

## Visit China

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mt. 20:28)

At this time last year, the participants of the Priests Renewal Seminars addressed a letter to all of you in which they expressed their determination to work towards building our local Church to full maturity in faith, to make it indigenous, and to put it at the service of the others, so that we may face future changes with a positive attitude, relying on God, the Lord of history, ever present in our midst.

I hold such a task to be of vital importance and I am in total and complete accord with this determination. On Palm Sunday I formally announced in a pastoral letter to you that the Diocesan Renewal Movement would begin with the solemn renewal of baptismal vows at the Easter Vigil Service. I also encouraged you to pray and to read the scriptures daily for personal renewal.

At about the same time, we learned that Pope John Paul, on 28 February, had addressed the Catholics of Taiwan and all overseas Chinese Catholics, and urged them to assume the task of being a bridge Church for our mainland compatriots so that Jesus may be honoured in a more visible way through our culture. We are encouraged and honoured by being entrusted with this role.

On 15 August last, the Solemnity of the Assumption, I issued a public statement on the question of Hong Kong. In it I spoke in the light of faith and in the spirit of the Gospel, elaborating on our identity as Chinese, as Hong Kong residents, and as Catholics. I pointed to the right to religious freedom and the free exercise of that right, which is now enjoyed by all people in Hong Kong, and spoke of how under God's love we are called to continue Christ's mission of proclaiming the Gospel through loving service to all people and of striving to make Hong Kong a better and more humane place in which to live. This statement was also presented to the Government of China, through the local branch of the Xinhua News Agency.

At the beginning of January, I received an official and personal invitation from the Government of China, through the Hong Kong Xinhua News Agency, to visit mainland China. The purpose of the visit is to promote closer links and better understanding. After much prayer, reflection and consultation, I have decided to accept the invitation, and on the 25 of this month, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, I shall leave Hong Kong for a trip of one week.

Last week more than 80 of our priests gathered once again in Cheung Chau for the second Diocesan Renewal Seminar. Once again they affirmed the serving mission of a "servant Church" and their commitment to taking further steps to foster a closer unity within the Church and a sincere dialogue with the world outside.

Looking back over the past year at the smooth

progress of the Diocesan Renewal Movement, I can only thank God with a full heart for many blessings and you, my brothers and sisters, for your constant support. My hope is that you will continue to cooperate in bringing to full realization this most important work, and I ask your special prayers for my trip to China. I will take the opportunity of making a pilgrimage to Our Lady's basilica and the graves of Matteo Ricci and Xu Guang-Gi to show them our devotion and respect. May God, through Jesus Christ, do in us what pleases Him. To Him be glory for ever and ever! Amen. (Hb. 13:21) 9 March 1985, at Priests Renewal Seminar

**+ John Baptist Wu**

**The Bishop of Hong Kong**