

MACAU RICCI INSTITUTE ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM IN NOVEMBER

Enhancing Silk Road's religious and cultural legacy

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ON November 22-23, the Macau Ricci Institute (MRI) is holding its annual symposium under the theme "Exploring The Silk Road Economic Belt and The 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road: The Challenge of Cross-Cultural Exchange and Communication."

The event aims to explore the cultural and religious traits inherent to the ancient legacy of the Silk Road. "China's Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road [B&R], announced in 2013, has clearly become a major focus for the coun-

try's efforts to sustain and further develop cooperative relationships with its neighbors near and far, and to work out mutually beneficial policies of economic development for Asia, Europe, and Africa," MRI says in its website.

Moreover, to MRI, "the B&R quite properly appeals to the historic legacy of the Silk Road, which for millennia provided opportunities for the exchange, not only of goods and services,

but also of ideas as well as spiritual and religious practices, and engagement with the peoples who cherished them."

"Indeed, save for Daoism, China's indigenous wisdom tradition, all its other spiritual and religious communities — Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism — first found a home in China along the Silk Road."

Furthermore, MRI "hopes to make a significant contribution

to the B&R," while bearing in mind, "the work of Fr [Matteo] Ricci and his companions is itself a significant part of the Silk Road legacy, and the friendship that Matteo Ricci enjoyed with China's scholars and officials is extended even today through MRI's mission."

MRI Director Fr Stephan Rothlin, SJ, told *O CLARIM*, "the symposium will highlight each of the three dimensions of the MRI mission," such as the "comparative appreciation of spirituality," "social innovation" and "moral leadership" within the B&R.

The first "will enable conference participants to present and analyze the history of the Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities in Macau and in China, and the way these

have formed bridges of understanding internationally."

Regarding the second, "an understanding of how social innovation occurred as a result of the Silk Road can shed a welcome light on the challenges and opportunities that today's innovators may face, encouraged by the remembrance of China's deep history of engagement with its neighbors."

The latter dimension offers many challenges, both theoretical and practical. "The development of effective teaching and learning programs in international business ethics, a special concern of the MRI and its partners, is indispensable if the goals of the B&R, even at the level of economic development, are to be realized." ■

CHAPEL OF SAINT LAWRENCE'S CHURCH

Sunday Mass in Bahasa Indonesia twice a month

STARTED early this month, the chapel of Saint Lawrence's Church is holding a Sunday Mass in Bahasa Indonesia, in order to keep the faith of the local Indonesian Catholics, since some have embraced other Christian denominations, and to maintain their solidarity. The celebration is held every first and fourth Sunday of the month, and begins at 5:00 PM.

"There is a slogan '100% Catholic, 100% Indonesian'," Fr Vincentius Lam, SJ, told *O CLARIM* on the reason the new Mass was put in place in the Macau Diocese.

"Before, they would have the Mass in the SVD house, and since nowadays the house is used by another community, we decided to choose another place," he said.

Fr Lam added that the chapel

of Saint Lawrence's Church was chosen for a more practical and apostolic reason, since "it is not far from SVD house, so it will make the access simple and the place easy to remember. "Also, the actual Indonesian community attending the Mass is not so big in number – around 10 people.

Having the latter reality in mind, it was suggested to Bishop Stephen Lee to integrate the Sunday Mass as "the extension" of the Hong Kong Indonesian Catholic Workers Community, Fr Lam added.

"First of all, 'the extension' here means it was served by a SVD priest, who is working in Hong Kong, and comes once or twice a month," he explained, to preside over a "Catholic liturgical activity."

"There are some other Indonesian groups in Macau, and



some of the community members also join these groups," he said, while not forgetting "most of the Indonesians in Macau are workers and Moslems." And since the local Catholic Indonesian community "is just few

in number, we prefer to keep 'the extension' first," and the aforementioned "community as a part of Indonesian Catholic community in Hong Kong," which he described as "quite big in number – around 200-

300 people who attend Church activities every Sunday."

"By introducing this community to the public, we hope we can let the other people born in Indonesia, especially Chinese overseas who moved out from Indonesia around the 70s and 80s, during the Communist movement, and finally stayed in Macau as residents and still can speak Bahasa Indonesia, to join together. Or, perhaps some others who are taking vacation in Macau and would like to keep the faith and don't speak Chinese," he said.

The Bahasa Indonesia Sunday Mass at the chapel of Saint Lawrence's Church is also celebrated by Fr Gregorius Dedi Rusdianto, SCJ, and Fr Kornelius Supranoto Bardata, SVD. ■

P.D.O.

Books on Macau missionaries launched

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The International Institute of Macau (IIM) and the Catholic Diocese of Macau have jointly launched a new edition comprising three books of Bishop Arquimínio da Costa, Fr Lancelote Rodrigues and Fr Mário Acquistapace at the auditorium of the Bishop's Palace on Tuesday, July 10.

In the launching ceremony, Rufino Ramos, Secretary-general of IIM, first introduced the three books, which are part of the series Missionaries for the 21st Century, and have now been translated into Chinese from Portuguese. Speaking to O CLARIM, Ramos



said these three books cover the missionaries' contribution to Macau's society and culture. The missionaries are part of Macau's memory and history that everyone in Macau should know. "The institute is now looking for someone to write the book of Fr Luis Ruiz Suarez and Fr Aureo Castro, hopefully we can launch them next year," said Ramos.

Bishop Stephen Lee and Fr Pedro Chung, Vicar-General of the Diocese, also presented the books. Bishop Lee gave special thanks to IIM for compiling the series and translating them into Chinese, thus allowing more people in Macau to know and understand more about the Catholic Church through the good works and merits of

these three missionaries.

