

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

- 1. Please provide any available information on the “Sodality of the Holy Mother” generally in China. Please provide any information specifically relating to Fujian?**
- 2. What is “Anne’s Society”?**
- 3. Please advise if it is unusual to be given a baptism certificate. Would this have been unusual in 1980?**
- 4. Please provide any available information about “generations of Catholics”?**

RESPONSE

- 1. Please provide any available information on the “Sodality of the Holy Mother” generally in China. Please provide any information specifically relating to Fujian?**

The response to this question provides information on the Sodality of the Holy Mother, and information on Marian congregations in China.

Information on the Sodality of the Holy Mother

Little information could be found on the ‘Sodality of the Holy Mother’ in China. A review of Catholic books and documents by Paul Rule from the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History briefly commented in a footnote on the Sodality of the Holy Mother in China:

This classic Jesuit confraternity was introduced [to China] by Matteo Ricci who had been a member of the Roman prototype in Beijing in 1609 and was, as Chan notes, by far the most popular with some 400 branches by the mid Seventeenth century. Again one might speculate

on the resonance of the cult of the Virgin Mary in a China where Guanyin 觀音 was the most popular religious cult figure (Rule, P. (undated), *Chinese Books and Documents in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus: a New Catalogue*, The Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, University of San Francisco, p. 25
http://www.usfca.edu/ricci/publications/chan_review.pdf – Accessed 31 July 2008 – Attachment 1).

No other information could be found specifically on the ‘Sodality of the Holy Mother’ in the searches conducted.

Sources seem to suggest, however, that the Sodality of the Holy Mother may be another name for, or a fraternity of, the ‘Sodality of Our Lady’, also known as the ‘Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary’, the ‘Children of Mary’, and sometimes referred to in more general terms as a ‘Marian Congregation’. These all form part of the broader Roman Catholic Church. For a brief history of the Sodality of Our Lady in Europe see the following attachment (‘The History of the Sodality’ (undated), Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary & St. Patrick website http://www.sodality.ie/h_and_s.asp – Accessed 31 July 2008 – Attachment 2).

Sources indicate that Marian congregations, including the Sodality of Our Lady, are Roman Catholic confraternities dedicated to the devotion and veneration of the Virgin Mary. A December 2007 article by Fr. Stefano M. Manelli from the Immaculate Mediatrix Online website, the official site of the Franciscans of the Immaculate in the U.S.A., indicates that:

On September 8, 1609, in order to provide effective help for his work of evangelization, Matteo Ricci established the first Chinese Marian Congregation, made up of a group of laity actively engaged in catechesis and in teaching Christian doctrine to the people (Manelli, Fr. S. M. 2007, ‘The Blessed Virgin Mary: Queen of China’, Immaculate Mediatrix Online website, 18 December <http://www.marymediatrix.com/magazine/missions-and-apostolate/the-blessed-virgin-queen-of-china/> – Accessed 31 July 2008 – Attachment 3).

A 2001 paper presented by Paul Rule at the 18th National China Catholic Conference also noted:

The Sodality of Our Lady was founded in 1609 in Beijing, on the initiative of one Luke Li, according to Matteo Ricci (Rule, P. 2001, ‘Christianity in China: Growing on Holy Ground’, *Growing on Holy Ground: Keynote Addresses at the 18th National China Catholic Conference* appearing in *Pacific Rim Report* No. 17, February <http://www.pacificrim.usfca.edu/research/pacrimreport/pacrimreport17.html> – Accessed 31 July 2008 – Attachment 4).

Although these sources accredit the formation of these confraternities to different authorities (Luke Li and Matteo Ricci), the year of the establishment of the first Chinese Marian Congregation (1609) and the Sodality of Our Lady (1609) matches that of the introduction of the Sodality of the Holy Mother into China (1609), as noted earlier by Paul Rule’s Ricci Institute paper (Rule, P. (undated), *Chinese Books and Documents in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus: a New Catalogue*, The Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, University of San Francisco, p. 25
http://www.usfca.edu/ricci/publications/chan_review.pdf – Accessed 31 July 2008 – Attachment 1). The links these confraternities have to Marian devotion, their links with Matteo/Matthew Ricci, and the same year of formation within China for all three suggest that these may be three different names for the same fraternity.

