
NEWSLETTER

Spring 95

The Guild of St. Luke, SS Cosmas & Damian

CAIRO CONFERENCE

From the desk of the Editor

Happy New Year and a prosperous 1995! We also hope that our Pope's visit to Asia would bring along prosperity in the religious domain especially in our motherland China. The large UN population conference in Cairo from 4 to 13 September 1994 was the focus of the media world-wide, arousing both religious and non-religious concern. The discussion of the 15000 participants would have significant impact on the development and population control of many countries especially the Asian ones. In this issue, we have collected some opinions and reflection concerning this event.

One of our respectable senior member, Sr. Howard has retired and went back to her homeland USA. We have a report on the farewell dinner for her.

The council is looking forward to seeing you and your family in the coming events of the Guild in 1995 - Chinese New Year Gathering, Annual Retreat and Annual Dinner.

Francis Mok

Report from the Council

1. Medical Sunday Mass 94

It was generally agreed that the mass this year was quite well organised. The preparatory core team consisted of Guild's members, nurses from the Catholic Nurses' Guild and medical students. The co-ordination was satisfactory. The tea gathering after the mass provided a good chance for the participants to have sharing and



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conversations. This practice was worthwhile to be continued next year. Some suggested that the preparatory meeting should be held a few months earlier so that even better planning could be achieved.

2. Mass for the Deceased 94

It was held on 13-11-94 at the Ricci Hall. 15-20 members attended. The mass was held at noon and was followed by lunch at QMH.

3. Ethics Subcommittee

A meeting was held on 29-10-94 at Hong Kong Wah Yan College. Originally it was intended to discuss the Cairo Conference concerning population control. It then turned into a sharing between different front line workers on the abortion issue (gynaecologist and pro-life workers), including their difficulties and frustrations. Further follow up meetings and possible actions were to be decided.

4. Young members recruitment

A retreat was organised by the PWH Catholic Association in Nov. 94. Two of our Guild members had participated. This kind of activity provided a good opportunity for promotion of our Guild especially to the medical students.

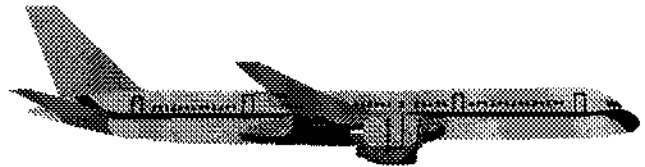
5. Chinese New Year Mass & Gathering

It was agreed that 12-2-95 (13th day of the Lunar New Year) would be a suitable date. JONAHS YEUNG and SIMON LO would be the co-ordinators.

6. Annual Retreat 95

This year we would keep the traditional style, i.e. a day retreat conducted in English. It will be held on Palm Sunday (9-4-95) at Hong Kong Wah Yan College. The Spiritual Director will be decided soon. An overnight retreat is also planned at around June, hoping to cater for the needs of different members - details will be announced soon.

Farewell to Sr. Howard



Fairwell!!

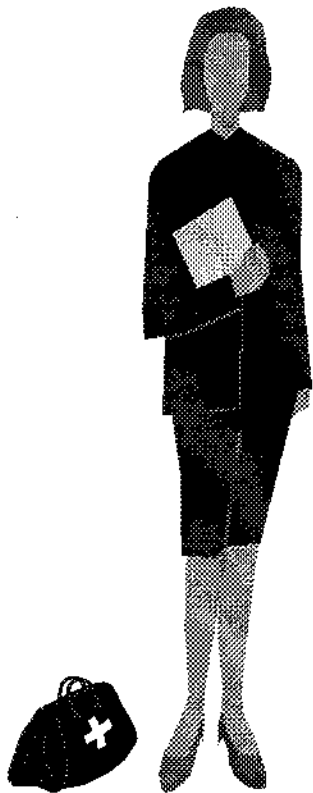
Sr. Howard left us for her homeland USA on 9/1/95. Besides being one of our most respectable senior members, she is also an active member of many organisations protesting Catholic faith and human dignity in Hong Kong. A farewell dinner was arranged by our Guild together with the Birthright Society and Pro-life groups on 29/12/94.

