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Tianjin Report 1

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ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF TIANJIN ARCHIVE AND LIBRARY RESTORATION PROJECT
REPORT - FORMER LAZARIST LIBRARY
天津羅馬天主教區書庫報告

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24 November 2012

Outline Notes Regarding Archival Visit to Xikai Bishop's Residence (26 October 2011):

- I. On Tuesday (10/25/2011): At Xikai Cathedral 西開座堂 met with the cathedral rector, Fr. Leo Zhang Liang 張良神父. Fr. Zhang arranged for Fr. Zhu Lige 朱立戈神父 to meet us after 7:30 am Mass the following the morning.
 - a. Fr. Zhang is the vice-chairman of the Tianjin Catholic Patriotic Association (張良神父，天津天主教愛國會副主任).
 - b. Fr. Zhu Lige is the chairman of the Tianjin Catholic Patriotic Association (張良神父，天津天主教愛國會主任).
 - c. Fr. Zhang noted that in 1966 the Red Guards did in fact remove a large portion of the cathedral's documents and books (and photographs) and burned them in front of the church. The authorities also took some historic photographs and documents and moved them to the Tianjin museum (天津博物館).

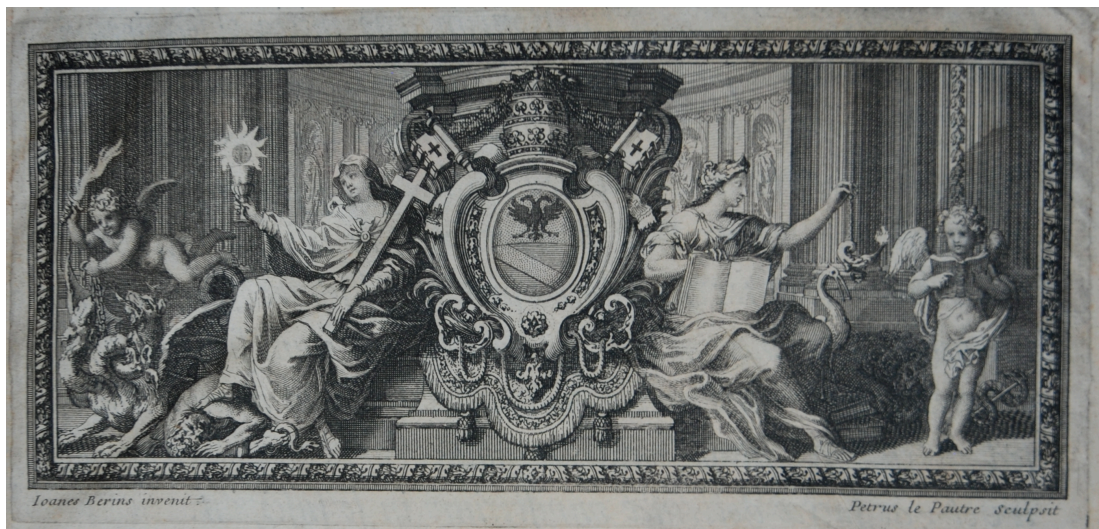
- II. On Wednesday (10-26-2011): met with Fr. Zhang after Mass.
 - a. Fr. Zhang arranged a meeting in the reception room, where we were met and were vetted by Fr. Zhu Lige, who outlined for me a brief history of the library/archive.
 - i. 1950: French Lazarists were forced out of China, and they left their library and documents in the cathedral bishop's residence.
 - ii. 1960s: Red Guards removed some of the collection and burned it outside the church. They also pulled down the crosses on top of the cathedral and destroyed the church's holy objects.
 - iii. In the 1960s/70s, the local authorities removed historic photographs and documents, and moved them to the state archive and museum. Again, in the 1980s several priests removed some of the works and objects held in the diocesan collection, and Fr. Zhu informed us that only a few historical images and official diocesan documents remain.

- III. The upper, second floor: this section of the Tianjin Diocesan library/archive is where much of the collection resides, and the collection is in poor condition. Father Zhao Mingsheng 趙明生神父 was assigned to remain with us throughout the day: we had a very nice lunch with him. Fr. Zhao was born in Taiyuan 太原, so we discussed Taiyuan's Catholic culture.
 - a. Most of what remains on this floor consists of French books on Church and Chinese mission history, theology, missiology, and dictionaries. There is also an impressive number of boxed edition Chinese books, most of which are Chinese classics.
 - b. We sketched a diagram of the collection as it appeared to us on the second floor, and then counted the books to produce an estimate of the entire collection today.

- c. We preserved some of the more valuable works (using sheep oil for leather preservation), and identified works related to the Church in China. Some of these works were on the Chinese martyrs, and several journals from the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary were located. All of these works are in terrible neglect, and are being ruined by dust, mildew, and vermin.
 - d. We informed Fathers Zhang and Zhu that we have applied for a grant to return to Tianjin, and that I would dedicate some of my time to restoring and organizing the Tianjin collection if I receive that funding.
 - i. We are still awaiting final news regarding funding for restoration of the collection.
 - ii. Fr. Zhang requested historical photos related to the Tianjin Diocese, which they hope to use for their 100-year anniversary in 2012.
 - e. We finished our work and arranged with Fr. Zhu to look at collection on the lower floor on 27 October, 2011.
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Notes from Archival Visit to Xikai Bishop's Residence (27 October 2011):

- I. We began this day with a pleasant meeting with Fr. Zhang Liang in his office on the first floor of the bishop's residence.
 - a. We returned to the library on the second floor, where we photographed several works dedicated to the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary mission in China, as well as other works on Catholic martyrs in China during the late Qing.
- II. Finally, we began to note the state and contents of the first floor library, which is in even worse decay and disorder than the collection kept on the second floor.
 - a. The library (書庫) consists of a long narrow room with an impressive collection of works dedicated to the lives of saints, Catholic schools in China, and theology, principally written in French. There also included a large, wall-sized Republican Era hand-drawn map of the Diocese of Tianjin.
 - b. One of the books in a box was a Latin account of the first synodal meeting in China (Shanghai). Other works included the complete letters of Saints Jean-Gabriel Perboyre and Francois Regis-Clet, who both died in Wuhan, China, during the late Qing.
 - c. The bookshelves are precariously placed against the walls and double-stacked; one had collapsed and was supported by several boxes, themselves on the verge of collapse. The preservation of this collection shall require a rather large commitment of recourses, both financial and regarding labor.



2011: Engraving from a rare book in the Former Lazarist Library (Tianjin, China).

Selected Images of the Former Lazarist Library:



1966: Red Guard destruction of church and library materials (Tianjin, China).



2011: Former Lazarist Library, second floor bookshelves (Tianjin, China).



2011: Former Lazarist Library, sample of the second floor rare Western books (Tianjin, China).



2011: Former Lazarist Library, sample of the second floor rare Chinese books (Tianjin, China).



2011: Former Lazarist Library, condition of the first floor (Tianjin, China).



2011: Dr. Anthony E. Clark at the Former Lazarist Library, second floor (Tianjin, China).