A Letter by a Malatesta Scholar from the Sichuan Earthquake Region

The most recent devastating earthquake in Sichuan Province has touched the hearts of many people. It also inspired some young scholars whom the Ricci Institute has supported. Dr. Deng Jie is a 2005-2006 Malatesta Scholarship recipient. Recently she wrote a letter to the Ricci Institute recalling her own experience in the wake of the earthquake and her experience with the local people in Sichuan.

Dear Dr. Wu,

The center of the earthquake is relatively distant from my home. During the first two weeks after the quake, most of us lived in open spaces in town. Schools canceled classes and students were afraid and anxious. As teachers, therefore, most of us took turns staying with our students, trying to calm and reassure them.

My doctoral dissertation focused on the western part of Sichuan Province. I visited the Wenchuan region twice. Each time, I would stay at the A’ba Teachers Academy. My dissertation dealt with people of the ethnic Qiang minority. Once I visited a small town called “Radish Village” in a mountain area over 2,000 meters above sea level. The local people were simple and warm hearted, guiding me to visit the primary school established by missionaries of the Border Mission and sharing with me stories of their services. Unfortunately, that village is no longer in existence. However, when I learned on TV that in spite of the destruction of the houses the villagers were all safe, I was overjoyed.

I do not think that one has to be a Christian to feel the presence of God. When helpless, we wish for the help of the Almighty. My happiness was beyond description when my wish came true.

— Deng Jie

Friends of Ricci and Its Activities in the South Bay

From May 8-18, 2008, the Friends of Ricci with the USF Ricci Institute presented a photo exhibit, “Life in China and Taiwan in the 1950s” at the Cupertino Square in Sunnyvale. The exhibit not only drew attention from people who lived through these years, but also from people who were interested in Chinese culture. All photos were taken by Rev. Fred Foley, S.J. and Rev. Alden Stevenson, S.J., respectively, during the above period and are archived at the USF Ricci Institute. The mayor of Cupertino and city council members were present at the opening ceremony and the World Journal reported extensively on the event.

On May 10, Friends of Ricci also invited Prof. Joyce Lindorff of Temple University, Prof. Peter Allsop of Beijing Central Conservatory, and Kati Kyme, a Baroque violinist from the Bay Area, to present a lecture/recital at the mall. The musicians discussed the life and music of Teodorico Pedrini, a European missionary to the Chinese Qing court in the 18th century.

On May 17, invited by the Friends of Ricci and the Ricci Institute, Gene Yang, a young cartoonist, presented his graphic novels with a book signing at the exhibit. Gene was born into a Catholic family. In addition to his outstanding academic performance, he has also loved drawing since his childhood. After graduating from UC Berkeley in electrical engineering, he taught computer science at a Catholic middle school in Oakland. During his spare time, he continued his interest in cartoon drawing and has published five books and received many awards.

— Irene Yao, member of FOR
In celebration of events commemorating Xu Guangqi, Matteo Ricci, and the Fourth Centenary of the publication of the Chinese translation of Euclid’s Elements, the cultural bureau of the Xuhui district of Shanghai has released a DVD video reenactment and testimonial on their contribution to Chinese mathematics.

Ricci Institute Remembers Two Founding Members

Reverend Bernard Chu, S.J., a long-time supporter and research associate of the Ricci Institute, passed away in Taiwan in February 2008. Rev. Bernard Chu was instrumental in supporting the establishment of the Ricci Institute in the early 1980s and the Malatesta Scholarship Endowment in the late 1990s. In recent years, he devoted much of his time to the “Marriage Encounters” program, a marriage relationship development program in the U.S., Macau, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. A special endowment for the study of spirituality in contemporary China has been established at the Ricci Institute in his honor.

Sister Mary Celeste Rouleau, R.S.M., a volunteer archivist at the Ricci Institute since its founding in 1984, passed away in April 2008. Besides teaching in the USF Philosophy Department in the 1980s and early 1990s, Sister Celeste Rouleau devoted hundreds of hours to the cataloguing of the Rev. Francis Rouleau Archival Collection and to other library development projects at the Ricci Institute. A new endowment to support a Rouleau Archives research fellowship has been established at the Ricci Institute in her honor.

Support the Friends of Ricci

We encourage friends of Ricci to invite their friends to become members of the Friends of Ricci and support the Ricci Institute.

In appreciation of your donation, the Ricci Institute will send you our limited edition mouse pad. For more information about how to become a member, please contact us at 415-422-6401, on the web: www.ricci.usfca.edu, or via e-mail at: ricci@usfca.edu.

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