agenzia fides
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
http://www.fides.org
Fondata nel 1927

Missionary Prayer Intention - MISSIONARY INTENTION - "That the Lord may help the Church in China persevere in fidelity to the Gospel and grow in unity" - Commentary on the Missionary Intention for May 2011

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) – According to estimates, the number of Catholics in China is little more than 1% of the population. Given that this is the most populous country in the world, even though they are a small percentage, the number of Chinese Catholics is significant. According to historic accounts, the saving truth of the Gospel arrived relatively early in China. Already in the fifth and sixth centuries groups of monks from Syria were travelling throughout central Asia, bringing the word of the Lord. Still today there is a star preserved in the capital of Chang'an from the year 635, which marks that historical moment when "Luminous Religion" officially entered China.

In the speech Pope Benedict XVI made on November 8, 2008 to the new Ambassador of the Republic of China to the Holy See, the Pope said: "It is part of the Church's mission to share her 'expertise in humanity' with all people of good will in order to contribute to the well-being of the human family." While recognising that the people of Asia have an "innate spiritual insight" and a "moral wisdom" that facilitates inter-religious dialogue, the Pope did not forget to emphasise that "In China too the Church is called to be a witness of Christ, to look forward with hope, and – in proclaiming the Gospel – to measure up to the new challenges that the Chinese People must face." (Benedict XVI, Letter to the Bishops, priests, consecrated persons and lay faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China, May 27, 2007, n. 3).

In the vicinity of the Great Jubilee Year, 2000, Blessed John Paul II urged Catholics in China to inspire their lives by the "good news", that "the genuine living of the Gospel in your lives will be a shining witness borne to Christ in your surroundings. For this reason all of you, dear brothers and sisters, are called to proclaim the Gospel of salvation to the Chinese people of today with new vigour." (Message of John Paul II to the Catholic Church in China, December 8, 1999, No.5).

And we note the plight of the Church in China, which has long had to carry out its mission in the midst of persecution. We ask God for the gift of faith for the Church in China, taking care at the same time to implement all appropriate means to preserve the Gospel of Christ, without exception. We must increase our prayers that the Church in China finds its spiritual unity in the form of Peter, upon whom Christ chose to build the one Church. Pope Benedict XVI recalled that "the Pope, when he issues the apostolic mandate for the ordination of a Bishop, exercises his supreme spiritual authority: this authority and this intervention remain within the strictly religious sphere. It is not, therefore, a question of a political authority, unduly asserting itself in the internal affairs of a State and offending against its sovereignty." (Benedict XVI, Letter to the Bishops, priests, consecrated persons and lay faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China, May 27, 2007, No. 9).

An attitude of forgiveness and reconciliation will facilitate the desired unity for the Church in China. A huge heart is needed, to have a heart that is truly Catholic, to create a climate of communion, understanding and forgiveness that will facilitate unity. The Pope is "sure that the Spirit of Christ, just as he helped the communities to keep the faith alive in time of persecution, will today help all Catholics to grow in unity." (ibid. No.12).

Mary, after the Resurrection of her Son, united the early Church in prayer in expectation of the coming of the Spirit. Let us pray that we too, united with Her, that the Holy Spirit may bring unity and faith to the Church of God in China. (Agenzia Fides 29/4/2011)

I contenuti del sito sono pubblicati sotto Licenza Creative Common - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.it