



Foederatio Internationalis *Una Voce*

Positio N. 23

THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM
AND CHINA

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From the General Introduction

These papers, commissioned by the International Federation *Una Voce*, are offered to stimulate and inform debate about the 1962 Missal among Catholics ‘attached to the ancient Latin liturgical tradition’, and others interested in the liturgical renewal of the Church. They are not to be taken to imply personal or moral criticism of those today or in the past who have adopted practices or advocated reforms which are subjected to criticism. In composing these papers we adopt the working assumption that our fellow Catholics act in good will, but that nevertheless a vigorous and well-informed debate is absolutely necessary if those who act in good will are to do so in light of a proper understanding of the issues.

The authors of the papers are not named, as the papers are not the product of any one person, and also because we prefer them to be judged on the basis of their content, not their authorship.

The International Federation *Una Voce* humbly submits the opinions contained in these papers to the judgement of the Church.

The Extraordinary Form and China: Abstract

Because of the unique recent history of the Catholic Church in China, the Extraordinary Form has continued to be said alongside the Ordinary Form. The paper argues that the affinity between classical Chinese culture, and notably Confucianism, and the Faith, continues to be relevant in the context of the Extraordinary Form, as the values of continuity, discipline and respect for the sacred continue to be valued, and needed, in the China of today. The Extraordinary Form is moreover helpful in many of the difficulties facing the Church in China today, including linguistic pluralism, poor catechesis, and liturgical indiscipline.

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POSITIO 23: THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM AND CHINA

1. The complex recent history of the Church in China has resulted in the survival of the Extraordinary Form, alongside the Ordinary Form, which was not introduced until the 1980s.¹ This raises the question of the relationship between the Extraordinary Form and Chinese culture; evangelisation; the attitude of the state; and the needs and resources of the Church in China today.
2. The ‘Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association’ (CPCA), part of the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State, was created in 1957, as an officially approved organisation for the Catholic Faithful, in contrast to the ‘underground’ Church. Today most bishops of the CPCA exercise a legitimate ministry,² and the Faithful of the underground Church may attend their services. However, it remains impossible to establish an Episcopal Conference recognised by the Holy See.³
3. Between them, the CPCA and the underground Church have, on a conservative estimate, about 15 million Faithful. Despite the many difficulties of the Church in China, the Church is growing rapidly, although less rapidly than some Protestant groups.

The Jesuit Mission and Chinese Culture

4. The Jesuit mission of the 17th and 18th centuries, faced with the highly sophisticated culture of Imperial China, made remarkable strides in inculturation, making use of these aspects of European culture of interest and value to the Chinese, and incorporating Chinese culture into the life of the nascent Church in China.
5. One central idea of the Jesuit approach, particularly associated with the work of the Servant of God, Fr Matteo Ricci SJ (1552-1610), was the affinity of Confucianism with the Faith.⁴ Fr Ricci adopted the Confucian term ‘Lord of Heaven’ to refer to God,⁵ and began the translation of key Confucian texts. Confucianism stresses the individual’s duties towards family and society, and a profound respect for tradition.
6. Confucius’ concept of ‘*li*’, often translated ‘the rites’ but encompassing social as well as religious ritual, connects the idea of the objective importance of cultural and religious behaviour to the moral life, as is illustrated by two Confucian texts reproduced in Appendix A. Strikingly, while not shying away from the importance of the pagan sacrificial cult in the first of these texts, in the second the Jesuits render *li* as ‘primaevum temperamentum naturae rationalis’,⁶ a reflection of its wide range and connection with self-control and the moral life. Confucian ideas find many echoes in the Catholic tradition: the integration of culture as a whole, including art, music, letters, and manners, in a Catholic society; the role of the liturgy

¹ The Ordinary Form began to be considered by the CPCA in 1984. The first Mass in Chinese in Shanghai Diocese was said in the Seminary of Sheshan on the feast day of St. Jerome (September 30th) in 1989. A similar delay in the implementation of the reform occurred in some countries of the Soviet bloc in central Europe.

² In recent years, the Holy See has agreed in advance to the ordination of some bishops of the CPCA, and others, ordained without Papal mandate, have been reconciled to the Holy See following their ordination.