Sr. Howard has been serving Hong Kong people for 27 years with 26 years working in Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital. She spent her first year in Hong Kong learning Chinese. Then she started her medical practice. In the beginnings, she chose to work in the 'well-baby clinic' because of her limited vocabulary in Cantonese. Sr. Howard remembered in that era, she was just able to speak "feed well?" & "Sleep well?" but was already sufficient to serve the purpose. Later, as her vocabulary expanded, she took up the 'sick-baby clinic' and then progressed into adult medicine.

Besides being a front line doctor in the medical field, Sr. Howard is also a front line

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warrior (a brave & swift one !) in the protestation of Catholic moral stand-points towards ethical issues in both our local and international scenes. One time or the other, we would see her words in the media like the SCMP in rapid response to hotly debated ethical issues. Our friends from the Birthright Society commented that Sr. Howard's hard work and service to our local people is proportional to her size! That night, Sr. Howard received two souvenirs: a tale of gold from the Birthright Society denoting that her contributions to Hong Kong was as valuable as gold to us, and a crystal rose from our Guild which represented her beauty and crystal clear personality that we admired.



Sr. Howard will be living with her only brother. Although USA is her homeland, she joked that she was prepared to face the cultural

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shock in the months to come when she return. She would miss Hong Kong especially the Chinese food (one explanation of her body weight) which she thought is the best world-wide. When she was asked whether she would forget how to use chopsticks, her answer was "definitely not". Actually she learned to use chopsticks in USA when studying medical technology in Pittsburgh before she came to Hong Kong !

Decades ago, Sr. Howard promised to be a nun but she worked as a doctor most of the time. Now , she would cease her medical career and became a nun again (after 27 years !). After her retirement, she planned to write about the mission work of Maryknoll Sisters. Of course, she wouldn't miss the 'medical elements' of it. She also has a small wish to go to China to teach medicine if chance arises and her health allows.

Farewell, Sr. Howard! We all wish you good health and enjoy your life in your homeland.

May God bless you always!

Francis

FIAMC 18th World Conference Report

CONCLUSIONS OF 18th WORLD CONGRESS OF FIAMC - PORTO, SEPTEMBER 8-12, 1994.

We Catholic Doctors, at the closure of the 18th World Congress of FIAMC (Federation internationale des Associations Medicales

Catholiques), held in Porto, Portugal, from September 8-12, 1994, came to the following conclusions:

Anyone who needs medical care is not only a human body or a human being but a human person. This means, for us, that every patient has a biological nature and is endowed with a dignity which demands respect, solidarity and love. The religious nature of the human person is thus a fact which must be taken into account by any doctor or other health care professional.

The life of the human person must, in consequence, be respected and cared for in all the stages of development, from conception to natural death. Respected for this most basic of human rights, the right to live, excludes any intervention aimed at suppression of life, like abortion, destructive embryo research, euthanasia, or aiding and abetting suicide. We believe that physician-assisted suicide must never be legalised. For the same reason, and in complete agreement with the Statement made by our Federation concerning the draft of the Document of the Cairo Conference, we reaffirm that physicians cannot be expected of authorized to commit acts of aggression against human beings at any stage in their existence. We believe that education and social development are the true answer to demographic questions and never restrictive or coercive measures which disrespect the right to live. It is our task to be at the service of health for all, and preferentially commit ourselves to assisting the destitute, the abandoned and those suffering discrimination of marginalization, including, AIDS victims or drug users. We pledge ourselves to dedicate our study, our investigational efforts and our professional knowledge to the solution of the many moral, ethical, social and economic problems faced by the sick and their relatives and friends. As insistently recommended by His Holiness John Paul II, we will devote ourselves to the inculturation of the Gospel in the world of health. Our position is to be applied wherever our medical vocation may be. The presence and work in ethical and other consultative

