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

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item 262

### three new Bishops for Hong Kong



Having been in Hong Kong for two years now, as chaplain to the French speaking community, I would like to share with you a recent and important event for the Catholic church in China and, at the same time, present some of its more characteristic aspects.

On the last Saturday of August, three new bishops were ordained in the crowded cathedral of *Our Lady of The Immaculate Conception* in Hong Kong. The celebration was lead by Cardinal **John Hon Tong**, ordinary of the diocese, in the presence of the former bishop **Joseph Zen Ze-kien**, known for his position in the battle for freedom, and many other bishops who came from Rome, Taiwan, Sth Korea, Japan, USA and even from Germany – as the diocese of Essen is twinned with Hong Kong.

The last ordination took place nearly twenty years ago (1996) on the eve of the handing back of what was then a British colony. It had been British for one hundred years but then became part of the People's Republic of China, with however special status granted across a fifty year transition period. At that time two bishops had been ordained, Zen and Hon Tong. In fact it is a sort of tradition in the Hong Kong church to have more than one episcopal ordination at a time – surely planned by the Vatican to provide the diocese with bishops for a long time.

**Michael Yeung Ming-cheung**, a diocesan priest, was born in Shanghai in 1945. Both the others were born in Hong Kong - **Stephen Lee Bun-sang** (Opus Dei prelature) in 1956 and **Joseph Ha Chi-shing**, a Franciscan, in 1959.

I personally know Michael Yeung because we live in the same diocesan centre behind the cathedral and we share the same table for meals. He was General Vicar and in charge of Caritas, the most important social institution of the Catholic church in Hong Kong. It has become an icon of christian love taking care of every need: handicapped children, the elderly, homeless, refugees and so on. Indeed the Church here is very strong in that way and remains as a very important counterpart not only in the social work but also in the educational field and wealth as well.



What demonstrates the high vitality of the church is the number of baptisms. Around four thousand adults are baptized each year. Cardinal Tong likes to joke about it saying that, in total, the number of adult baptisms in his diocese is as many as in the whole French Catholic church! That really means that a new parish should be created every year but unfortunately it is not possible. So with 50 parishes (10% of the population are christian – half of them Catholic – out of more than 7 million inhabitants ) and 300 priests, as well as many religious communities, the Catholics of Hong Kong are assured that their spiritual life is looked after! Alas, as in many other parts of the world, there are currently few vocations to priesthood. Support from other countries is always expected, perhaps now much more than ever – just as signs of God's love are expected everywhere, and in China as well!

Just after the ordination rite, as the doors of the cathedral flung open, I recognized the melody and the words of the French song which filled the cathedral, pouring out the beautiful message: "PEACE, YES PEACE IS A GIFT OF JESUS"

**Remigiusz [Remy] Kurowski sac [FR] – Hong Kong – CHINA**  
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item 263

## **12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of foundation**

These few lines are penned in loving gratitude to God for the completion of 12 years of our foundation – the **Cenacle Sisters of the Sacred Heart** [cssh]. Over those years the Lord has been carrying us on eagle's wings.

As we thank Him for his accompaniment we want to share the steady progress and growth of our congregation. We look back with joy and gratitude at the wonderful way we have been guided – the pleasant and unpleasant memories, the successes and failures, joys and sorrows. We thank and praise Him for all that He has done, for calling us in spite of our unworthiness, and for keeping us faithful.

**Fr Tomy Churathil sac**, our founder, has urged us to become lost in contemplation of God's thought, reassuring us that growth in spirituality will take place only when we focus on Jesus, on God, on the church's teachings. We need to constantly find Him and allow Him to reveal Himself to us. We need to have

Jesus' attitudes, of humility and obedience, in order to grow into the knowledge and wisdom of God. Those virtues will help us to remain in the Cenacle with meaning and grace.

I sincerely thank our beloved founders Fr Tomy sac, Mother Chandrika and each Cenacle sister who has contributed to us reaching this important milestone, as well as the Pallottine society for its own generous contribution to our growth.



By God's grace we now number 32 professed sisters in 8 communities across India. Our activities include our retreat centre – where we organise 40 day Cenacle Experience retreats – and formation house, and our prayer ministry through adoration and intercession. We serve in schools, through family visits, with youth, in prison ministry, in catechesis. In addition to the above numbers we have been blessed with 8 novices, 5 postulants, 20 candidates. However this moment calls for even more ardent prayer that God might send yet more laborers into the harvest.

The inspiration of St Vincent has remained constant over the years, in our love for the church, our dedication, our love for the priests and the religious, as well as our zeal and enthusiasm to win souls. To fulfill his vision we try to take all our difficulties, problems and setbacks in our stride. With God's help and grace, we can be conquerors through him who has called us to follow him.



We acknowledge too **Fr Jacob Nampudakam sac**, always standing by to support and encourage us. A highlight has been his promotion of the education of sisters who attend the annual spirituality courses in Rome. He visited us last July bringing with him a first grade relic of St Vincent Pallotti for our Cenacle chapel. On that occasion he shared his view of cenacle spirituality, reminding us that it was the place of Jesus' last supper, and too where Mary prayed along with the scattered, frightened disciples. So our Cenacles should likewise be places of prayer and contemplation, where people seek to live with a oneness of mind and heart, houses where the action of the Holy Spirit can transform and empower us for our mission.

He stressed that no place will become a spiritual centre unless there is prayer. Prayer is like a spring of water, bringing life. He also spoke much about Pope Francis' *The Joy of the Gospel*, gifting a copy to each of us.

Our thanks to **Sr Sara Carafania csac** and her Porta Maggiore community for accommodating our sisters who travel to Rome for study. We are extremely happy whenever she comes to India, it helps us feel really part of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate.

We are ordinary people with an ordinary background gathered together in the Cenacle to love and serve the Lord with extraordinary love taught by our beloved founders **Mother Chandrika cssh** and Fr Tomy sac.



We pray that God continues to give us strength and courage to live faithfully in His service, helping us to be authentic witnesses of His merciful love. May these days of thanksgiving spur us on to rededicate ourselves and cherish our vocation as CSSH. We pray that our apostolic life bears abundant fruit and that we grow as best as we can, as God wants us to grow.

“The love of God and Jesus should impel us to do everything.” [St Vincent Pallotti]

**Laura Maria cssh – Bilaspur – INDIA**  
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