Marian congregations in China

Limited specific information could be found in the searches conducted on Marian congregations in China. Richard Madsen provides a background to the Marian congregations in China in his 1998 book, *China's Catholics*, noting that:

The Marian cult was central to the theology conveyed to China by nineteenth- and twentieth-century European missionaries. Mary – gentle, compassionate Mary, portrayed even in Chinese households as a slender brown-haired European woman dressed in blue, often openly displaying her Immaculate Heart – is primarily the one who helps us in our trials, defends us from our enemies, heals us when we are sick, and keeps us from sin. The eager acceptance of the Marian cult by Chinese Catholics was the result at least partly of Mary's similarity to the Buddhist Guanyin and to the Eternal Mother of north Chinese secret societies (Madsen, R. 1998, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, p. 88 – Attachment 5).

Sources also indicate that there are a number of Marian shrines in China, including one in Fujian. A 2004 report on the AsiaNews.it website also provided a review of Marian shrines in China:

A Marian shrine is usually a place where the faithful and the Church believe Our Lady has appeared or where some miracle or other supernatural event has taken place through the intercession of the Holy Mother, whom the Chinese like to call Our Lady.

China has a number of Marian shrines. There is the shrine of Our Lady of Bliss situated in the hills north of Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou province in southwestern China. This shrine is reputed to be at least 200-years-old. It was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution and since it was reopened in 1980, has attracted numerous devotees of Our Lady annually.

There is the new shrine in Fuzhou, opened on 30 April 1993 on top of the hill in Longtian village near Fuzhou city, Fujian province. This shrine is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary and called Rosary Villa. The title given to the shrine is reminiscent of the fact that the Dominicans, who were in Fujian province before Liberation, had dedicated the area to Mary of the Rosary. A statue of Our Lady, a gift from Italy, stands in the middle of the Chinese style pavilion on the shrine grounds. The shrine is used as a place for priests' retreats and for group pilgrimages. It was set up by Fuzhou's elderly bishop to promote unity and community in the Catholic Church.

On 1 May 1994, the famous Marian shrine adjacent to the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Qingyang township in Nanjing diocese, Jiangsu province, reopened after having been closed for some 55 years. Tens of thousands of pilgrims were drawn to the site ('China's Marian shrines' 2004, AsiaNews.it website, 27 May <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=871> – Accessed 1 August 2008 – Attachment 6).

The location of Haikou relative to Fuzhou can be seen in the following attachment. There is also a village called Longtian, but it could not be confirmed if this was the Longtian where the Rosary Villa shrine is located. A measurement tool on Microsoft Encarta Atlas indicates that the direct distance between Fuzhou and Haikou is 44.5km ('Map of Fuzhou, Haikou and Longtian' 2000, Microsoft Encarta Atlas – Attachment 23).

This AsiaNews.it report also commented on the treatment of those who wish to attend these shrines:

Needless to say, the government has not been terribly enthusiastic about having thousands upon thousands of people gather anywhere. This is all the more threatening when the gathering involves religion and people of the unofficial Church. The Public Security Bureau, the agency in charge of keeping watch over the unofficial Catholic community, periodically flexes its muscles to prevent anyone from going on pilgrimage to Donglu. In 1995, when tens of thousands of pilgrims flocked to Donglu for the Feast of Mary Help of Christians on May 24, the Public Security barred all pilgrims from joining anyone on the hill. The police forced people back into buses and trains without offering any explanation. Still, thousands successfully reached the area by finding alternative ways to get there. As many as 100,000 participated in the celebration.

Again in 1996, an official announcement forbade anyone from going to the Donglu shrine. This time two reasons were given for the prohibition: it was an illegal gathering and it was bad for social stability.