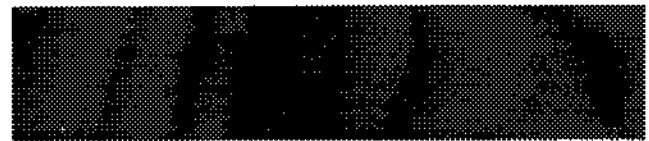
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bodies which make recommendations to the Governments are part of today's apostolate. We are conscious of our role in the New Evangelization and ready to fulfil our task, totally aware that our witness will be more effective through competence and compassion than through sterile argument.

Cairo Conference

An abstract of the talk on " The Cairo Conference - Ethical Issues concerning Population, Development and Family Planning" by Dr. U. Poner, Executive Secretary, International Church Affairs, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Germany

(We thank The Catholic Institute for Religion and Society for supplying the original article)



Cairo

Reasons for the enormous population growth

Demographic science shows us that the reason for the strong population growth in our century is not that the parents have more children compared to the generations before. The reason for population growth is not an increasing fertility rate, but a decreasing mortality rate. From a demographical point of

view, population growth depends on both the birth rate and the mortality rate. Since the times of European colonialism, basic health care has been provided in regions with high mortality rates. So in these regions the mortality rate has decreased, whereas the birth rate has remained high.

Reasons to have large families in developing countries

Asking for the reasons to have large families under the circumstances of developing countries, we have to recognize that these reasons are many and varied. But as most experts will confirm, the one that stands out above all others is poverty. There is empirical truth of the connection between poverty and high birth rates.

Consequences of the enormous population growth

1. Population growth is not a problem, in any respect and under all possible circumstances. Where suitable economic, social, political, cultural, and ecological conditions exist or where they can be created, population increases can in many instances be coped with without any major social friction. And we know from demographic history, especially from the one of Europe, that sometimes in fact population growth can lead to a greater dynamics of the social, economic, or technological development.

2. The increase of population numbers must be understood in relation to the economic development and the advanced technological and scientific opportunities. Population growth is never a problem as such. If it is considered a problem, one has always to answer the question: In relation to what factors, opportunities, capacities, resources etc. is it a problem?

3. It is of eminent importance to recognize that population growth is not the main reason for

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today's development and ecological problems. It is not the main reason for mass poverty and hunger, which millions of people suffer from, but it is an intensifying factor. It is not the main reason for environmental destruction, it is but one of the causes. And population growth is not the main reason for wars and civil wars and social disintegration in developing countries. However, in this field as well it is an intensifying factor of the social crisis.

4. The global environmental problems are not caused by population growth in the developing world, but by the production and consumption patterns in the industrial countries. Eighty per cent of the resources and of the energy are used up by those 20% of the world which accounts for 80% of the emission of pollutant substances, being responsible for the destruction of the ozone layer and for the green house effect.

Example: Emission of carbon dioxide

Africans : per year 1.03 tons
Asians : per year 1.93 tons
Europeans : per year 8.74 tons
US-Americans: per year 19.68 tons

Asia with 3.2 billion people: 5.8 billion tons
USA with 256 million people: 4.8 billion tons

This example shows to what extent the industrial world contributes to the environmental problems. On the other hand, the economic growth, especially in Asia, leads to a higher degree of environmental pollution. Already today this trend is obvious, and it will still intensify in the future.

5. As it is true that there is an increase not only in the population number but also in the opportunities to build up living conditions, it is impossible to give a precise figure of the maximum population limit. Furthermore it is true

that in today's world the main population problem is not the absolute number of people, but a rapid growth in a short period of time. There is no time for the necessary economic, social and ecological processes of adaptation. And it is difficult to estimate whether the expansion of the living space of people - which is taking place in a limited period of time - will lead to a permanent damage to the natural sources of life and consequently will jeopardize a humane survival of future generations.

