

United Service in Charity

The Vatican Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church states: “In exercising his office of father and pastor, the Bishop should be with his people as one who serves, as a good shepherd who knows his sheep and whose sheep know him, as a true father who excels in his love and solicitude for all, to whose divinely conferred authority all readily submit. He should so unite and mould his flock into one family that all, conscious of their duties, may live and act in the communion of charity”.

Ideal-Communion in Charity

This is the ideal - one we must aim at. “To live and act in the communion of charity” is the true living-out of the Gospel message – “by this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another”.

Shared Responsibility

In my 10 months’ as Bishop, I have gradually come to realize how extensive is our commitment in human and in material terms to the people of Hong Kong. I share with you, 260,000 Catholics in Hong Kong, responsibilities in the working out of practical solutions to the practical problems confronting you and us.

As the priests are an extension of the bishop's priesthood so the laity are an extension of the apostolic work which, as bishop, I must lead and guide. The hope and future of the Diocese lies in the spirit of collaboration of the priests and laity.

Continuing Service to the Community

We are proud of the fact that the Catholic Church in Hong Kong, following the example of Christ our Leader and Guide "who came not to be served but to serve", has played its part in the promotion and implementation of a variety of services, religious, cultural, social and otherwise. I hope to be able to release a list of commitments in the near future.

At the end of April, I was happy to announce the appointment of our two Vicars General of the Diocese. In the near future I hope to appoint three Bishop's delegates - one for Hong Kong Island, one for Kowloon and one for the New Territories.

The re-organization of the Diocese Board of Consultors, Senate of Priests, and Personnel Commission is being carefully examined. The Pastoral Centre is being developed in order to integrate the efforts of the Pastoral Council and the Centre for Pastoral Studies.

The Hong Kong Diocese Social Communication Office has been established. On World Communications Day - 30 May - the Social Communications Commission will be set up and the names of the members will be announced.

The vast commitment of the Catholic Church to education in our Diocese is also being discussed and studied at great length. We intend soon to set up the new advisory body so that our commitment with regard to education can be better fulfilled.

For the past few months, the Justice and Peace Preparatory Committee have been working to prepare the aims of the future Justice and Peace Commission, and the means to achieve these aims.

Dedication to Service

Similar efforts are being made to render more meaningful our commitments in other areas.

Our programme is ambitious and will involve hard work. To be of real service means getting deeply involved. More often than not, it means that we find ourselves committed to do more than our resources permit. The Church therefore needs the dedication of all,

laity, religious and priests, in her efforts for human development.

Service and dedication mean sharing what one has and is with others - talents, time, material goods and all things else. St. Paul deems sharing with others what one has, a privilege. Twice the Acts of the Apostles speak of the disciples first as united in community and love and then as sharing in goods and property.

This way of dedication and service of the early Church is particularly appropriate for us today, since the Catholic Church in Hong Kong has been established as a Diocese in its own right for the past 30 years. As a result we may not look primarily for overseas support to sustain our many services - we have to rely more on our own local resources.

Foundation of Hope

We thank God for what has been achieved and we look forward with hope to the future, since Christian hope consists above all in a spirit of praise and thanksgiving for God's bounty. As St. Paul says "... hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us".

God bless you.

+ John Baptist Wu
The Bishop of Hong Kong