

Mgr. Peter Lei Appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Hong Kong



Mgr. Peter Lei

POPE Paul VI has nominated Mgr. Peter Lei, Vicar General of the diocese of Hong Kong, to the post of Auxiliary Bishop to Bishop Francis Hsu of Hong Kong.

Mgr. Lei will be consecrated bishop on Wednesday, September 8. At Mgr. Lei's request, Bishop Hsu will be consecrator and Bishop Bianchi, retired Bishop of Hong Kong, and Bishop Tavares of Macao have been invited to act as co-consecrators.

Mgr. Lei was born at Nam-hoi, Kwongtung province, on March 29, 1922. He entered the seminary of the Hong Kong diocese in 1939. He did his philosophical and theological studies in the Regional Seminary, Aberdeen, Hong Kong, and was ordained priest in 1952.

He taught in the Minor Seminary, Saikung, N.T. from 1952 to 1955. From 1955 to 1957 he was Assistant Parish Priest at Mount Carmel Church, Wanchai. In 1957 he became Parish Priest of the Cathedral. He went to St. Peter's, Aberdeen, as Parish Priest in 1967.

In 1969 he was made Vicar General of the diocese, returning at the same time to the Cathedral as Parish Priest.

On July 2 this year, he was appointed Rector of Holy Spirit Seminary, retaining his post as Vicar General.

An Auxiliary is a bishop appointed by the Holy See to assist a residential bishop who finds his work beyond his own unaided powers. Monsignor Lei is the second Auxiliary Bishop appointed to Hong Kong. Bishop Hsu was Auxiliary to Bishop Bianchi of Hong Kong from 1967 till Bishop Bianchi's retirement and his own nomination to the See of Hong Kong in 1969.

The fact that the Holy See has appointed two Chinese bishops to Hong Kong within four years is clear indication of the Pope's keen desire to indigenize local Churches and his high regard for the fast-developing diocese of Hong Kong.

AUXILIARY BISHOP

THE diocese of Hong Kong will give a warm welcome to the appointment of Mgr. Peter Lei as Auxiliary Bishop.

There is no need to welcome Mgr. Lei as a person. Parochial work in the Wanchai, Aberdeen and Cathedral parishes made him known to a large part of the diocese, and as Vicar General he has attended meetings and various other functions all over Hong Kong, in churches and elsewhere. Perhaps half of the members of the diocese will greet the appointment as that of someone they know personally or have at least seen at close quarters. A stranger would have to be welcomed. Mgr. Lei will be received as one of ourselves.

The need for an auxiliary has long been obvious to all who have considered the point. It is not merely that Hong Kong now has about a quarter of a million Catholics. A constantly expanding diocese imposes a far heavier administrative burden than a static diocese of the same size, and the diocese of Hong Kong has been constantly expanding, not only in numbers but also in institutions and activities of all kinds, ever since the war.

More important still perhaps is the happy Hong Kong tradition of inviting the Bishop to every major function and meeting. A visit from the Bishop is not a solemn, awe-inspiring and rare event here; it is a familiar visit from the father of the diocese to the family that has been entrusted to him. This helps enormously to make the members of the diocese conscious of unity with the Bishop and with one another. For the diocese, this is pure gain. For the Bishop, it means endless work.

Now, Mgr. Lei will be able to share this as well as many other episcopal tasks. It will lighten the burden on Bishop Hsu. It is not likely that it will halve the burden. Anyone who knows the Catholics of Hong Kong and knows Mgr. Lei can foresee that one result of the appointment of an Auxiliary Bishop will be a multiplication of invitations.

Episcopal ordination imposes a burden of life-long responsibility. It is not a matter for casual congratulation but for prayerful good wishes. Mgr. Lei has our good wishes and our prayers.