³ Pope Benedict XVI, 2007: *Letter to Chinese Catholics* 7

⁴ In contrast with other philosophico-religious systems found in China, such as Taoism and Buddhism.

⁵ *Tiānzǔ*; the term is still used by Chinese Catholics today. Protestants use another term, *Shangdi*.

⁶ ‘youthful moderation of rational nature’.

as the foundation for the Christian life,⁷ and the stress on the objective importance of the rite, as performative, and not merely didactic, something manifested notably by the use of silent liturgical prayer.⁸

7. The Jesuit mission was seriously impeded by the long controversy over the ‘Chinese Rites’,⁹ whose compatibility with the Faith was long disputed, leading to a prolonged persecution of the Church. In 1939 Pope Pius XII ruled that Catholics could licitly assist at them.¹⁰

The Church under Communism

8. From 1949, however, the new, Communist government rejected classical Chinese culture, and anything savouring of foreign interference. This policy applied with special ferocity during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Christians of all kinds continue to face restrictions and persecution in China today, something illustrated by the fact that there are only eight Catholic churches¹¹ in central Beijing, a city of more than 21 million souls.
9. In recent years the state has softened its attitude to classical culture and traditional religions, even setting up ‘Confucius Institutes’ around the world to promote Chinese culture and the teaching of the Chinese language. The ideology of Communism being undermined by the collapse of the Soviet Union and rapid economic development, ‘lack of belief’ is regarded as a major social problem, even at official levels.
10. The question arises of whether Catholicism could come to be viewed officially as a source of social stability, rather than of (particularly foreign) subversion.¹² One hopeful historical parallel is Bismark’s ending his attack on the Church, the ‘kulturkampf’, in 1878. Whereas he had regarded the Catholic Church as an affront to the power of the state, he came to see her as a bulwark against socialism.¹³ The traditional liturgy expresses, through its language and ritual, the values of continuity, integrity, and respect for the sacred, which are widely recognised as sorely needed in the China of the 21st century.¹⁴

⁷ See Second Vatican Council Decree on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14: the liturgy is ‘the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit.’

⁸ See Positio 9: ‘Silence and Inaudibility in the Extraordinary Form’, especially 10.

⁹ Ceremonies honouring family and community ancestors and Confucius himself, carried out in domestic and civic contexts.

¹⁰ Pius XII, 8th December 1939, Decree *Plane compertum*.

¹¹ Including the chapel of the diocesan seminary, but not including non-public places of worship. The underground Church often uses private homes for the celebration of Mass. Another indication of the lack of places of worship is that resort has to be made to ticket-only admittance to Midnight Mass at Christmas. The tickets are distributed, free of charge, at Masses on the third and fourth Sundays of Advent to the Faithful who want them, but with a limitation on numbers.

¹² In an article dated 1st November 2014, *The Economist* reported: ‘In recent years the [Chinese Communist] party’s concerns have shifted from people’s beliefs to the maintenance of stability and the party’s monopoly of power. If working with churches helps achieve these aims, it will do so, even though it still frets about encouraging an alternative source of authority.’ The article noted government officials asking for help from Hong Kong Christians to set up NGOs and charities, and local government in some parts of China sponsoring the construction of some favoured Christian churches, even while in other places churches are forcibly demolished. It also noted the disadvantage faced by Catholics deriving from the Chinese State’s hostility to adherence to the Holy See.

¹³ Something manifested in electoral terms by the increasing importance of the Catholic Centre Party.

¹⁴ A recognition manifested not only the state’s evolving attitude to traditional religions and Confucianism, but by initiatives such as the ‘Oxford Consensus’, a statement of common concerns by Chinese intellectuals of the New Left, Neo-Confucian, and Christian traditions at a meeting in Oxford, England, in 2013.

