



ASIA/HONG KONG - The diocese of Hong Kong rejoices over the beatification of Fr. Allegra, the Franciscan who brought the Word of God in Chinese among the Chinese

Hong Kong (Agenzia Fides) - "We must learn his great love for the Lord and his spirit of evangelization", this is how Cardinal John Tong, Bishop of the Diocese of Hong Kong, urged the faithful during the Mass of thanksgiving for the beatification of Fr Gabriele Allegra, OFM, who was beatified on September 29 in Acireale, Italy. According to the Kong Ko Bao (the Chinese version of the diocesan bulletin that gives ample space to the event), more than 800 faithful attended the Thanksgiving Mass presided by Cardinal Tong before he left for Rome to attend the Synod of Bishops, which was concelebrated by about fifty priests on October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. The diocese and the faithful are eagerly waiting to welcome the relics of the newly beatified on 26 January, the day of his liturgical memorial. The Franciscan, nuns and lay faithful who have had the honor to live or work with Fr. Allegra, shared their personal experience by presenting an even more alive image of this passionate missionary of the Word of God and the mission of evangelization with the Word of God, especially among the Chinese people.

In conjunction with the beatification, celebrated in his country of origin, in Italy, more than 350 believers of Hong Kong took part in a prayer vigil in the parish of St. Bonaventure on September 29, expressing heartfelt thanks and gratitude of Hong Kong to Fr. Allegra.

Mgr. Dominic Chan, diocesan Vicar, who presided over the prayer, encouraged the faithful to learn from Fr. Allegra "using his translation of the Bible to spread the Gospel."

Fr. Gabriele Allegra, was born on December 26, 1907 in St. Giovanni La Punta, in the province of Catania (Italy), he was ordained a Franciscan priest in 1930 and sent to the Chinese mission in 1931. Even before ordination, he already harbored the dream of translating the Word of God in the Chinese language, he fulfilled his dream in 1968, publishing the entire Bible in Chinese. In 1945 he founded the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Beijing, which is now in Hong Kong. In 1971 he also published a Biblical Dictionary in Chinese. He died in Hong Kong in 1976 and Cardinal J. B. Wu, then Bishop of Hong Kong, in 1984, opened the diocesan phase of the cause of beatification. In 1994, his heroic virtues were recognized and was proclaimed venerable. On 23 April 2002 the decree concerning a miracle attributed to his intercession was promulgated. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 17/10/2012)