book deals precisely with the difficulties in the relationship between China and the Vatican. The author, himself a Chinese who Studied abroad, Proposes several possibilities.

O Clarim - Can you tell some of them very briefly?

AR - The relationship Primarily Should be based on trust, respect and not trying to invade! If not it will be very hard...

O Clarim - For example? ...

Alberto - Long ago, once in Beijing, I Asked why China is not open to dealing With The Vatican? And the answer I had was that, "how it was possible that the Vatican with one hand extended the olive branch [symbol of peace] and with The other allowed or tolerated those members of the Church always attack the regulations China.

O Clarim - Will it be due to the concept that the Western powers want to control China? Catholicism is really strong in the West, and China is skeptical of the true intentions of the Church?

Alberto - Not really. One of the problems now Is That the Catholic Church has no control over the opinions of the people of the Church. There may be a bishop or a person in the United States to say something very strong against the government of China. On the other hand, We have seen recent signs that the Vatican aims to bridge the gap With China.

O Clarim - There is little knowledge of China in the West ...

Alberto- I think people who are now in the Vatican with Pope Francis know what is happening in China and are working on it. This is just my opinion ...

O Clarim - Do you personally know the Pope Francis?

Alberto - I do not know, but I can say one thing: The Claret Publishing Group owns the rights of the books Pope Francis wrote while he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires. These Books Have been translated into 28 languages. In Macau, the Claretian Publications has Published some of these works in English and Traditional and Simplified Chinese.

O Clarim - What is the latest title from the Publications?

Alberto - It was not long ago that we published the title "Open Mind, Faithful Heart" by Jorge Mario Bergoglio, now Pope Francis in Traditional and Simplified Chinese.

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