The use of the vernacular in the Church in China today

11. One early Jesuit project was the translation of the Roman Missal into Mandarin,¹⁵ whose role in classical Chinese culture appeared to make it suitable as a liturgical language, even, or perhaps especially, since it was not the language of everyday speech. In the context of the Chinese Rites controversy and the persecution of the Church, the use of this Missal never became established.
12. Vernacularisation since the Second Vatican Council has proceeded without the same connection with classical culture. The Mandarin of the Ordinary Form in China today is modern in style and vocabulary, makes use of ‘simplified’ characters,¹⁶ and long-used vernacular prayers have also been revised.¹⁷
13. Mandarin is not, however, the only language of mainland China, and the other vernaculars, for which there are no special Missals, present a number of difficulties. One problem is that there are no translations of the liturgy into non-Chinese languages spoken by large populations, such as Hmong, Tibetan, Uighur, and Mongolian.¹⁸
14. Other problems arise in the case of the Faithful who speak Chinese dialects or regional languages. The most important of these is Cantonese, which is also the language of Hong Kong and Macau, and the most widely used language of the Chinese diaspora. The method employed for congregations dominated by the speakers of such languages, which are mutually incomprehensible, is to read the Mandarin text using the local pronunciation. This may render the words intelligible, but it is far from being the case that the words, as locally understood, are necessarily what would be chosen by a competent translator of the original text. Furthermore, the grammar remains that of Mandarin.
15. The overall result may be understood by its hearers to the degree that the local language is close to Mandarin, and the Faithful have a Mandarin education. For Cantonese speakers, especially those in the diaspora who have not benefitted from a Chinese education, and whose second language, if any, is more likely to be English than Mandarin, the result is often entirely incomprehensible. The problem can be exacerbated when texts are sung.¹⁹ The problem could

¹⁵ It was translated by Fr Ludovic Bugli SJ, and permitted for use by Pope Paul V in 1615.

¹⁶ Traditional Chinese characters are used in Missals, as in other contexts, in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. The ‘Simplified’ writing system has been promoted by the Chinese state since the 1950s, and the Ordinary Form Missal using it was produced by the authority of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, starting in 1992.

¹⁷ Traditional versions remain in use alongside the new translations.

¹⁸ Korean is also spoken, both by the ethnic Korean Chinese of the Northeast and by visitors and immigrants. Although a Korean Missal exists, Korean congregations in China tend to be faced with a liturgy conducted mainly in Mandarin, to which the Faithful make responses in Korean. Such linguistic confusion can also be seen with congregations comprising both Mandarin and Cantonese speakers, even in Masses organised for the Chinese community in London.

¹⁹ One of many possible examples, and not the most distressing, is the response to the Prayers of the Faithful (Bidding Prayers), the equivalent of ‘Lord hear us’. In Mandarin the phrase ‘Lord of Heaven’ (or ‘Heavenly Lord’) is used, and with a particular, and widely used, musical setting, while sounding perfectly correct in Mandarin, means ‘Heavenly Pig’ (or ‘Sky Pig’) in Cantonese. The way this happens is described below; the change results from the role of pitch in the meaning of Cantonese words.

天	主	聽	我	禱	聲	(Mandarin words)
tin1	jyu2	ting3	ngo5	tou2	sing1	(Cantonese pronunciation)
So	So	Mi	Fa	So	La	(The solfege of the line)
tin1	jyu1	ting6	ngo4	tou1	sing1	(How it sounds when sung)

not be solved simply by translating the Missal into Cantonese and the other regional languages, since these languages do not have a formal written form.²⁰

16. The delivery of a Mandarin text with a non-Mandarin pronunciation cannot, in fact, be described as a natural language. The Chinese method of writing traditionally assisted non-Mandarin speakers to understand a text composed by a Mandarin speaker, and even to compose one which would be understood in turn; the reading aloud of a Mandarin text with local pronunciation is not the use of a language anyone would actually speak. The question arises of the suitability of such an artificial language for the liturgy; it is certainly far from ideal.²¹
17. A final difficulty is that the Church is in danger of presenting herself as an ally of the State policy of the promotion of Mandarin.²² This is inevitably at the expense, not only of minority languages, but of the cultures which are expressed in them, cultures already under pressure from rapid economic development and urbanisation.
18. For all these reasons, the use of Latin in the liturgy has obvious advantages.²³

The Needs and Resources of the Church in China

19. The celebration of the Extraordinary Form in China today is limited most of all by a lack of Latin among the younger clergy. Deficiencies in seminary formation were noted in Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 *Letter to Chinese Catholics*.²⁴ The absence of Latin from the liturgy

Jyu2 (主) means 'lord', while jyu1 (豬) means 'pig'.