Teams of Public Security agents as large as 500 strong were dispatched to all the villages surrounding the Donglu area and to towns all over Hebei Province. As they travelled around, they tried to force the members of the unofficial community to join the Patriotic Association and to do away with unrecognised religious premises such as Donglu. Priests in the towns and villages were ordered not to leave their residences and were forbidden to preach from May 13 until further notice. Lay people were also forbidden to leave their villages. Parents were not allowed to take their children to church or to wear any religious objects ('China's Marian shrines' 2004, AsiaNews.it website, 27 May <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=871> – Accessed 1 August 2008 – Attachment 6).

Limited information could be found on Marian congregations in Fujian. In May 2007 the Union of Catholic Asians News website, UCANews.com, reported on the pilgrimage sites for Marian devotions in China, noting that:

According to a June 2007 report from Faith Press, a Catholic newspaper based in Hebei province, the three most popular pilgrimage sites in China last May were the Sheshan shrine, Jianshan Hill in Jinan diocese, Shandong province, and **Rosa Mystica Sanctuary in Fuzhou diocese, Fujian province**. Approximately 30,000 people visited Jianshan, while Sheshan and **Rosa Mystica each attracted 20,000 or more, it said** ('Catholics Advised Against Going To Other Provinces For Pilgrimages In May' 2008, UCANews.com website 2 May <http://www.ucanews.com/2008/05/02/catholics-advised-against-going-to-other-provinces-for-pilgrimages-in-may/> – Accessed 1 August 2008 – Attachment 7).

A list of Chinese Cathedrals on the Giga-Catholic Information website notes that there is a 'Church of Holy Rosemary' of the 'BVM Rosary' ('Blessed Virgin Mary Rosary') in Fuzhou, Fujian. The brief information provided on the site suggests that this was built in 1848, closed in 1966, and reopened again in 1981 ('Cathedrals: China' (undated), Giga-Catholic Information website <http://www.gcatholic.com/churches/data/cathCNX.htm> – Accessed 1 August 2008 – Attachment 8).

In June 2007 the blog website, 'A Faithful Rebel', noted that a Marian shrine was to be destroyed in Tianjiating in Eastern Central China because "it has been designated as a centre of 'illegal religious activity'". This report also noted that "The local government has banned the annual 16 July pilgrimage to the shrine, which attracts 40,000 – 50,000 people. It has also forbidden any other religious gathering in the area" ('Shocking: China to Destroy Popular

Marian Shrine With Dynamite' 2007, A Faithful Rebel website, source: *AsiaNews/BBC News*, 26 June <http://faithfulrebel.blogspot.com/2007/06/shocking-china-to-destroy-popular.html> – Accessed 1 August 2008 – Attachment 9).

Fr. Jean Charbonnier's 2004 *Guide to the Catholic Church in China* provides a list of Catholic churches in Fujian, and this includes some churches with Marian links. (Charbonnier, Fr. J. 2004, *Guide to the Catholic Church in China*, China Catholic Communication, Singapore, pp. 644-661 – Attachment 10).

A previous RRT Research Response also explored the Our Lady of the Rosary shrine in Fujian (RRT Research and Information 2007, *Research Response CHN31482*, 9 March – Attachment 24).

For additional information on the situation of Catholics in Fujian, see the following attachments (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2005, *CHN100386.E – China: Situation of Catholics and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2001-2005)*, 1 September http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=449524 – Attachment 11; RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response CHN31675*, 7 May – Attachment 12; RRT Research & Information 2005, *Research Response CHN17603*, 21 October – Attachment 13; RRT Research & Information 2005, *Research Response CHN17483*, 29 August – Attachment 14; RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response CHN32442*, 16 October – Attachment 25).

2. What is “Anne’s Society”?

No information could be found in the searches conducted on ‘Anne’s Society’. Sources indicate that there have been a number of different ‘St. Anne’s Societies’ around the world at various times in the past, but no information could be found in the searches conducted on a St. Anne’s Society with links to the Catholic Church in China. Sources seem to suggest that these societies are often (but not always) linked with mother’s and women’s groups. The St. Anne’s Society in Houston, Texas, USA, for example, “is a ministry for mothers of all ages providing opportunities to meet for spiritual, social and educational enrichment” (‘St. Anne’s Society’ (undated), Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church website <http://www.ctrcc.com/ministries/stanne.htm> - Accessed 6 August 2008 – Attachment 26). Similarly, St. Anne’s Altar Society in Harbor Springs, Michigan, USA, notes that “All women of the parish are members and are encouraged to attend meetings and volunteer for projects (‘St. Anne’s Altar Society’ (undated), Holy Childhood of Jesus Church website <http://www.holychildhoodchurch.org/anne.htm> - Accessed 6 August 2008 – Attachment 27).

