

VATICAN-CHINA UPDATE

April 2020

2 Updates

1. **Vatican thanks Chinese Catholics for gifts of medical supplies to assist in combating coronavirus**
2. **Covid-19 emergency, help arrives at the Vatican and a letter from Chinese Catholics**

1. **Vatican thanks Chinese Catholics for gifts of medical supplies to assist in combating coronavirus**

9th April 2020

America Magazine

<https://www.americamagazine.org/>

By: Gerard O'Connell

Vatican thanks Chinese Catholics for gifts of medical supplies to assist in combating coronavirus

The Holy See expressed its appreciation and gratitude to the Chinese Catholic bishops and faithful, as well as other Chinese institutions and citizens, on Holy Thursday for their “generous gesture” in sending medical supplies to the Vatican to assist in its effort to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

The director of the Vatican press office, Matteo Bruni, told journalists on April 9 that the gifts should be seen “as an expression of the solidarity of the Chinese people and the Catholic communities [in the mainland] to all those who are committed in assisting people struck by the Covid-19 and in the prevention of the coronavirus epidemic that is underway.” The supplies were sent to the Vatican through the Red Cross Society of China and the Hebei Jinde Charities Foundation, a Chinese Catholic charity.

Matteo Bruni: “The Holy See appreciates this generous gesture and expresses its gratitude to the Catholic bishops and faithful.”

Tweet this

“The Holy See appreciates this generous gesture and expresses its gratitude to the Catholic bishops and faithful,” he wrote, “as well as to the Chinese institutions and all the other Chinese citizens for this humanitarian initiative, and it assured them of the esteem and prayers of the Holy Father.”

[Explore all of America’s in-depth coverage of the coronavirus pandemic]

The Chinese gesture is seen as reciprocating the early donation by the Vatican at the end of January and early February, when it sent around 700,000 masks to aid the Chinese people suffering from Covid-19 in Wuhan in Hubei province, the early epicenter of the epidemic, and in East China’s provinces of Zhejiang and Fujian. It did so after Pope Francis on Jan. 26 expressed his closeness, concern and prayers for the Chinese victims of the virus.

The Chinese gesture is seen as reciprocating the early donation by the Vatican at the end of January and early February, when it sent around 700,000 masks to aid the Chinese people.

Tweet this

Since the signing of the landmark “provisional agreement” in Beijing on Sept. 22, 2018, regarding the nomination of Chinese bishops on the mainland, as well as the more recent meeting in Munich last February between China’s foreign minister and the Vatican’s Secretary for Relations with States, both the Vatican and the Chinese Catholic church have sought closer ties.

America has also learned that a group of Catholic laity in Shanghai raised money to support the Gemelli Hospital and different Catholic communities in Rome. Over a thousand Chinese contributed to the solidarity project, which provided approximately 50,000 sterile surgical masks, 25,000 gloves and 600 pairs of protective glasses for hospital staff at the Gemelli Hospital. They also sent more than 40,000 disposable masks to communities in different parts of the city.

A group of Catholics in Hong Kong also sent gifts of masks to the Pontifical Italian Foreign Missionaries (PIME) seminary in Monza, near Milan, where 57 students from a dozen countries have been living in isolation since the lockdown in Lombardy—the worst hit region of the country—more than a month ago. “We received many, many masks from generous friends in Hong Kong, and we are wearing them,” the dean of studies, the Rev. Gianni Criviller, who is living with the students, told America.

https://www.americamagazine.org/china-doc?utm_source=Website&utm_medium=inline_promo&utm_campaign=china_doc

<https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/02/14/vatican-and-chinese-foreign-ministers-meet-first-time-over-50-years>

2.

