***This is to be used as a mini homily / pulpit announcement for the US-China Catholic Association (USCCA)***

“Inspired by the Gospel, the mission of the US‐China Catholic Association is to build bridges of friendship and dialogue between the people of China and the United States by offering educational, service, and cultural programs in support of the Church and the larger society.”

The statement I just read is the mission statement which animates the China Association in its work of service.

The USCCA was founded in 1989 as a collaborative effort of concerned bishops of the United States, Maryknoll, the Jesuits, and several other religious congregations.

At that time, China had recently reopened to the world.

Catholic organizations in the U.S. then reached out to partner with the Chinese Catholic Church as it struggled to get back on its feet after many years of oppression and persecution.

Today, in China, there are some 12 million Catholics.   
Parishes and seminaries have been reopened.   
Congregations of religious sisters have been reestablished.

While in many places the Church operates openly, it does so under the supervision and restrictions imposed by Chinese authorities.   
In other areas, there are “underground” Catholics who attempt to operate outside of government supervision.

Unfortunately, recently, the government and the Chinese Communist Party have reasserted their authority and launched a harsh drive requiring all religions to further conform to the Chinese ways of doing things.

Its policies are exacerbating the tensions that already exist between Church leaders who try to work with the government and those who operate outside official channels.

In this difficult context, the US-China Catholic Association works to promote dialogue and maintain bridges between Catholics in China and in the U.S.

In order to keep Americans better informed of the circumstances facing Catholics in China, the USCCA sponsors a bimonthly newsletter, maintains an informative website, and runs an ongoing speaker series with both local and online participation.

The China Association also hosts a bi-annual international conference that brings together Chinese Catholics, supporters of the USCCA, and a wide range of experts in order to reflect on the challenge of living the Gospel in contemporary society.

They partner with other groups that sponsor Chinese sisters and priests for sabbatical programs and graduate study.

Each year they also host annual religious study tours for American clergy, professors, journalists, and lay people to participate in our mission of building bridges.

In addition, they serve as a year-round network to respond to the needs and requests of Church leaders in China.

This year, in particular, they were able to promote networking in between Catholic organizations in China and the U.S. in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

At present they are launching a new Campus Outreach Initiative.

Currently over 450,000 Chinese international students study at U.S. high schools and universities.

In view of this reality, the China Association is working with partners to assist teachers, professors, counselors, and campus ministers better host and engage these young people.

We trust that the seeds of faith and friendship that we plant will, with the nurture of the Holy Spirit, bear fruit in the lives of these young people. It is they will go on to make a difference in China and the world in the years ahead.

All recent popes have sought to strengthen the faithful in China.

John Paul the 2nd reached out to Chinese leadership to initiate a conversation concerning the status of our clergy under communist authority.

Pope Benedict the 16th wrote a milestone pastoral letter to promote unity and reconciliation within the Chinese Catholic community.

And since his accession, Pope Francis has reached out to Chinese leaders in fraternal charity.

The Church in China needs our ongoing support in the effort of sharing the Gospel with the people of China.

At this time in history, more people in China are able to see and embrace the hope that is held out in the Gospel.

Christianity has been growing faster than ever before in Chinese history.

At this time when the Chinese Communist Party is increasing restrictions on religion with each passing day, more and more young people are looking for meaning and finding it in the Gospel, your support of their mission will make a greater difference than ever.

To learn more, please visit their website - USCatholicChina.org

We thank you for your time, attention, and generosity. God bless you.