3. Please advise if it is unusual to be given a baptism certificate. Would this have been unusual in 1980?

Sources seem to suggest that it is not unusual to be given a baptism certificate. Kay Lynn Isca's *Catholic Etiquette* noted of the baptism ceremony:

Parents will be given a baptismal certificate and sometimes other mementoes of the occasion, as well. It is important for parents to file this certificate in a place where it can easily be retrieved at a later date. When your child is getting ready to receive his or her First Communion, you will probably be asked to produce this certificate or a copy of it (Isca, K. L. 1997, *Catholic Etiquette: What You Need to Know about Catholic Rites and Wrongs*, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, Huntington, p. 77
http://books.google.com/books?id=21K7EEXAivMC&pg=PA77&lpg=PA77&dq=%22given+a+baptismal+certificate%22&source=web&ots=StpZifJVe&sig=S-lmMTTvQo5t7bjoqtbO3ph3DH4&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=3&ct=result#PPA78,M1 – Accessed 1 August 2008 – Attachment 15).

Little information could be found on the issuance of baptismal certificates in China. An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada report from 2004 commented on baptismal certificates issued by underground Catholic Churches:

During a 4 June 2004 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a representative of the Cardinal Kung Foundation stated that there are no standardized baptismal certificates within underground Catholic churches in China nor are baptismal certificates issued as a matter of course. Instead, if a baptismal certificate were requested at the time of baptism, the priest might issue an informal document that would most likely be written in Chinese (ibid) (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2004, *CHN42650.E – China: Whether underground Catholic Churches issue baptismal certificates; if so, in what language*, 8 June http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=416315 – Accessed 1 August 2008 – Attachment 16).

No other information could be found in the searches conducted on the issuance of baptismal certificates in China, or if it was unusual for a certificate to be issued in 1980. Sources seem to suggest, however, that baptismal certificates have been issued on request for hundreds of years. For example, Robert Robinson's *The History of Baptism*, published in 1817, commented on the historical origins of these certificates:

It was on some such just and natural ground that the English government required and accepted as evidence a certificate from three or four members of a dissenting congregation, that such a person was *bona fide* a protestant dissenter. From the same natural source, too, perhaps, came certificates from the minister of a parish, and the church-wardens (Robinson, R. 1817, *The History of Baptism*, Lincoln & Edmonds Press, Boston p. 294 – Attachment 17).

4. Please provide any available information about “generations of Catholics”?

Sources indicate that Catholicism has been increasing in China in recent decades as strong family ties hold Catholic communities together. The strong familial cohesiveness within some Chinese communities encourage younger generations of Chinese to follow the religious practices of their parents. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee argued in a 2007 paper:

Despite the state's persecution, Christian families kept faith alive and conversion followed the social hierarchy; that is, the Christian patriarchs, mostly older men and women, instructed the younger members of the family in the faith, because family and marriage ties involved a sense of loyalty to household leaders. **This hierarchical social structure bore witness to the impact of traditional Chinese culture, requiring that junior family and community members obey elder ones. The practice guaranteed a steady church growth and maintained the continued adherence of the Christians to their faith.** When Christianity became a family religion, Jesus Christ publicly replaced the ancestor as the focus of worship and created a new religious and social identity to hold different generations of a Christian family together. Christian patriarchs saw conversion, baptism, and church affiliation as essential filial duties for their children.

...**The Christian family is a strong social unit. Individual choice is discouraged, as it would detract from family cohesiveness.** In that case, the Christian identity is a collective one for family members. Such findings confirm Richard Madsen's view that strong family ties held the Catholic communities together and prevented them from falling apart under the state's persecution in the Maoist era (Lee, J. T. 2007, 'Christianity in contemporary China: an update', *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 49, no. 2, Spring – Attachment 18).