Covid-19 emergency, help arrives at the Vatican and a letter from Chinese Catholics

3rd April 2020

Agenzia Fides - www.fides.org

ASIA/CHINA - Covid-19 emergency, help arrives at the Vatican and a letter from Chinese Catholics: "Holy Father, take care of yourself"

Beijing (Agenzia Fides) - "Holy Father, during the epidemic, may you also have your person at heart. Do it for us, 1.3 billion Catholics around the world. Please take care of yourself too!". This is the recommendation that Chinese Catholics address to Pope Francis from the bottom of their hearts. An open letter addressed to the Bishop of Rome and published today on Xinde Press ("Faith") website, the widest platform for Chinese Catholic communication. "The same recommendation" reads the letter "we would like to extend to those who administer Casa Santa Marta and its secretaries: may they take care of the Pope, in this difficult period, and watch over the safety distances when he has to meet visitors. And if he must necessarily receive someone or participate in events with other people, we hope very much that the Pope will also wear a mask".

In the words of the letter addressed to the Pope one perceives the loving concern of those who also care about the health of a person they love so much, at a time when danger is incumbent on everyone. As a gesture of faith and communion, countless Chinese Catholics remained awake or woke up on purpose in the middle of the night to follow via internet the extraordinary act of prayer in times of epidemic presided over by Pope Francis on Friday 27 March in St. Peter's Square (in Beijing it was already one in the morning, Saturday 28 March). A large number of them are following the Pope's spiritual suggestions every day (reciting the rosary, novena, daily prayers) to live their own Lenten spiritual journey in this time devastated by the global health emergency.

The aid collected with the coordination of Jinde Charity - as well as those sent by other communities and private citizens - are arriving in Italy and in the Vatican with the logistical support of the Italian embassy in Beijing and the Italian Foreign Ministry, which has made it possible to coordinate and organize the air transport of the collected aid. On March 28, the second shipment of aid sent by Chinese Catholics arrived at Malpensa airport (Milan), for a total value of 450 thousand euros. Through the Vatican Pharmacy, the aid was sorted to the Office of the pastoral care of the Vicariate of Rome (10 thousand N95 model masks, over 500 thousand disposable masks, 27 thousand surgical gloves, 8 thousand coveralls and 6 thousand protective glasses). Large quantities of the same health devices were sorted to the Diocese of Macerata, to the Gemelli Hospital of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, to

the field hospital of the National Alpine Association. The first shipment of medical devices shipped thanks to the collections of Chinese Catholics had arrived in Italy two weeks ago, in which case the protective equipment had been taken over and redistributed by Caritas Ambrosiana, in the territory of the archdiocese of Milan and in Lombardy, epicenter of the pandemic. Now the third shipment is ready to leave Beijing with the first available direct flights to Italy.

Since the first outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, Pope Francis has publicly shown his closeness to the Chinese population heavily affected by the virus also with direct references expressed at the end of the Wednesday general audience or after the recitation of the Sunday Angelus. As confirmed by Mgr. Segundo Tejado Muñoz, Undersecretary of the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development, quoted by Xinde Press, "through Jinde Charity, Pope Francis donated 200,000 euros unconditionally to China for prevention/epidemic projects and assistance for the elderly, to express his love for the Chinese people".

Chinese Catholics are living this emergency with a great sense of faith, comforted by the gestures and words of the Pope who calls everyone to prayer and fraternal solidarity. In addition to Italy, aid from Chinese Catholics and Protestants also arrived in South Korea and Spain, also provoking free gestures of gratitude from people affected by this spontaneous charity movement. Don Giovanni Battista Sun, President of the "Li Madou" Study Center of the diocese of Macerata, stressed that the emergency that Italy is going through, the Country of the Jesuit Matteo Ricci from Macerata, had aroused concern in all Chinese, Catholic and non-Catholic. And a Chinese scholar wanted to send 10 thousand Yuan (equivalent to 1,500 euros) to Jinde Charity asking to use it to send aid to the population of Macerata. The Amity Foundation, the Chinese Protestant Christian Foundation renowned for printing hundreds of millions of Chinese-language Bibles, is collaborating with Chinese Catholics to help countries most affected by Covid-19 such as Italy, Spain and Germany "in the name of all Chinese Christians". "Christian charity", says Father John Baptist Zhang, at the head of Jinde Charity, to Fides "is borderless, and especially now it is urgent to look at the sufferings of the whole human family with the spirit of Christian charity, as faith and the magisterium of all the Popes teach us". (NZ) (Agenzia Fides)

End