²⁰ With some effort, Cantonese can be written informally with the use of homonyms: that is, using a Mandarin character to represent not the Mandarin word or what that word means, but a Cantonese word which sounds the same.

²¹ The use of artificial languages such as Esperanto in the liturgy is more restricted than the use of natural languages. Cf. the Instruction of the Congregation for Divine Worship *Liturgiam Authenticam* (2001) 17: 'As for the use of "artificial" languages, proposed from time to time, the approval of texts as well as the granting of permission for their use in liturgical celebrations is strictly reserved to the Holy See. This faculty will be granted only for particular circumstances and for the pastoral good of the faithful, after consultation with the Bishops principally involved.' ('Circa usum linguarum «artificiosarum» qui interdum temporum decursu est propositus, textuum approbatio, necnon facultatis concessio, eos in actionibus liturgicis adhibendi, Sanctae Sedi stricte reservatur, quae facultas solummodo in peculiaribus rerum adiunctis atque pro bono pastoralis fidelium tribuitur, collatis consiliis cum Episcopis quibus maius interest.') The passage concludes with a footnote reference to the permission given for the use of Esperanto in the liturgy. As a language deliberately created for written and verbal use, Esperanto, though more artificial, is at any rate more linguistically coherent than the languages considered here.

²² 'Standard Chinese'—Mandarin—is for example often the language of instruction in schools in preference to local dialect.

²³ Cf. St Pope John XXIII Apostolic Constitution *Veterum Sapientia* (1962) 3. 'Of its very nature Latin is most suitable for promoting every culture among diverse peoples, for it gives no rise to jealousies, it does not favour any one group, but presents itself with equal impartiality, gracious and friendly to all' ('Suae enim sponte naturae lingua Latina ad provehendum apud populos quoslibet omnem humanitatis cultum est peraccommodata: cum invidiam non commoveat, singulis gentibus se aequabilem praestet, nullius partibus faveat, omnibus postremo sit grata et amica.')

²⁴ *Letter to Chinese Catholics* 8

reinforces its absence from the study of theology,²⁵ even while the academic study of Latin is growing in China.²⁶

20. Pope Benedict's other concerns, in his *Letter*, are inadequate catechesis, including of adult converts to the Faith,²⁷ and problems of discipline, notably in the area of priestly celibacy.²⁸ The discipline and theological content of the Extraordinary Form has special advantages in this context, and can give effective witness to many of the Church's teachings, even if it is not the Form most often celebrated.
21. Unauthorised liturgical developments have also made an appearance, such as the reception of Holy Communion standing and in the hand.²⁹ The liturgical discipline associated with the Extraordinary Form is particularly useful in this context.
22. Important resources for learning the Extraordinary Form have recently become available in China,³⁰ and Gregorian Chant is also undergoing a revival.³¹

Conclusion

23. This paper has argued for a particular affinity of the ancient liturgical tradition with Chinese culture and the needs of Chinese society today, and its usefulness in meeting the challenges facing the Church in China. China's unique situation derives both from its diversity, including a linguistic diversity; its extraordinarily rapid development; and the loss of continuity in relation to its own classical culture and values, as a result of Communist rule. The qualities of stability and universality, represented by the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, its reassertion of the importance of reverence, and the theological richness of its ceremonies and texts, seem particularly suited to this situation. By a chance of Chinese history, the Extraordinary Form is today available and appreciated by the Chinese Faithful, more widely than in almost any other country in the world. For this to continue, however, special attention must be given to the training of a new generation of priests to celebrate it.

²⁵ Positio 12: *Latin in Seminaries*

²⁶ Notably the Latinitas Sinica or the Beijing Latin Centre, in Beijing Foreign Studies University; centres of Latin teaching have also been established in Renmin University in Beijing, Sun Yat-san University in Guangzhou, and in Fudan University in Shanghai.

²⁷ *Letter to Chinese Catholics* 17

²⁸ *Letter to Chinese Catholics* 14

²⁹ Without an Episcopal Conference recognised by the Holy See, permission for this cannot even be requested for China. The practice has spread in both Forms of the Roman Rite since the late 1990s, and particularly during the SARS (Atypical Pneumonia, 'Bird Flu') epidemic of 2003, although it is still far from universal.

