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China's Predicament

China's predicament is not a new one, rather a continuation of an old problem that dates back to the Tang Dynasty in the 600's. At that time Nestorian Christians entered China and introduced their ideas into Chinese life.

Ever since, China has found it difficult to know how to deal with foreigners, especially Westerners.

Today China owns a lot of western debt. How can it relate to the Western world and still retain its own cultural values?

One can say that China is now a modern society, but the better question is, is it a developed society? A modern society can have the most up to date electronic gadgets, but still live as if an agrarian one in social structures.

A developed society is one where the citizens enjoy good social conditions and quality of life including health care, happiness, sense of wellbeing, education, social structures that provide for all needy people and minimum governmental intrusion.

For centuries, China has been in tension with the West. Start with the opium wars of the 1840's, the Taiping Rebellion in 1860, the Boxer Rebellion in 1901 and more recently the communist take-over in 1949 resulting in many foreigners being expelled.

More specifically for us Catholics, the problem continues of how the Chinese government will relate in the future towards Christianity.

There is an uneasy peace between the Vatican and Beijing. The ordination of bishops without the approval of Rome and the removal of some underground Catholic Church priests has chilled relations.

Yet I believe that because of the growth of communications, the Chinese government is destined to fail to prevent the spread of Christianity.

It is like a flood, stop it one place and it leaks in someplace else. China can't have it both ways, a market economy that engages the West and also not have Christian philosophy which underpins an open market system.

Christian freedom is contagious. Russia found that out.

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