Dear Friends,

The holiday season is upon us once again, and with it will come many worthy opportunities for charitable giving. This year, I ask you to consider becoming a Friend of Ricci by making a modest membership donation to support the important work of the Ricci Institute.

In the past year, the Friends of Ricci hosted a series of activities, including a presentation by Prof. Gong Minlü of Hunan Normal University, visits of Prof. Gong to the San Jose Chinese Catholic Community and its programs, and assistance to produce a set of greeting cards based on a unique Chinese Catholic art collection Icons of Celestial Kingdom.

As we move forward into 2012, we have more exciting plans ahead. In particular, we will be spearheading two projects that will help you access the Ricci Institute more easily. Our first project will connect the Ricci Institute with the world of social media and allow users to receive updates and reminders of events and projects sponsored by the Institute. Our second project will bring speakers into your communities to make our scholars more accessible while providing them with the opportunity to share their work with you. We hope that with these two endeavors, we will be able to show you more of the important work that is being done at the Ricci Institute every day.

As you consider your holiday giving this year, please do not overlook the significance of our work here at the Ricci Institute. Your support will allow the Ricci Institute to continue its important role in opening up more channels of dialogue and fostering mutual understanding between China and the West. Join me today and invest in this worthy mission by becoming a member of Friends of Ricci.

Sincerely,

Isabel Chou

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Visiting Professor Delivered a Public Lecture on Shen Congwen in Santa Clara

On September 7, 2011, the Friends of Ricci and the USF Ricci Institute co-sponsored a public lecture on Shen Congwen, the internationally known Chinese writer from Hunan Province, at the Saint Clara Church in Santa Clara. Entitled Christian Culture in the Eyes of Xiangxi Writer Shen Congwen, the lecture was delivered by Prof. Gong Minlü, a visiting scholar of the Ricci Institute from Hunan Normal University. Xiangxi lies in Hunan Province, for generations home to the Miao, Tujia and Dong ethnic minorities. In the early 20th century, the influence of Christian missionaries brought new ideas for political reform. Many Xiangxi intellectuals left the region and made a significant contribution to Chinese society. Using Shen Congwen as an example, Prof. Gong’s lecture explored Christian social and spiritual influence on the culture of Chinese ethnic minorities.

Ms. Zhang Shenshen, an award-winning Pipa virtuoso from the Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra in the Bay Area played folk music from the region. Both the lecture and the music performance can be viewed at: http://usf.usfca.edu/ricci/events/index.htm

2011-2012 Ricci Institute Awards Two Chinese Doctoral Students Malatesta Scholarships to honor the memory of Rev. Edward J. Malatesta, S.J., founding director of the Ricci Institute, for his contributions to the history of Chinese–Western cultural exchange and to promote research by Chinese scholars on topics related to the history of Christianity in China.

MEI Rong, Center for Mongolian Studies at Inner Mongolia University, China. Her dissertation topic is History of Christianity in Western Inner Mongolia during the 19th and 20th centuries.

WANG Miao, Center for Modern Chinese History at Central China Normal University, China. His dissertation is War, Christianity, and Nationalism: A Case Study of Methodist Episcopal Church in Northern China during the Anti-Japanese War (1937 – 1945).
Narratives from the Hinterland Presents Two Programs in Central China and Publishes Two Primary Resource Books

Narratives from the Hinterland is a research and educational program that promotes the study of Chinese-Western cultural history through Christianity in remote areas of China. Supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, the USF Ricci Institute held two programs in Hunan and Henan.

Entitled Literature and Religion: Reflections of the Literati from the Hinterland of China in the Late Qing and Republican Era, the Hunan program held in April included a series of lectures on methodology in comparative culture, modern literature and history, and comparative literature. The seminar following was attended by scholars from more than 20 universities and research institutions, with topics ranging from studies of modern Chinese social movements and literature to the influence of Christian faith on Chinese literati. The program held in Henan carried the title Cultural Encounters in the Central Plain Region of China: Social Changes and Christianity along the Mid-and-Lower Stream of the Yellow River. It featured public lectures on historiography of cross-cultural encounters and utilization of primary sources both in China and abroad. Scholars presented their research on issues relating to history, educational and medical enterprises, famine relief, missionary biographical studies, and identity of local Christians in Henan, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Hebei, Shandong, and Anhui provinces.

The USF Ricci Institute worked with Chinese scholars in remote provinces and produced two collections of primary resources this year. These publications provide access to documentary sources from Inner Mongolia and South China on the history of Christianity in China.

New Library Acquisitions on Matteo Ricci

The 400th anniversary of the passing of Matteo Ricci in 1610 has been commemorated with exhibitions, symposia, publications, broadcast news and videos in many countries, especially in Italy, China, and the United States. Our acquisitions include:


A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610, by Ronnie Po-chia Hsia (Oxford University Press, 2010). Hsia details Ricci’s training and development leading to his historic cultural encounter with the Ming empire, and his intellectual engagement with leading scholars of the period.

Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit encounter with the East, by Mary Laven (London Faber & Faber, 2011). Laven illustrates the challenges and difficulties of the 16th century meeting of Eastern and Western cultures, where Ricci and his fellow Jesuits learn and adapt to a complex new civilization.

Matteo Ricci: incontro di civiltà nella Cina dei Ming (Matteo Ricci: meeting of civilizations in Ming China) by Filippo Mignini (Regione Marche, 2010). Catalog of an exhibition on Ricci and 16th century China and Europe that traveled to Beijing, Shanghai, and Nanjing in 2010 including papers presented in honor of Ricci’s legacy.


Li Madou zhi lu 利瑪竇之路 = In the footsteps of Matteo Ricci = Sulle orme di Matteo Ricci. A video log of a group of 30 Chinese missionaries walking the route taken by Matteo Ricci from Macau to Beijing, showing many places visited by Ricci as they appear today.