Concrete consequences

At first there is the problem of nutrition/food. In the 50ies and 60ies, scientists expected a large hunger crisis as a result of the rapid population growth. However, during the last decades food production has been increased to an unexpectedly large extent. So, today there are no hunger problems that are caused by demographic reasons. On the other hand, there is a declining production of corn/cereals - especially in regions with rapid population growth. And the extension and intensification of farming leads to a damage to agricultural land. This process has been aggravated by the pressure of growing populations and by the ever increasing demands of the industrial countries, some of whose populations are declining. As a result, desertification is increasing and the soil has an excessive degree of salinity or is eroded, not only in the ecologically poor regions of the earth but in temperate zones as well. This loss of soil means that ever more land is given over to farming, the result being forest depletion and the use of land that is of only very limited value for farming.

The population growth affects not only agriculture but man's demand for natural resources. Although one can assume that there will be no shortage of renewable resources (natural deposits, minerals) in the longer term, water, especially drinking water, is becoming

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increasingly precious owing to constantly rising consumption in some regions.

Apart from these mounting problems in certain regions, the impact of global ecological hazards, too, is becoming heavier. The more mankind claims living space for itself, the faster fauna and flora species become extinct. Increasing emissions of harmful substances are polluting the air, water, soil, and forests.

The rapid population growth often affects the economic development in Third World countries. The existent capital must be used for education and a social basic supply for the growing number of young people. Therefore the capital cannot be used for investments into economic projects. Another problem, in the economic field is that of the social integration of the increasing number of poor people (speaking in absolute figures). And nobody knows how to create the huge number of jobs which will be necessary in the future decades.

Necessary courses of action

1. Poverty-oriented development policy

Due to the fact that there is a close connection between mass poverty and population growth, the most important requirement to slow down population growth is to overcome mass poverty. In most of the developing countries it will be necessary to create or to improve the conditions of sustained economic growth and an ecologically sustainable development. Such a policy requires to transform economic structures, to overcome corruption, to establish efficiently working administrations and to build up a state governed by the rule of law.

Although it is true that economic growth is a prerequisite to eradicate poverty, it is also true that those groups of the society who are

mostly affected by poverty frequently will not be able to profit from that economic growth. This is the reason why a complementary strategy is necessary to reach these groups of poor people. Experience teaches us that a policy is effective which assists and strengthens people to help themselves. This is the way to realize the progressive integration of the poor into the social system. The development work of the Church, which is inspired by its option for the poor, is determined by this concept.

Economic development and the eradication of poverty in developing countries depends as well on the policy of the rich countries. Frequently they are not willing to give development countries the opportunity of a fair trade. There is still a lot of protectionism and a more or less subtle discrimination against goods coming from poor countries on the international market. It is important as well that the rich countries keep their promise given in several UN declarations to use 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for the assistance to developing countries. Even more important is a change in production and consumption patterns in the industrial world, especially to ensure a more efficient use of energy. The way of life in these countries must be compatible with the global ecological requirements. In the final analysis, what the peoples in the rich part of the world are required to do, is to develop no less than a model of universal prosperity.

2. Important social aspects of population policy

As we have seen, overcoming mass poverty and creating conditions which make life worth living for all is a long process which requires a whole range of economic, ecological, social, and socio-cultural changes. This is a process that leads to decreasing population growth. However, there are some social factors which have a special impact on generative behaviour so that changes to them tend to act

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faster on the incidence of birth than other development measures. They are old-age provision, women's social status and opportunities in life, health care and the level of education of the poor sections of the populations.



