A Bridge: Young East Meets Old West

Born in Kansas, I eat Chinese meals at home, but know about burgers. I went to public school on week-days and to Chinese School on Saturdays. I am an ABC: American Born Chinese. People like me have a responsibility: we are “bridges”.

When in Rome earlier this year, I thought of this analogy of being a bridge. There I was, with seven ABC friends in our twenties, wandering the streets of Rome. No doubt, we stood out: dressed like Americans, we clearly looked Asian. Yet, I felt surprisingly comfortable, perhaps because I felt “at home” as a Catholic.

My most awe-inspiring moment was in the Sistine Chapel facing Michelangelo’s Last Judgment. It happens to be the last mural you see, because it is to your back, as you enter the Chapel. When you turn around and find it, you are lost to its complexity, its details. This mural of faith, history, and art conveys a personal message to each onlooker.

That is the purpose of a bridge: to be a conduit between people of different faiths, education, culture and geographic locations, so that both sides can meet. I hope that with the Friends of Ricci and the Ricci Institute I will improve my role as a bridge. I encourage ABCs my age to take advantage of this unique situation and join me in this most meaningful endeavor.

Isabel Chou

Upcoming Event Announcement

Public Lecture on Madonna and Guanyin in the Fall 2004

The Ricci Institute is preparing a public lecture for Fall 2004. Entitled Folk Goddess or Madonna? Early Missionary Encounters with the Image of Guanyin, Ms. Lauren Arnold, a research fellow of the Ricci Institute will discuss the relationship between the image of Madonna and Guanyin through Christian missions between the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

For the actual date and time, please check the Ricci Institute website: www.usfca.edu/ricci or your mailbox for the event announcement postcard.

Gift Enriches Ricci Artifact Collection

A small group of Ming-era (1368-1644) terracotta funerary objects from China were donated to the Ricci Institute recently by Dr. Frank Hill, a retired medical doctor from San Francisco Children’s Hospital. “These objects would have been found in the tomb of a prosperous person,” Dr. Hill said, “and are intended to be miniatures of things the deceased would have owned or used in life.” Over the past two decades the Ricci has built a substantial collection of varied non-library items which include ceramics, textiles, paintings, statuary, and other items, many of them gifts from the Institute’s generous supporters. They are regularly introduced on the Ricci Institute website: http://www.usfca.edu/ricci
Shanghai Cathedral Stained Glass
Windows to be Replaced

Born into a family of government officials, Wo Ye converted to Catholicism. The bishop of Shanghai sent her to the Istituto Beato Angelico in Milan, a school for church artists. In 1999, on a Malatesta scholarship, Wo Ye came to the University of San Francisco and learned how to make stained glass objects from Father Tom Lucas, S.J.

A year later, she returned to Shanghai and established a stained glass workshop with three nuns. Since then, with the help of Shanghai Diocese, she has been working with Father Lucas and others to restore the stained glass in the Xujiahui (Zikawei) Cathedral. The original windows were destroyed during the infamous “cultural revolution.”

Wo Ye will design, supervise the manufacture, and install over 300 square meters of stained glass into Shanghai’s old gothic cathedral.

Teaching Assigned for Dr. Yin Wenjuan at a Jesuit Consortium in China

Dr. Yin Wenjuan (standing), the 2002 recipient of Malatesta Scholarship at the Ricci Institute, graduated from Peking University last August in comparative literature and culture. Her research interests include the “History of Christianity in China” and “History of Sino-Western Cultural Exchange”. She is also working with the Ricci Institute on a project on “Christian Secondary Education in China.” She recently accepted an appointment to teach a class on Chinese religion to American undergraduate students at the Beijing Center for Language and Culture, a consortium of twenty-six American Jesuit Universities in China.

Malatesta Scholarship Endowment Update

Our campaign goal is to raise an endowment of $100,000, which will guarantee a regular annual income in perpetuity. As of June 1, 2004, $77,600 has been raised thanks to the generosity of the members of Friends of Ricci and colleagues and friends of the Ricci Institute.

How to join Friends of Ricci

The fully tax deductible annual membership of Friends of Ricci is used to support various unique programs at the Ricci Institute. For detailed information about how to become a member, please contact us at: 415-422-6401, on the web: http://www.usfca.edu/ricci, or via e-mail at: ricci@usfca.edu