³⁰ Most notably, Bishop Li Jingfeng of Fengxiang Diocese in Shaanxi Province has on his own initiative published an edition of the 1962 Missal with a parallel translation for study purposes. Also noteworthy is the launch in the Summer of 2014 of a version of the instructional video for teaching the Extraordinary Form produced by the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter, with commentary in Mandarin and Cantonese, an initiative of the Traditional Catholic community in Hong Kong.

³¹ It is promoted notably in the Guang Qi Music School run by the Diocese of Shanghai, whose courses are attended by musicians from all over China.

Appendix A: Two Confucian Texts

The affinity of Confucianism with the Catholic Faith claimed by Fr Matteo Ricci and his successors, and their own achievement in entering into Chinese culture, can be illustrated with two passages from Confucius' *Analects*, with reference to the translation into Latin produced by Fr Ricci's Jesuit successors. This was published in 1687 under the title *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus sive Scientia Sinensis Latine Exposita*.

Translation from the Latin

VIII 21: Confucius said: As to the Emperor Yu, I do not have nor can I discover anything to blame. He was sparing and remarkably moderate in drink and in food: but he was exceptionally generous, splendid, and elegant where the Spirits were concerned. Generally his dress was quite plain; but whenever he carried out sacred rituals there was a kind of exquisite adornment and splendour about his priestly vesture and head covering. The Palace was humble and far from lavish; but he deployed and exhausted all the resources of his mind and treasury in channelling water that needed routing down to the sea, and in making reservoirs against times of drought. So in Yu I do not have nor can I discover anything to blame.

XII 1: To overcome oneself, and so to return to that youthful moderation of rational nature [li], is to have acquired innocence of heart and perfection [ren]. If all mortals were to overcome themselves for but a single day and get back to that moderation, then the whole world would return to its innate innocence and perfection.

Latin text

VIII 21: Confucius ait: Quod attinet ad *Yu* Imperatorem, ego non habeo nec invenio, quod arguam. Parcus erat ac mire temperans potus et cibi: Idem tamen maxime liberalis, magnificus, ac mundus erga spiritus. Admodum vulgaris passim erat ei vestitus: Eiusdem tamen summus quidam ornatus ac splendour erat in veste sacerdotali et tiara, quotiescumque sacris operabatur. Humile erat minimeque sumptuosum Palatium: Idem tamen exerebat et exhauriebat omnes animi, et aerarii facultates in aquarum in mare derivandarum ductus et earumbem receptacula pro siccitatis tempore. In *Yu* ergo non habeo ego nec invenio quod arguam.

XII 1: Vincere seipsum, atque ita reidire ad primaevum illud temperamentum naturae rationalis [li], hoc est obtinuisse cordis innocentiam et perfectionem [ren]. Mortales universi vel unico die si vincerent seipsos et redirent ad temperamentum illud; tunc orbis universis redirect ad innocentiam nativam et perfectionem.

Modern

*translation*³²

VIII 21: The Master said, With Yu I can find no fault. He ate and drank the meanest fare while making offerings to ancestral spirits and to gods with the utmost devotion proper to a descendant. He wore coarse clothes while sparing no splendour in his robes and caps on sacrificial occasions. He lived in lowly dwellings while devoting all his energy to the building of irrigation canals. With Yu I can find no fault.

XII 1: To return to the observance of the rites [li] through overcoming the self constitutes benevolence [ren]. If for a single day a man could return to the observance of the rites by overcoming himself, then the whole Empire would consider benevolence to be his.³³

³² Confucius *Analects* trans D.C. Lau (London: Penguin, 1979)

³³ Other modern translations of this passage concur with the Jesuits in understanding the final result to be the conversion of the world (or Empire). The power of good example of the ruler, in performing the 'rites', to convert the ordinary people, is affirmed in many other passages of the *Analects*. Cf. *Analects* IX 14, XII 17-18, XIII 1-2, 6, 13, XIV 41 and *passim*.