A Statement by the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations (FIAMC) Concerning the Draft of a Document of the United Nations Conference on Population and Development

In the context of the International Year of the Family and of the United Nations Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the world community is called upon to reflect deeply and arrive at significant new insights and proposals for the universal advancement and protection of the institution of the family, which is necessary for the survival and well-being of all mankind and has been recognized by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights to be the natural and fundamental group unit of society (Art. 16,3)

The International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations (FIAMC) has a world-wide representation of its members in Associations of Guilds of Catholic doctors established in over 45 countries, including those of Africa, Asia and Latin America. FIAMC derives its authority in the field not only from its world-wide engagement, but also from its activities, such as conferences, symposia,

courses, action of medical care in poor regions, as a sign of solidarity and cooperation. Its publications are the journals regularly edited by its members in the different countries, its bulletin 'Decisions' and the books of proceedings of its World and Regional Congresses, the 18th of which will be held this year. For all these reasons, FIAMC has the legitimate wish to state its views at this decisive moment in history.

In doing so, FIAMC seeks not only to manifest its concern for the protection of the family and defence of human life, but wishes to present its specific proposals to the Conference on Population and Development from the standpoint of practising physicians committed to the cause of life.

1. Human Procreation and the Mission of Medicine in Today's World

a) The Physician and the Inviolability of Human Life

Our Federation declares that the only legitimate mission for any doctor is to protect and enhance human life and health, never to destroy or manipulate the human being. This conviction is not the exclusive heritage of any particular religious confession, but is enshrined in world culture, most notably in the time-honoured commitments of the Hippocratic Oath.

We further declare the human life, in strict biological terms, begins at the moment of conception, and this is a scientific fact. As a result, deliberately putting an end to the incipient human life is unacceptable and act against medicine, with the aggravating circumstance that such violence is perpetrated against a completely defenceless being. For this reason, abortion is also a crime against humanity, against the human race in its weakest representatives and bearers of its future.

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b) The Medical Unacceptability of Political Instrumentalizations of Life.

A physician cannot appeal to any human authority to justify an action which is inherently wrong. All legislation authorising abortion is a negation of human rights and therefore, of Medicine itself. Such legal provisions are intrinsically lawless and destructive of human society. All attempts to justify this crime ethically become sophistry and falsification. A physician who practices abortion has abandoned de facto the purpose of medicine to save and protect all life, not the life of some at the expense of others.

In view of the foregoing, our Federation unhesitatingly denounces and rejects the serious deviations in medical practice, particularly over the last three decades, which have gravely undermined the authenticity and credibility of the profession as practised by many. We are saddened by this abandonment of genuine medical ethics and pledge ourselves to fostering a renewal of the founding spirit of medicine. No matter how unlikely it may now seem to some, we are convinced that it is only a matter of time before society at large will repudiate such attacks on life.

History will judge the anti-life jurisprudence of our time and the misnamed medicine which has become its instrument, very severely.

c) The Distortions of Anti-Life Ideology as seen by Physicians.

As observers and agents of the social and medical climate of our time, we also want to mention the following motivations which have led to this disastrous and lamentable state of affairs.

1) Systematic Reduction of Sexuality to Self-Gratification and Denial of the Centrality of Family.

It can escape no intelligent observer that the second half of our century has witnessed a large-scale tendency, sometimes stimulated by the mass media and social and political currents, to reduce sexuality to a means of pleasure and gratification.

We hold that while it is true that pleasure and gratification are responsible sexuality, sexuality itself is inherently linked to procreation. Of course, biology supports this position. The medical truth is that our nature is structured to foster procreation through the spontaneous expression of sexuality. But this also means that the heterosexual relationship is the only natural expression of sexuality, manifesting a complete union of two persons, with their own psychophysical characteristics, intrinsically orientated towards becoming a family. In short, sexuality, as a natural component of human psychology and biology, is an important component of the family. The sexual relationship, then, is constitutively orientated towards the family and the family requires a permanence and continuity where the members accompany and support each other in a stable way.

2) Unscientific Demographic Theories in World Society.

Attention must be drawn to the fallacies of anti-life demographic analyses. There is no evidence whatsoever that an increase in population automatically means economic impoverishment and social malaise.

