

**STATEMENT BY HIS EMINENCE CHARLES CARDINAL BO, PRESIDENT OF THE
FEDERATION OF ASIAN BISHOPS OF CONFERENCES**

Fourteen years ago, in 2007, Pope Benedict XVI published his letter to the Church in the People's Republic of China, and designated 24 May, the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, as an annual Worldwide Day of Prayer for the Church in China.

On behalf of the Church throughout Asia, as President of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, I would like to call on the faithful to extend that to a Week of Prayer for the Church in China and the peoples of China, from Sunday 23 May until Sunday 30 May.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the peoples of China have faced increasing challenges, which impact us all. It is right that we should pray not only for the Church but for all persons in the People's Republic of China. We should ask Our Lady of Sheshan to protect all humanity and therefore the dignity of each and every person in China, in the words of Pope Benedict XVI's prayer, "to believe, to hope, to love." In fact, we are reminded that "the whole of the Church's social doctrine, in fact, develops from the principle that affirms the inviolable dignity of the human person."

Many parts of the world are currently challenged, including my own country of Myanmar at this time, but in a spirit of solidarity it is right to focus not only on our own challenges but to pray also for others, in the clear knowledge that their well-being is closely linked to ours.

In proposing this Week of Prayer I am expressing my love for the peoples of China, my respect for their ancient civilization and extraordinary economic growth, and my hopes that as it continues to rise as a global power, it may become a force for good and a protector of the rights of the most vulnerable and marginalized in the world. Pope Francis rightly reminds us that "there is also a deeper hunger, the hunger for a happiness that only God can satisfy, the hunger for dignity. I am calling for prayer for each person in China that they may seek and realize the full measure of happiness that our Creator has given to them.

So I urge the faithful, throughout the world, to join me in prayer for the Church and the peoples of China, from 23-30 May, and especially to join with Pope Francis, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and the whole Church to ask, in the words of Benedict XVI, the “Mother of China and all Asia” to support the faithful, that “they never be afraid to speak of Jesus to the world, and of the world to Jesus”, and “always be credible witness to this love, ever clinging to the rock of Peter”.

Fraternally yours,



Charles Bo

President of FABC

Date: 14 March 2021

4th SUNDAY OF LENT (Laetare Sunday)

“Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you. (Pss. 137:6)