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I have prayed so much for you!

Bishop Javier Echevarría visited Hong Kong and Macau from 14th to 18th July 2008. Echoing the sentiments of St Josemaría, he told everyone, “I have prayed so much for you. I will continue to do so even when I leave.”

08/04/2008

Bishop Javier Echevarria stopped over and spent 3 full days in Hong Kong and Macau as he travelled towards Sydney. He was going to

concelebrate with the Pope for the Final Mass of the XXIII World Youth Day 2008.

He arrived late at midnight at Hong Kong International Airport on July 14 from New Delhi, and left early on July 18 to continue his journey onwards to Sydney.

His love for China

Bishop Javier Echevarria had last visited Hong Kong and Macau 12 years ago in 1996. Thus this stopover en route to Sydney was greatly looked forward to by members and friends living in what are today Special Administrative Regions of China: Hong Kong SAR (1997) and Macau SAR (1999).

In those 12 years, Hong Kong had changed notably, with newer and taller skyscrapers built up densely on the narrow strip of land on the slopes of Hong Kong Peak, right up to

the waterfront. He remarked that the roads criss-crossing up and down the slopes of the peak served as a reminder for him of the effort we should exert to make Christ known to more souls in Hong Kong, in Macau and in China.

“I can say that I have lived with a priest who loves China with all his soul,” referring to St Josemaria, “He is more Chinese than you all!”

Though St Josemaria did not have the chance to be in these lands, he had prayed so much for China, for Asia.

“I have in mind this great nation, great for many reasons, that is China... I pray that the seed sown by so many, with their blood and suffering, may bear fruit as soon as possible. We love her people and all those of Asia, and we ask the Mother of God to obtain the light of peace from her Son for all of them.”(St Josemaria, 24-V-1970,

before our Lady of Guadalupe,
Mexico)

Devotion to our Lady

Bishop Javier called on Cardinal Zen on the morning of July 15, after he had spent some moments praying before our Lady at the Cathedral of the Immacualte Conception.

On July 16, he spent the day in Macau, meeting members, their families and friends. Being the feast day of our Lady of Mount Carmel, he visited the Church dedicated to her on Taipa island. Making reference to our Lady as he began a get-together later that afternoon, Bishop Javier encouraged everyone to have greater devotion to her, and “to serve as she served, and to be cheerful as she was cheerful.”

Meeting families and young people

One of the highlights of his last day, July 17, was a visit made to Tak Sun Secondary School. Students and teachers looked forward to meet him and to show him around their campus that was built in 2000. The spiritual direction of Tak Sun Secondary School is entrusted to priests of Opus Dei.

In the late afternoon, several families were waiting in the school to greet him with their children. George and his wife came from Shen-zhen, China, and were meeting Bishop Javier for the first time. They were moved to see his affection for them and their children.

General get-together on July 17

At 7 pm that evening, he had a gathering with some 700 people in the auditorium of the school: members of Opus Dei, their families, colleagues and friends. The Father was just as enthusiastic as we were

to be with him; it was an evening of family conversation and dialogue.

With fatherly concern, he urged us all to live a deeper Christian fraternity, loving everyone –even those who may think very differently from us– and without imposing our faith. We should always try to go forward with our example as Christians who try to work well, to be punctual, to have a spirit of service and who are ready to help our colleagues amiably. We have to be approachable, living with the cheerfulness and joy of those who know themselves to be children of God.

“Make the effort to live this fraternity with everybody. Make the effort to live this Christian brotherhood.” He reminded us that fraternity lived cheerfully would be the way to reach all the millions of souls that await Christ in China.

Bishop Javier took questions from several of those present. In his reply to a young student from Hong Kong University, he said that all that happens in our day could be occasions for coming closer to God. The spiritual training that Opus Dei offers can help her on her journey towards holiness, helping her to take advantage of her ordinary life to be more immersed in God. “What joy we must have to know that our Lord listens to us, that he has sought you out from the very beginning...” He urged everyone to fight to be better Christians each day; everyone ought to feel the urgency to be holy!

The family: a fountain of love

In answer to another question, he emphasized the importance of family love. “When there is love, people remain young at heart!” A united family is a wonderful thing, and parents have to be courageous to

remove anything that could be an obstacle to family unity, even if it means turning off the television that intrudes into family conversation. “I know a family who decided not to have a television set. And the mother told me that after they got rid of it, they talked to each other more at home, and they were happier than before!”

He also encouraged young parents to be generous, to be open to life. This openness is an expression of the self-giving of the husband to the wife, and of the wife to the husband. He made us laugh when he added, “Without putting myself as an example, I can tell you that I come from a family of 8 children. It was a joy to get home from school. There was always someone to play with, someone to talk to... and also someone to fight with!” He reminded married couples that their happiness would not lie in having more things.

True happiness was in the joy of loving each other more, of being open to the children that God may send, so that more souls can come to share in His Goodness.

A father's blessing

Before he concluded the get-together with his blessing, he told us, “I have learnt a lot from you while I am here; to be of service, to be punctual. I have received so much and I have no way to repay you other than with my prayers and mortification.” Then he pointed out that for us Catholics, there was still one other powerful way: - the renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary. He assured us that he would keep us in his intentions when he celebrated Holy Mass.

“I care for China! You are my brothers in faith. I have tried to pray so much for everyone. I will continue to do so even when I leave.”

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