The Bishop said that the "three missionaries are good examples of being the Good Shepherd described in the Gospel. The Good Shepherd shows us the way in our everyday life, and to teach us to listen to God's voice." He described these three books as the instruments to glorify God.

Having met the three missionaries in person, Fr Chung thinks they are very special with a big and loving heart. "They spent their whole life for us, for the Chinese speaking church, that motivates us to know God. The compilation of the books is to keep the memories, [because] just like Ruffini said, if there is no memory, there is no future," said Fr Chung.

He also shared an experience

with Bishop Costa, "remembering he was invited to China in 1985, I had a chance going with him. Even though he didn't speak Mandarin, he still insisted using Chinese (Cantonese). This means he is a 'Chinese'. He loves us the church in China, he serves the Chinese people. This is a very tiny thing, but it's a very strong symbol of his love towards his flock in Macau."

At the end of the book launch, the choir of St Thomas performed two songs contributed by Bishop Costa.

An initiative of the IIM and the Diocese of Macao, the book launch was supported by the Macao Foundation and with the collaboration of the Association of the former students of the St Joseph Seminary in Macau. ■

HUMANAE VITAE FIFTY YEARS HENCE (2)

Reactions

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as clearly presented by Paul VI, in favor of *responsible parenthood*. The Pope writes: "If, then, there are serious motives to space out births, which derive from the physical or psychological conditions of husband and wife, or from external conditions, the Church teaches that it is then licit to take into account the natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions, for the use of marriage in the infertile periods only, and in this way to regulate birth without offending the moral principles" (HV, 16).

Paul VI explains (HV, 10): *Married love, therefore, requires of husband and wife the full awareness of their obligations in the matter of responsible parenthood, which today, rightly enough, is much insisted upon... But if we then attend to relevant physical, economic, psychological and social conditions, those are considered to exercise responsible parenthood who prudently and generously decide to have a large family, or who, for serious reasons and with due respect to the moral law, choose to have no more children for the time being or even for an indeterminate period. As a consequence the commitment to responsible parenthood requires that husband and wife, keeping a right order of priorities, recognize their own duties towards God, themselves, their families and human society.*

As Vatican II had taught earlier: appropriate consultation on the matter is prudent, but it is the parents - and no one else - who ultimately decide in the sight of God (cf. GS, 50). From

this follows that they are not free to do as they like in the service of transmitting life... On the contrary, they are bound to ensure that what they do corresponds to the will of God the Creator (cf. GS, 50-51)

The *Magisterium* of the Church recommends, when warranted, responsible parenthood through *natural family planning* methods. The safe period is good because "there is no positive, deliberate frustration of the sexual act; self-control is practiced; it is a rightful use of liberty, just as entire abstinence would be," and "there are no ill effects on the health of the man and woman." It respects the responsible transmission of life through recourse to the observation of the woman's cycle. Its practice requires "reciprocal respect, shared responsibility and self-control" (F. del Rio). *Methods of natural family planning*. (1) The *calendar rhythm* (on regularity of woman's menstrual cycle); (2) The *ovulation method* or *Billings method* (on the appearance of mucus at the vulva); (3) The *sympto-thermal method* (criteria for determining the ovulation time). Fertility period: strictly speaking, about six days in a cycle (cf. Ashley-O'Rourke, *Health Care Ethics*).

Over-Population - Pope Paul VI says in *Humanae Vitae* that "rapid demographic development" creates difficulties for many families particularly in the developing countries (HV, 2). As a consequence, public authorities may encounter "serious difficulties" on this matter, and must contribute to the solution of

the demographic problem by "a provident policy for the family, a wise education of peoples in respect of the moral law and the liberty of citizens" (HV, 23). "No solution to these difficulties is acceptable which does violence to human dignity and is based only on a materialistic conception of man himself and of his life" (HV, 23).

In our secular society, *population control* continues to be used as another argument in favor of the regulation of births. The secular stand is clear: World population which - according to them - causes poverty and misery in many places has to be curbed by governments throughout the world. The means recommended to curb the population growth are broad programs of contraceptives, especially "the pill," sterilization and even abortion. The propaganda of these methods underscores their easy use, efficacy and suitability "to avoid conception at any price."

Why is the Catholic Church opposed to the secular solution to the problem of over-population? The radical argument is simple: the secular solution is opposed to the dignity and rights of man and family. Moreover, Christians with many other believers firmly hold that God is the Creator of life, and that life is sacred and therefore, God must be revered - and also human life.

Poverty - What the world needs is not curbing of population really, but - as the Church's teaching emphasizes after Vatican II - justice and equality and soli-

arity (cf. HV, 23). Pope Paul VI refers to his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (HV, 18), one of the best papal encyclicals of all times on social ethics (cf. PP, 48-55). He points out in particular the social teachings of Pope John XXIII in his encyclicals *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963), teachings that are grounded on the previous papal documents of the social doctrine of the Church and especially on Vatican II. One remembers the powerful words of Pope Paul VI at the United Nations in New York on October 4, 1965: "Human life is sacred... Your task (the UN's) is so to act that there will be enough bread at the table of mankind, and not to support an artificial birth control that would be irrational, with the aim of reducing the number of those sharing in the banquet of life."

Is Paul VI's Humanae Vitae too negative? As theologian Del Rio proclaims: "Catholicism is universal affirmation, and the good Catholic is the man who is always affirming, and who denies in order to affirm." The Church shows herself as "a sincere and disinterested friend of men, whom she wishes to help" (HV 18). She wants to contribute to the establishment of "a truly human civilization" - a civilization of love. Jesus did not come to condemn but to save (cf. Jn 3:17). Pope Paul VI comments: "He was indeed intransigent with evil, but merciful towards individuals" (HV, 29). And so must Christians be! ■