

Thanks and Goodbye to Bishop Bianchi



Rev. Gilbert Baker, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao, says Grace before the dinner in honour of Bishop Bianchi.

Bishop Bianchi says thank you and goodbye to Hong Kong in a short but very moving reply to the toast.

Mr. Dominic Cheung, President of the Hong Kong Central Council for the Apostolate of the Laity, proposes the toast to Bishop Bianchi.

ABOUT fifteen hundred people—men and women, distinguished and quite ordinary, Christians and non-Christians—gathered at Oceania Restaurant, Ocean Terminal, on Monday, April 14, to thank Bishop Bianchi for all that he has done for the diocese and the Colony of Hong Kong, as a missionary since 1923 and as Bishop of Hong Kong from 1951 to 1968.

The roll of special guests was exceptionally brilliant yet it was obvious throughout that this was not to be thought of as a social occasion but as a personal gathering, despite its great size. All present had come to pay personal tribute to a well loved Bishop.

H.E. the Governor, Sir David Trench, was present and proposed the health of the Pope. The Commander of British Forces, Sir Basil Eugster, the Colonial Secretary, Sir Hugh Norman-Walker, the Comptroller, the Director of Education, Judge A. McMullan, Judge Simon Li, and many others represented government in all its branches.

Cardinal Samore had broken his journey to Rome to be present. The Apostolic Pronuncio to China, Archbishop Accogli, had come specially from Taipei, as had Bishop Tavares from Macao, Bishop Cheng from Tainan and Bishop Tou from Hsin-chu.

Rt. Rev. Gilbert Baker, Anglican Bishop of Hong Kong and Macau, Dean Foster, Dr. the Rev. James Pong and the Rev. Peter Wong represented the Christian Churches of Hong Kong.

Church and state paid notable tribute, but more impressive still was the great gathering of those who had come without any thought of representing anything but the affection and gratitude the Bishop Bianchi had aroused

in their hearts.

The dinner had been organized—very perfectly organized—by the Central Council for the Apostolate of the Laity, and every parish and Catholic association had its tables. Numbers were limited because the vast restaurant could hold no more. Bishop Bianchi started the function by proposing the health of H.M. the Queen. The Governor proposed the health of the Pope. Bishop Gilbert said grace.

The Toast

Mr. Dominic Cheung, President of the Lay Apostolate Council, proposed the toast as

follows:

"On behalf of the Catholic community of Hong Kong, I humbly thank you, our beloved Bishop, for your most kind teachings and service in this part of the world for more than 40 years, not only for looking after our spiritual needs, but also for your love and generosity towards our less fortunate citizens by establishing so many social centres, clinics, hospitals and for your great interest in all the youth activities, and on top

of all for the construction of numerous secondary and primary schools for the education of our young people of Hong Kong.

"My Lord, you shall be missed by all who have the honour of knowing you whether in person or only in name, and you will always be in our hearts and remembered in our prayers.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, may I invite you all to join me in drinking to the good health of our beloved Bishop Bianchi, and may our Almighty God bless him always."

Bishop Bianchi replied:

The Bishop's Reply

"On this occasion my only sentiments are those of a deep gratitude to God for having given me so many friends, who are gathered here to render me an honour which I will always remember, though I do not deserve it. I have already, in our Catholic press, expressed my heart-felt thanks to all who have shown me so much courtesy, friendship and loyalty, and I have said that after 46 years in this dear diocese, this dear city of ours, I cannot really say I am leaving you. Let me

say it once more: wherever I am, you will always be very close to me, and there will always be an old man's blessing for you. How can it be otherwise, since all my working years have been spent amongst you?

"This brings to my mind another thought. Having been your servant and minister for so long, I realise that next to God, I must render to you an account of my stewardship. So, where I have failed you, I ask your forgiveness. Where I have served as I should, you will thank God for it. I am but a frail instrument in His hands.

"The same good Lord who has sent me to you now calls me into retirement, so that a younger, more energetic man will take over the diocese.

"My dear friends and Catholic faithful, I am sure you share my happiness that Bishop Hsu carries on where I left off. He needs no recommendation, and I am sure you will support him as you have supported me.

It remains for me to say thank you. God bless you all."



H.E. Sir David Trench, Governor of Hong Kong, proposes the health of His Holiness the Pope.

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