

Sino-British Joint Declaration

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 15 August, I issued a statement on the Catholic Church and the Future of Hong Kong. In that statement, I strove to describe religious freedom as we know it in Hong Kong and to emphasize what Christian faith in action entails.

On the Feast of the Birth of Mary, 8 September, I wrote a Pastoral Letter dealing with the future elections. I called upon all the faithful to register and to vote, thereby exercising their right and doing their duty.

A genuine and faithful Catholic is also a genuine and good citizen. As Catholics, we have the mission to preach Jesus Christ, and to proclaim his Gospel in love and service. As people of Hong Kong, we must work in solidarity with all for the good of Hong Kong and for the well-being of society.

A new stage in the history of our society began with the initialing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on the Future of Hong Kong. I have observed with deep concern

the different reactions to this document and the comments made on it. I pray the Lord of History to help us to be open, and to give us the wisdom and courage we shall need to face the future and to accept its many challenges.

Regarding the Joint Declaration and the drawing up of the Basic Laws of Hong Kong, I urge all of you to study the Declaration carefully and to reflect on the issues it raises. Every parish community, association and institution is advised to study it and discuss it. Your opinions and recommendations can be sent to the appropriate bodies, and to the Hong Kong Catholic Social Communications Office also so that the Diocese may have them for future reference and possible action.

The official representatives of China and Great Britain held 22 searching sessions spread over almost two years before initialing the Joint Declaration. They worked hard at this task, and many others have since given generously of their opinions. All of them have my admiration and appreciation, and I ask God's blessing on them for their service and their dedication.

I ask my brothers and sisters in Christ to face this change in history with the eyes of faith, taking up

courageously their sacred mission as Christians, and accepting their historical responsibility as people of Hong Kong. Let us join all the people of Hong Kong in solidarity and co-operation to work for integral and total development of the human person. Let us strive in unity to make Hong Kong free, just, peaceful, harmonious and altogether a better and more human place in which to live.

God Bless you all!

+ John Baptist Wu
The Bishop of Hong Kong
Feast of St. Luke Evangelist
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