

Atheists running the Church? Spare us



These last few days Catholic faithful inside and outside China have noted with sadness and indignation words pronounced by Mr Liu Bainian, Rev Guo Jincai, Mgr Fang Xingyao and Rev Yang Yu, which are hardly distinguishable from being schismatic. But today's statement by the Religious Affairs Bureau has reached the extreme of absurdity.

We may understand if the Government come out to defend their puppets by saying that they are politically correct, or to praise their courage in resisting foreign pressure; but now they come out to praise their "ardent Catholic faith", and to say that the ordinations without papal mandate are necessary for "the normal running of the Church and for the needs of pastoral and evangelising activity". This is absolutely preposterous and ridiculous! As recently some scholars have pointed out, the Government now is "running" the Catholic Church.

Are they blind? Have they not had chance to see how the Catholic Church works in the rest of the world? Does the special situation of China force the Government to run a Church which simply can no more be recognisable as Catholic? They are making themselves the laughing stock of the world!

Can our leaders take out some time from their engagement in power struggle and give attention to this "tiny community" of Catholics? Why our brother and sister should not be allowed to live peacefully their normal life of faith? Is it not that a right given them by the Constitution?

They call the excommunication by the Holy See in the fifties "cause" and the illegitimate ordination of bishops "effect", they are shamelessly twisting the reality.

From the recent three illegitimate ordinations and the 8th Assembly, everybody could understand that the Religious Affairs Bureau and the Patriotic Association have decided to lead the open Church to go unrepentant their way of an independent church and to unilaterally elect and ordain their bishops. Then let them find someone with enough weight like Martin Luther and Henry VIII, to give a status to their

new Church, but they have no right to usurp the name of "Catholic Church".

With violence they limited personnel freedoms, they even offended the dignity of conscience, they completely disregarded the authority and the kindness of our Holy Father, and still they dare to say that they have sincere will of dialogue, that is the biggest lie in the world! Only the self interests and the cowardice of the nations prevent them from saying a fair word of disapproval.

The saying goes: "the eyes of the people are illumined". In Leshan some people may admire the administrative efficiency of Rev. Lei Shiyin, but they must know that he is unfit to be a bishop; in Shantou there may be people supporting the ambitions of Fr. Huang Bingzhang; but the generality of the Catholic faithful in China will reject these "opportunists", and will always be on the side of the Pope.

Nobody knows how long the severe winter will last, but our faithful are not afraid, or they will overcome their fear with faith and prayer, which will give them strength to imitate the canonized martyrs and innumerable living heroes of faith, to give courageous testimony to our Risen Saviour.

Dear faithful brother and sister, we salute you!

From an old brother who is almost ashamed of living in freedom,

Cardinal Zen

Cardinal Joseph Zen Zekiun, SDB, - Asia News