

Reflection Thursday Week 14 – Chinese Martyrs 2020

Christianity was first brought to China in the 7th century by Nestorian Eastern Syriac believers. Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in the 13th century. In the early 1300s Peking briefly had a Franciscan archbishop. However most Chinese people particularly Chinese Catholics believe the faith formally arrived in China in 1601 with a permanent mission established by the Chinese-speaking Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci. There are now well over 100 million Christians including protestants in China. *“Let your face shine on us, O Lord, and we shall be saved”* says the psalmist. Despite the different periods of persecution, Christianity continues to grow in China. Certainly, the face of the Lord shines brightly on the Chinese people. If anything, persecution has only helped Christianity grow there because they see the presence of God in it. **We live** with a freedom to celebrate our faith together without interference. In fact, faith is seen by many as a moral and spiritual good for the strength and well-being of the nation. As we pray for the Church in China, let us be encouraged by their commitment, dedication and courage in the faith and live our faith with greater gratitude and with a desire to strengthen the heart of the nation. Let us see difference not as a source of division but as an opportunity to be enriched because of the diversity. Showing more reverence and respect for each other as we have done during Lockdown, being more attentive to creation by living more simply, we will become more aware of the presence of the face of God and know that our salvation is for sharing. The more salvation is shared, the stronger it becomes for us all. Pope Francis: *The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept His offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew. Only we big sinners have the grace of knowing what salvation really means.*

And finally

Two nuns, a penguin, a man with a parrot on his shoulder, and a giraffe walk into a bar. The bartender says, "What is this? Some kind of joke?"