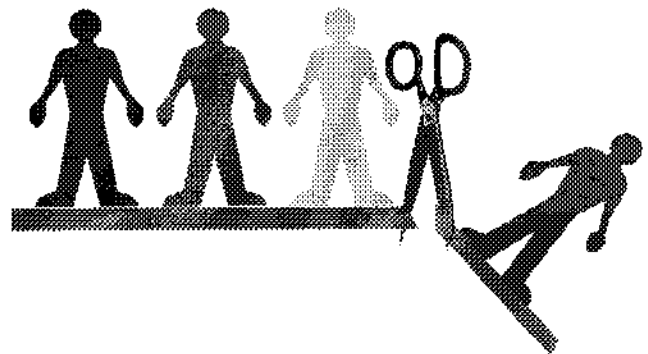
On the contrary, if we look at recent history, we find that all the nations which have played leading roles in cultural and economic development have been endowed with sizeable

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populations. In fact, population is the initial source of individual and social well-being. Only through the human resources of large populations is it possible to develop a diversified culture, technology, scientific achievement and market economy facilitating the multiplication of goods and services.

In addition, serious and unbiased population research must calculate the number of jobs lost in industrialized countries as a result of the decline in birth rates; it suffices to mention the fields of education and services directed to children and young people to make a point.

As for ecology, the need to adapt production and consumption to environmental protection is itself another immense source of employment, rather than a handicap for society. Obviously, population increases require modifications in lifestyle. But, after so many socio-economic changes in the last two centuries, why should we be afraid of further adaptation? Rather than a threat, we face here a challenge to our creativity. Furthermore, no estimates of population growth can be fully realistic, because there are too many unknown factors which can radically alter demography in the most unexpected ways from war and epidemics to cultural attitudes; data obtained during the last decades clearly show the fallacies of estimates based on demographic extrapolations.



On the other hand, there is no scientific verifiable limit to the world's capacity for sustaining human

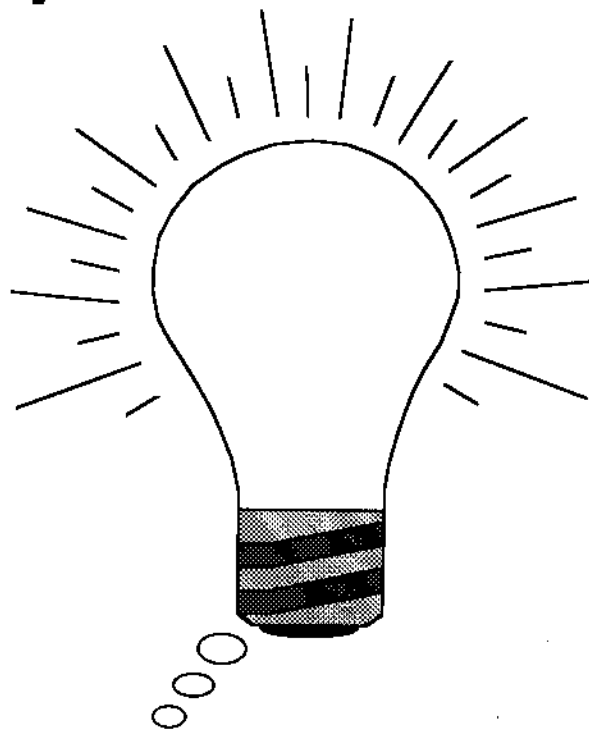
life. To affirm such a limit is to engage, not in science, but in demagogy. The problem in developing countries is not, in essence, population as such, but poor or inadequate social organization and education. We have experience of the practice of Medicine in the most advanced hospitals and health care centres as well as in the most deprived regions of the Third World and we know that education is the keystone for development. Education is a global process, including sexual education and promotion of responsible parenthood. This is the real answer to the problem, which cannot be coped with by the short-sighted, selfish and lawless proclamation of a fight against procreation at all costs and by any means, and this point leads us to the final and most serious, hidden motivation behind anti-life ideology.

3) Attacks on life are against Human Rights.