Appendix B: Prayers for the Church of Silence

Composed by Pope Pius XII; promulgated, with an indulgence, 16th July 1957.³⁴

O Lord Jesus, King of martyrs, Thou art the comfort of the afflicted and firm support of all who suffer for love of Thee and by reason of their loyalty to Thy Spouse Holy Mother the Church. In Thy mercy give ear to our fervent prayer in behalf of our brethren of the 'Church of Silence' that they may never be disheartened in the struggle nor waver in the faith; rather may they taste the sweetness of the consolations reserved by Thee for those souls whom Thou dost vouchsafe to number among Thy companions on the hill of the cross.

To those who must suffer torment and violence, hunger and fatigue, be Thou the invincible strength sustaining them in their trials and assuring them of the rewards pledged by Thee to those who persevere to the end.

Many, on the other hand, are exposed to moral constraints, which oftentimes prove much more dangerous inasmuch as they are more deceitful; to such then be Thou the light to enlighten their mind, so that they may clearly see the straight path of truth; be Thou also to them a source of strength for the support of their will so that they may triumph in every crisis and never yield to any vacillation or weakness.

Finally, there are those who find it impossible to profess their faith openly, to lead a normal Christian life, to receive the holy sacraments frequently, and to converse familiarly with their spiritual guides. To such be Thou Thyself a hidden altar, an invisible temple, a plenitude of grace and a fatherly voice, helping and encouraging them, providing a remedy for their aching hearts and filling them with joy and peace.

May they be helped by our fervent prayer; let our fraternal solidarity assure them that they are not alone. May their example redound to the edification of the whole Church; especially may it be profitable to us who regard them with no small affection.

Grant, O Lord, that their period of trial be shortened and that very soon all, including also their converted oppressors, may enjoy the freedom of serving and worshipping Thee, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

Composed by Pope St John XXIII; promulgated, with an indulgence, 23rd January 1959.

O Jesus, Son of God, who out of love for Thy Church didst deliver Thyself up for her in order to sanctify her and cause her to appear in Thy presence glorious and without spot (Eph. 5:23-27), behold with eyes of pity the afflictions which Thy mystical Spouse is suffering in certain parts of the Catholic world, particularly now in the vast country of China.

Thou art fully aware, O Lord, of the traps that endanger the souls of Thy faithful; Thou knowest the calumnies uttered by innuendo against Thy Shepherds, Thy ministers and Thy faithful followers, who are eager for the spread of the Gospel and Thy kingdom, which is not of this world! How persistent and pernicious are the efforts to tear asunder the seamless garment of Thy Spouse, the one, holy, catholic, Roman Church, by separating the local hierarchy and community from the one centre of truth, authority and salvation, the See of Peter!

Confronted with such an evil spectacle, we first of all ask Thee to pardon the offenses inflicted on Thee. Indeed, the words addressed by Thee to Saul of Tarsus on the way to

³⁴ The indulgences for these prayers were not renewed in the 1968 *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* and its later editions.

Damascus: 'Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me' (Acts 9:4), so true in olden and recent history, can be applied also in our own day.

We however, will always trust in the power of Thy Father when lifted up on the Cross: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing' (Luke 23:24). As Thy sacrifice was the source of universal salvation, so by Thy grace, may the martyrdoms which the Church, Thy Spouse and our Mother, suffers in various places, redound to the salvation of all men!

O Prince of peace, grant that the bishops and priests, the religious and laity may everywhere and always be 'careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Eph 4:3). May Thy almighty power overcome every human contingency so that the Shepherd's and the flocks may remain obedient to the voice of the one universal Shepherd, the Bishop of Rome, who feels in his heart a sense of responsibility from that supreme aspiration of love: 'Holy Father, keep in Thy name those whom thou hast given Me, that they may be one even as We are.' (John 17:11).

Finally, O Redeemer, look graciously upon the merits and prayers of Thy Mother and our Mother, the majestic Queen of the Missions and of the universal Church; regard also the labours, the sacrifices and the blood of the countless martyrs for the Faith who everywhere have borne and still bear witness to Thee. Above all, however, be mindful of Thy precious Blood, shed for many unto the remission of sins, and grant Thy peace to China and to the whole world inasmuch as hope, victory and peace are had only through Thee, our Lord and immortal King of ages and nations.