



**E-BULLETIN #254**

**08-Jan-17**

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*"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5, 16)*

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**item 473**

### **Taiwan 'can be the bridge'**

**"The Taiwanese church can also serve as a link between underground and patriotic churches in China"**  
**- Fr Jeroom Heyndrickx**

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The Catholic church in Taiwan can play a bridging role between the Vatican and Beijing as well as between the government-sanctioned and the underground church communities in China, agreed speakers at a seminar.

Belgian Fr Jeroom Heyndrickx, a sinologist who makes frequent visits to China and Taiwan was one of three speakers at the Taipei seminar hosted by the Chinese Christian Spirit Community on Dec. 2, said he is optimistic on China-Vatican relations.

Fr Heyndrickx said he saw that mainland China has become a "person of dialogue" since the government's reform and opening policy in late 1970s while the Vatican is a "church of dialogue."

"The Taiwan church should serve as a bridge between the underground church and the patriotic church," said Fr Heyndrickx who is the founding director of the Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation at Leuven Catholic University in Belgium.

"With Fu Jen Catholic University, including the theology school, accepting students from mainland China, it is the greatest gift that the church in Taiwan gives to the church in China," he said.

The idea of a "bridge church" was proposed by the late Cardinal Paul Shan Kuo-hsi to persuade the Vatican not to give up on Taiwan when diplomatic relations between the two parties faced crisis in 1999, said another speaker Ku Wei-ying, a retired professor on Catholic history.

"The former Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, said in 1999 that the Vatican was not severing ties with Taiwan," said Gu. "It was just moving the doorplate of the 'Nunciature of China' to where it was originally from," he said.

Ku implied the doorplate has no indication it refers to People's Republic of China or Republic of China, often known as Taiwan.

Ku anticipated that China and the Vatican might take a "gradual approach by first setting up a liaison office."



The third speaker at the seminar, Wang Yu-yuan, a former Taiwan ambassador to the Holy See, said that Taiwanese should be paying attention to the Vatican's efforts to broker a deal with Beijing over bishop appointments in mainland China.

"Pope Francis has repeatedly expressed goodwill to the Beijing authorities and his wish is to establish normalized relations," said Wang.

"It shows relations between the two parties have never been better as now," he said.

Media attention in Taiwan over the issue is currently tempered with anxiety given that the Vatican is the only European state that Taiwan maintains diplomatic relationships with.

While negotiations are said to be about bishop appointments, there are concerns in Taiwan that this might ultimately lead to changes in Taiwan-Vatican diplomatic relations.

Wang thinks that since the China-Vatican working group was formed only this year, negotiations will still take some time.

Giving a comparison, Wang said the Holy See has conducted nearly 10 years of progress with Vietnam's communist regime since initial contact began in 2007.

There are an estimated 300,000 Catholics among Taiwan's 23 million people.

item 474

## Christmas in Taiwan

Dear friends,

Greetings and best wishes from Fr Solomon sac. I wish you the compliments of the season!

Herewith I would like to share with you some pictures of our Christmas celebration, together with a few snippets of information on the development of our apostolate in Taiwan.



### Fr Antony John sac

Our Lady of Immaculate Conception - Fu Xing parish, Taichung.

They had a nice Christmas celebration. Since it is a big parish with lots of faithful, the celebrations were indeed very lively. They had a very meaningful carols service and liturgy.



### Fr Antony Fernandez sac

Assistant parish priest

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Taichung.

He too had a nice Christmas celebration. Besides catering for Taiwanese people that parish also serves the spiritual needs of lots of Pilipino faithful.



### Fr Solomon Raj Titus sac

Our Lady of Rosary, Douliu

We also had a very meaningful celebration – shared with local physically and mentally challenged people, as well as visiting the elderly in an aged care home and praying for them.



**Fr Milton Pathrose sac**

Presently doing Chinese studies in Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei.

Pictured here [at left] with fellow students around a crib - he came to celebrate Christmas together with our community in Taichung.



Once again I wish you a merry Christmas.

With love and prayers,

**Solomon Raj Titus sac [BA] – Douliu – TAIWAN**  
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**sac asia oceania e-bulletin**

**you commented...**

**on #253**

Thank you Fr Royichen Joseph for your contribution to last weeks E Bulletin. To live the charism fully we are called to use all means and, only when we have to, to use words. Art in so many forms provides that opportunity of "seeing God in all things".

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