Ricci Institute Becomes New Home of Canton Diocese Archives

Archival materials are the primary sources of history and essential for serious research. Throughout the years, however, many valuable documents illustrating the life and work of Chinese Catholic communities have been lost, especially those of the 120 Catholic dioceses in China. Thanks to the diligent work of the last Bishop of the Pakhoi Diocese, Mgr. Deswasières, M.E.P., the archives of the Canton Diocese were moved to Hong Kong in 1949. The last Bishop of the Canton Diocese, Mgr. Dominic Tang Yi-ming, S.J., later moved the documents to Lisbon, Portugal, thus saving these important documents.

Following an agreement between the Chinese and Portuguese Provinces of the Society of Jesus and the University of San Francisco, the Ricci Institute is now home to the Archives of the Canton Diocese. The Archives contain approximately 12,000 documents that date from 1851 to 1949 and consist of correspondence, reports, records, and other materials in French, Latin, Chinese, Italian, English, and Portuguese. Documents detail pastoral and religious matters, administrative and social affairs, and external relations with Church authorities and French or Chinese governments. They are valuable sources for the study of the interaction between the Church, local communities, governments, and other organizations at the time. Thanks to a major grant from the Odell Foundation in San Francisco and a matching grant from the China Province of the Society of Jesus, the Ricci Institute is currently digitizing and cataloging the entire collection, which will soon make these precious archives available for researchers and other interested people.

The Ricci Institute Receives a New Grant for the Study of Christianity in China

The Ricci Institute recently received a $300,000 grant from The Henry Luce Foundation. Entitled Narratives from the Hinterland: Expanding the Study of Christianity in China beyond the Major Urban Centers, the new grant will allow the Ricci Institute to help Chinese universities in less urban and more rural areas, such as Qinghai and Inner Mongolia, to expand institutional resources in the field of Chinese-Western cultural history.

The grant aims to broaden the study of Christianity in China by including multidisciplinary projects conducted at six centers throughout China. The initiative will promote opportunities for education and research among lesser served regions with the international scholarly community. “It promises to open up new resources and to continue the process of building international networks and improved understanding of cultural and historical issues between China and the U.S.,” says Dr. Terrill Lautz, Vice President of The Henry Luce Foundation, about the new USF Ricci Institute grant.
Librarian’s Corner

During a recent visit to Beijing for the Westerners at the Qing Court Symposium, members of the Ricci Institute staff took advantage of bookstores in the area and returned with many important reference works, including a multivolume collection of Qing treaty documents, a catalog of Qing court painters, official sources on Guangzhou during the Ming-Qing period, and many other books, maps, and resources. Many of these texts are difficult to find in U.S. libraries and will contribute to research support for our visiting scholars. Members of Friends of Ricci are welcome to come by and review these books, or check the online catalog of the Ricci Institute Library for details.

Homeland Group of Parishioners Visit the Ricci Institute

In recent years, many new immigrants in San Jose from mainland China joined the San Jose Chinese Catholic Community, most of whom are well-educated professionals. To strengthen friendship, promote opportunities for spiritual growth, and to cherish their memory of their homeland, they organized Bible study groups and named these groups the Homeland Group of Parishioners.

In August this year, members of the group paid a special visit to the Ricci Institute to express their great respect for Fr. Edward J. Malatesta, who founded the San Jose Chinese Catholic Community. With George and Irene Cheng as their docents, they were attracted by the library collection, publications, and research projects of the Ricci Institute, and deeply impressed by the spirit of dedication and devotion of the early Jesuits to China, such as Matteo Ricci, Ferdinand Verbiest, and Adam Schall. We would like to welcome them to join Friends of Ricci.

2008-2009 Malatesta Scholarship Recipients

Each year the USF Ricci Institute awards grants in memory of the Institute’s founding director, Edward J. Malatesta, S.J., to support research in Chinese-Western cultural history by doctoral students in China. This year’s Malatesta Scholars are:

WANG Dingan, 王定安 a Ph.D. candidate at Shanghai Fudan University. His dissertation will compare Catholic and Confucian funeral rituals in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Drawing on primary sources in philosophy, religion, sociology, and especially anthropology, Wang will analyze conceptual structures involved in Catholic and Chinese funerals, views of life, death, and the soul.

DENG Liang, 鄧亮 a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute for the History of Natural Science, Chinese Academy of Natural Sciences. His dissertation will focus on Western science introduced to China in the late Qing dynasty by Christian missionaries, and the transmission of scientific knowledge and Christian thought between China and the West.

USF Ricci Institute Co-sponsors an Annual Conference on China

The US-China Catholic Bureau held its 23rd annual conference October 3 - 5, 2008 in Belleville, Illinois. Co-sponsored by the Ricci Institute, the focus of this meeting was on the Chinese experience of Christ. Over 75 people attended the meeting, including 20 plus priests and nuns from China and those interested in the development of the Church in China. It was inspiring to witness the dedication and devotion to China by the participants, especially the Maryknoll fathers, brothers, and sisters. The order spent more than one million dollars annually for the training of over 30 Chinese priests, brothers, and sisters who returned to China upon the completion of their studies in the United States.

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. 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. Contributions are tax-deductible.

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