

Cardinal-Designate John B. Wu's Address at the Press Conference on the Solemnity of the Visitation, 31st May, 1988

ON 29th May, 1988, the feast of the Holy Trinity, Pope John Paul II announced that he had created 25 new Cardinals, and I was one of them. Since then friends in the Media and the Press have been showing their interest, care and concern for this appointment. To you all I owe my sincere thanks. Today, I have arranged this meeting in haste, to give you a simple account of this matter. I greatly appreciate your having braved this hot weather to come here this afternoon.

The Pope himself chooses the Cardinals, to be his principal councillors and collaborators, and to assist him in ministering to the Universal Church. In the early days of the Church, the number of Cardinals was small. They formed only a council of Consultors to the Pope. To-day, this small group has evolved into a large College of Cardinals numbering 160. These Cardinals are chosen from all over the world — from the First World to the Third World. This emphasizes the universal and communal nature of the Catholic Church.

I believe that when the Pope decided to make a Chinese Bishop of Hong Kong a Cardinal, he wished to show his love and care for the Chinese people, the most numerous people in the world. He deeply appreciates the long history and the rich culture and civilization of China, and he also appreciates the importance of Hong Kong, which happens to be the largest Chinese Catholic diocese in the world. I am sure that you will all agree that in this transitional period and at this historic moment in Hong Kong this gesture of the Pope is truly inspiring and encouraging.

I was born and grew up in Guangdong Province and received my Primary and Secondary education there. I did my Philosophy and Theology courses in Hong Kong. After my Ordination I went to Rome for further studies. Later on I spent some time in pastoral service overseas, after which I was assigned to Taiwan where I spent 18 years in parish ministry. Thirteen years ago, in 1975, I was appointed Bishop of Hong Kong. I am deeply aware of my limitations and inadequacies, and I am conscious that so little has been accomplished — so much remains to be done. And now with this appointment to the Cardinalate by the Holy Father, to be one of his immediate councillors, participating in the ecclesiastical affairs of the Universal Church, I feel the heavy burden and foresee the long road ahead. But in the spirit of the Magnificat of Our Lady, trusting in God, Our Father, and relying on the Holy Spirit, I go forward with courage and confidence, with humility and serenity.

It is my earnest hope that all brothers and sisters in the Lord will be united with me in communion, and that all friends from far and near, will show their love and concern for me. With this hope and trust I shall be able to perform my duty, to bear my responsibility, and so fulfil my vision and mission; "to live the truth in love", to serve the community and to work for the wellbeing of all men. "The world is one family with China a member". This is the apex of the Chinese culture and it is also the Good News of Jesus Christ. Let us all work together to hasten the realization of this ideal.

(Translated from the Chinese text)



Cardinal-designate John B. Wu with (l-r) Father Edward Khong, Father Gabriel Lam, V.G., and Father J.B. Tsang, V.G., at the press conference.