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Cindy Yik-yi Chu: *The Catholic Church in China: 1978 to the Present*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; pp. xi + 175.

Christianity is the fastest growing religion in communist China. However, the vast majority of academic literature published in the last few decades has tended to focus on the dynamics of Protestant Christianity, rather than Catholic, Orthodox, or other Christian groups. The 2013 death of the controversial Aloysius Jin Luxian, the Bishop of the Catholic diocese of Shanghai, and continued difficulties in Sino-Vatican relations makes well-researched studies on Chinese Catholicism's recent history even more appealing. It is within this needed space that the volume under review hopes to fill.

Cindy Chu's book is a history of the Catholic Church in China since the country's reopening in 1978. The book covers three decades and evaluates this history along four levels: diplomatic, political, societal, and individual (pg. 2). Each of the decades is discussed within two chapters respectively, resulting in a total of six main chapters. For each pair of chapters, the first focuses on diplomatic and political developments whereas the second focuses on societal and individual developments.

Chapters two and three discuss the 1980s, when public religious activity was restored. Catholic churches were allowed to practice publicly only under the auspices of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, "a *political* organization supervising their activities" (p. 22, emphasis in the original). This gave rise to a bifurcation of local Catholic congregations where some were government-recognised "open" churches, while others were "underground" churches that remained outside of the government-approved structures and loyal to the pope. Addressing this development, Pope John Paul II asserted that it was possible for Catholic churches to have a double loyalty that was "truly Christian and authentically Chinese" (p. 24); however, government-approved bishops responded saying that the pope's message was antagonistic rather than fostering constructive dialog. Although Sino-Vatican relations did not improve much in that decade, the open church had exchanges with overseas Catholic delegations, which facilitated the first exposure to the changes brought upon by Vatican II.

Chapters four and five describe the developments of similar themes in the 1990s. Chu reports that in 1989, the government issued Document No. 3 to "suppress the underground church and to isolate the underground leaders" (p. 62). However, the 1990s still witnessed a growing number of new priests, nuns and catechists. In 1992, priests of the open churches in Fujian were first to adopt a vernacular Mass for their people. As other dioceses followed suit, this led to better communication with clergy in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan who helped train their mainland colleagues in the Chinese-language liturgy. In October 1996, Pope John Paul II appointed to the Hong Kong diocese Father Joseph Zen Zi-kiun as coadjutor bishop and Father John Tong Hon as auxiliary bishop. Catholic leaders from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, as well as the Catholic Patriotic Association showed support for these appointments as it was understood that they would encourage better engagement with the mainland.

Chapters six and seven move into the first decade of the twenty-first century. Pope John Paul II inaugurated the new millennium by conferring sainthood on 120 Chinese martyrs on October 1, 2000. However, this date was a huge oversight on the side of Vatican officials since the canonisation occurred on China's National Day – the holiday that celebrates the communist victory over the nationalists and the founding of the People's Republic of China. The Chinese government openly denounced the canonisation saying the 120 were not "saints" but "sinners" – many of whom violated Chinese laws during the Boxer Uprising (1900) and were protected by Western imperialists. Chu explains, "The Vatican considered the event a solely religious issue that did not have any political implications. Nevertheless, this was not how the Beijing government interpreted it" (p. 88). Despite a troublesome start to the new millennium, Sino-Vatican relations shifted quite rapidly in 2007 as Pope Benedict XVI publicly approved the ordination of an open bishop and issued a letter calling for respectful and constructive dialogue – gestures that were well received. The years following have continued to be a mixed bag for Sino-Vatican relations.

Any monograph discussing religion in contemporary China must be diligent in its representation of all relevant opinions. Importantly, the religious freedom offered by government policies mandate that religious organisations inside of China must be completely autonomous from entities outside. Whether the topic is religion, human rights, or disputed islands in the East China Sea, the Chinese leadership has argued for the nation's right to self-determination – a notion initially articulated by Woodrow Wilson (1918) and underscored by the United Nations (1960).

Chu's study centres on a conflict between a Catholic theological understanding of papal authority and a Chinese political understanding of self-determination, which argues for autonomy from foreign polities like the Vatican city-state. In describing this complex state of affairs, the work could be more nuanced. In one instance, the book gives the impression that the government-issued Document No. 3 was produced in response to the military clash in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 (p. 62). However, the document was released in February 1989 – *prior* to the democracy protests. Additionally, a fuller picture could have been portrayed if the book had shown how the government issued Document No. 3 largely in response to the Vatican issuing an eight-point directive (September 1988) detailing the ways Catholics are to engage China, asserting the doctrine of papal supremacy and challenging the legitimacy of the Catholic Patriotic Association. In other instances, the book underscores that the three government-sanctioned Catholic organisations in China are political groups (pp. 12, 23, 43, 61, 116). But are they not also religious entities? The introduction states that, in the 1950s, the communist leaders established the Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement (p. 3) and the Catholic Patriotic Association (p. 4). Yet, a fair amount of scholarship from Philip L. Wickeri, Beatrice Leung, Anthony S. K. Lam, John Tong and others have demonstrated a much more tangled situation with Christian leaders entering into discussions with Premier Zhou Enlai to create these new entities. It must be remembered that when a Chinese Catholic makes a conscious choice about papal authority, this is a decision that is both political and theological.

All who are interested in contemporary religion in China ought to pay close attention to the recent history of the Chinese Catholic Church. Though one may debate with some of the analyses around this controversial subject, Chu's book is a timely historical survey that highlights a number of delicate issues in a very accessible manner.

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