Similarly, Richard Madsen explained in a 2003 article:

In China, even more than Europe, it [Catholicism] became primarily embedded in the relations of village life, especially after it lost the credibility of scholar officials after the rites controversy. **Catholic missionaries made an effort to convert whole villages, or at least whole lineages, in order to provide the social support for perseverance in the faith. Catholics embraced the extended family relationships that were central to village life.**

Indeed, in many Catholic villages, especially in those relatively closed to the outside world, a Catholic identity becomes almost identified with such familistic relationships. **Some villagers may be "true believers" and others "lax," but even lax Catholics can never completely lose their identity. At the very least, they will have to be buried with Catholic rites, in order to maintain a connection with their ancestors** (Madsen, R. 2003, 'Catholic Revival During the Reform Era', *The China Quarterly*, vol. 174, p. 477 – Attachment 19).

In his 1998 book, *China's Catholics*, Madsen also argued that Chinese born into a Catholic family adopt the Catholic religious identity as though it were an ethnic identity:

If people have grown up Catholic and live in a Catholic family, they cannot avoid using Catholic ceremonies to express their social identity – their membership in a particular family and lineage – even if they do not believe the tenets of the Catholic faith. As long as they need such membership, which they will as long as they live and work close to their rural home, they retain a Catholic identity.

...Clearly, for some rural Catholics, the God teaching is a genuine faith. They believe the doctrines and use them to give meaning to their personal experience. They are committed to praying regularly and to receiving the sacraments. They are willing to suffer for their beliefs. Whether or not they genuinely believe its teachings, however, for most rural Catholics their religion is a status, inherited from their parents, that they cannot cast aside even if they wanted to (Madsen, R. 1998, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, pp. 54-56 – Attachment 20).

For more information on the growth of the Catholic church in China over recent years see the following attachments (Pontifex, J. 2008, 'China and the Church – Irreconcilable opposites?'),

Thinkingfaith.org website, 10 July http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20080710_1.htm – Accessed 4 August 2008 – Attachment 21; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2000, CHN33598.EX – *Catholic Church and Catholicism in China; treatment of Catholics; relations between the underground and open Churches; differences between Catholic worship in China and elsewhere; differences in practice between the underground Church and the open Church; beliefs, practices, holidays and ceremonies; update to CHN33002.EX of 8 October 1999 regarding Christians in Fujian province*, 27 January <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/ndp/ref/?action=view&doc=chn33598ex> – Accessed 25 August 2005 – Attachment 22).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Google <http://www.google.com.au/>
All the web <http://www.alltheweb.com/>
Altavista <http://www.altavista.com/>
Ask <http://www.ask.com/?ax=5>
Exalead <http://www.exalead.com/search>
Yahoo! <http://search.yahoo.com/>

Government Information & Reports

Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada <http://www.irb.gc.ca/>
UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>
US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

Non-Government Organisations

Amnesty International website <http://www.amnesty.org/>
Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

International News & Politics

BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/index.shtml>

Databases:

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)
REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)
ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)
RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. Rule, P. (undated), *Chinese Books and Documents in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus: a New Catalogue*, The Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, University of San Francisco, p. 25
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12. RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response CHN31675*, 7 May.
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16. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2004, *CHN42650.E – China: Whether underground Catholic Churches issue baptismal certificates; if so, in what language*,

8 June http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=416315 – Accessed 1 August 2008.

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23. 'Map of Fuzhou, Haikou and Longtian' 2000, Microsoft Encarta Atlas.
24. RRT Research and Information 2007, *Research Response CHN31482*, 9 March.
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26. 'St. Anne's Society' (undated), Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church website <http://www.ctrcc.com/ministries/stanne.htm> - Accessed 6 August 2008.
27. 'St. Anne's Altar Society' (undated), Holy Childhood of Jesus Church website <http://www.holychildhoodchurch.org/anne.htm> - Accessed 6 August 2008.