We cannot fail to detect in the widespread assault on procreation, especially in the world's developing countries, certain poorly disguised genocidal tendencies. Why are some rich countries so interested in financing and abetting the suppression of life? Beneath the political rhetoric, we discern a fear of being outnumbered. For population is also a source of power over human destiny. The life-denying mentality of some rich countries spurs attacks on nascent lives elsewhere in the these attacks reaching the proportions of a war on life.



Spiritual Refreshment



SIX DO'S & DON'TS FOR SOCIAL CONCERNS

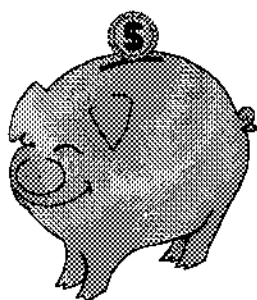
Six Do's

1. Be involved in the Church's social justice activities.
2. Actively participate in the parish Small Faith Communities.
3. Be concerned about your neighbours and visit them.
4. Besides the weekly Sunday offering, sacrifice half a day's salary once a month to support the Church.
5. Create a clean and natural environment.
6. Care for the elderly who live alone and who need your care.

Six Don'ts

1. Don't reject handicapped people and other minority groups.
2. Don't waste food and electricity, and use paper and plastic bags sparingly; protect the environment.
3. Don't be a nuisance in public; be polite, and maintain law and order.
4. Don't avoid voting in elections because of political ignorance.
5. Don't disturb peace in your neighbourhood by making too much noise.
6. Don't be afraid to stand up for truth and justice.

From Diocesan Committee for the Formation of the Laity



YEAR OF THE PIG

NEWSLETTER

Coming Soon

1. **Chinese New Year Mass & Gathering**

Date: 12-2-1995

Time: Mass: 11:00a.m. - 12:00 noon

Lunch: 12:00noon - 2:00p.m.

Venue: Mass: QMH Nursing School

Lunch: QMH Staff Canteen

2. **Retreat**a. **One-day Retreat**

Date: 9-4-1995 (Palm Sunday)

Time: 9:00a.m. - 6:00p.m.

Venue: Hong Kong Wah Yan
College

b. **Overnight Retreat**

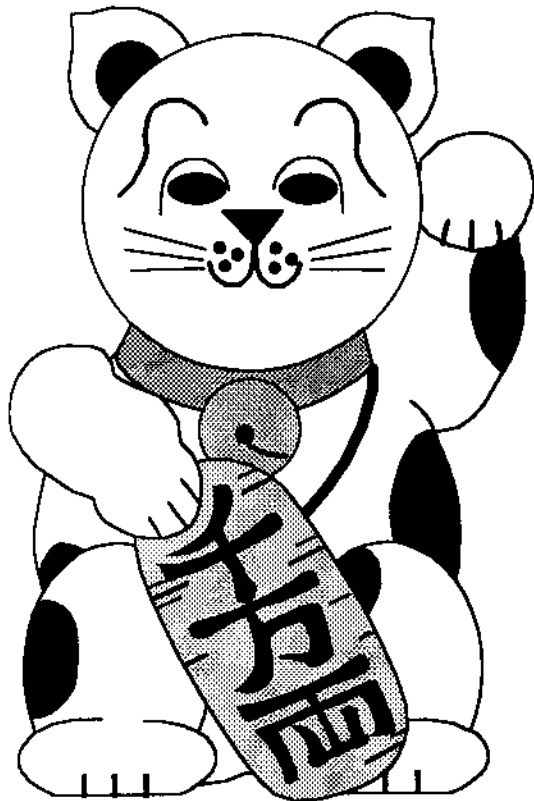
Date: 3-6-95 to 4-6-95

(Saturday and Sunday)

Venue: Holy Spirit Retreat
House, Aberdeen

The Editorial Board

- Dr. Francis Mok
- Dr. K M Lee Philip,
- Dr. C W Lam Linda
- Dr. S M Lo Simon
- Dr. K N Yuen Robert



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Comments and Letters to the Editor are most welcome. Correspondence can be sent to the Chief Editor:

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