

## Settimo Cielo



di Sandro Magister

31 ago

## China and Vietnam. Two Accords Bought At a High Price

[> Italiano](#)[> English](#)[> Español](#)[> Français](#)[> All the articles of Settimo Cielo in English](#)

\*

During the same span of late August twin news stories came out concerning relations between the Holy See and two crucial states of southeast Asia, China and Vietnam.

In China there was on August 26 the first episcopal ordination made on the basis of the **accord** stipulated with Beijing on September 22 2018: that of **Anthony Yao Shun**, ordinary of the diocese of Ji Ning, in Inner Mongolia.

And on August 28 this was followed by a second ordination: that of **Stephen Xu Hongwei**, bishop of Hanzhong, in the region of Shaanxi.

Curiously, the Holy See did not release the official news of their ordinations, limiting itself to confirming - in two statements from the director of the Vatican press office, Matteo Bruni - that both the one and the other took place with the "papal mandate."

Both of the new bishops had been elected to this role, last April, by assemblies of priests, religious, and laymen of the respective dioceses, all of them selected by the Chinese authorities, brought together at a hotel and instructed on whom to vote for.

And in both cases it was the Chinese pseudo episcopal conference, made up only of bishops officially recognized by the government, that presented the new bishops to Rome, which accepted them. The precise terms of the accord between the two sides are still secret, but it is abundantly clear that this is how it works.

With Vietnam instead there took place in Rome, on August 21 and 22, one of the periodic working meetings between the delegations from the two sides. In the **final statement** it was envisioned that "in the near future" a permanent residence could be established in Vietnam for the "pontifical representative" to this country, who currently resides in Singapore.

As for the life of the Vietnamese Catholic Church, with its approximately 8 million faithful out of a population that is close to 100 million, the statement limited itself to reporting the positions of the two sides, without mentioning the heavy limitations on religious liberty.

\*

The resemblances between China and Vietnam, in their relations with the Church of Rome, are very strong. Among other things, they are the only two countries in the world in which the appointment of Catholic bishops takes place on the basis of secret accords, stipulated in recent years, that assign to the state authorities a preponderant influence in the selection of candidates.

In Vietnam episcopal appointments take place "according to a procedure agreed verbally with the government," whose "realization is based on honor, on good faith, and on respect for the giving of one's word, and cannot be defended legally," as Vatican secretary of state Cardinal Pietro Parolin declared at a **conference** at the Pontifical Gregorian University last February 28.

Parolin is the diplomat who in 1996, when he was undersecretary of the Holy See for relations with states, was the main author of the aforementioned "verbal" accord on the appointment of bishops.

Since then, it has been up to the Vietnamese authorities to select every new bishop from among three candidates proposed by the Holy See. And it not rarely happens that none of the three satisfies them, with the result of delaying the appointment for years and leaving the diocese vacant.

In China the Holy See is at an even bigger disadvantage, because the initial selection of the candidate is up to the Chinese authorities, with the pope getting a second shot at accepting or rejecting him, in this case putting off the appointment to a new candidate in the future who will be more acceptable to him.

Both accords therefore inevitably pave the way for the taking of office by bishops submissive to the respective regimes, each of them dominated by communist parties ideologically opposed to religious freedom.

In justification of this double capitulation of the Holy See it is maintained that this is the price for securing the Churches more breathing room in a hostile context.

In China, however, it does not at all turn out that things have improved, for the Catholic Church and for the other faiths, after the stipulation of the September 22 2018 accord.

In that same year of 2018 there went into effect a new set of "Regulations on religious affairs" that escalated even more the repression of the freedom to profess a faith, with effects that forced the Vatican authorities themselves to issue a prudent, public reaction, in a document of last June 28:

[> China Violates the Accord. A Bishop Rebels](#)

And in Vietnam it is the same. There too the atmosphere is anything but "conducive for the activities and development of the Catholic community," as however the Vietnamese delegation went to great lengths to say at the recent meeting in Rome, according to what is written in the final statement.

It should suffice to point out that on the concluding day of the Roman meeting, on August 22, the justice and peace commission of the Vietnamese episcopal conference organized prayer vigils all over the country for the victims of religious persecution.

In particular there took to the streets, as on every evening, about a hundred Catholic families of Ho Chi Minh City, who last January had their homes destroyed (see photo) on a plot of land called "Lộc Hung Garden" owned by the Missions Étrangères of Paris, confiscated by the communist regime for commercial development projects:

[> Oppressed by the regime, Catholics in Lộc Hung pray for religious freedom](#)

Moreover, it does not appear that the Roman meeting between the representatives of Vietnam and of the Holy See have raised even the slightest hopes for the fate of a Catholic conscientious objector, Hồ Đức Hòa, an active member of the diocese of Vinh and an associate of a press agency of the Redemptorist Fathers, sentenced to thirteen years in prison as an "enemy of the state":

[> Free Hồ Đức Hòa: Hanoi denies medical care to jailed Catholic activist](#)

For an overview of the vicissitudes of the Catholic Church in Vietnam, it could be helpful to scan the list of articles from UCA News, an online Catholic agency that specializes in Asia:

[> UCA News / Vietnam](#)

As for China - but with interesting parallels with Vietnam - the most up-to-date documentation on the heightening of the persecution even after the stipulation of the accord with the Holy See is in this brand-new book by Massimo Introvigne, a world-famous sociologist, founder and director of the Center for "Bitter Winter," specialized precisely in the religions persecuted in China:

[> M. Introvigne, "Il libro nero della persecuzione religiosa in Cina", Sugarco Edizioni, Milan, 2019.](#)

\*

**ERRATA CORRIGE** – The **verbal accord** between the Holy See and Vietnam was stipulated not in 1996 but between 1990 and 1994, when the undersecretary for relations with states was not Pietro Parolin but Claudio Maria Celli.

Moreover, the Holy See is thought to propose not a trio of names, among which the Vietnamese authorities would have the ability to choose, but a single name, with the ability of the government to accept or reject it, in which case Rome would propose another, until it gets the go-ahead.

Condividi:



31 agosto 2019

English

0

## NESSUN COMMENTO

I commenti sono disabilitati.

## CHI SONO



Versione italiana



English version



Versión española

## CERCA NEL BLOG

Cerca



Dal 2002 al 2016 quindici anni di notizie, analisi, documenti sulla Chiesa cattolica. In italiano, inglese, francese e spagnolo

From 2002 to 2016 fifteen years of news, analysis, documents on the Catholic Church. In Italian, English, French, and Spanish

De 2002 à 2016 quinze ans d'informations, d'analyses, de documents concernant l'Église catholique. En italien, en anglais, en français et en espagnol

De 2002 a 2016 quince años de noticias, análisis y documentos sobre la Iglesia católica. En italiano, inglés, francés y español

## NEWSLETTER

Italiano English Español Français

Vuoi ricevere l'avviso di ogni nuovo articolo?

ISCRIVITI

Per cambiare il tuo indirizzo o altri dati:

MODIFICA

Per annullare la tua iscrizione:

CANCELLA

## ARTICOLI RECENTI

Francesco imprenditore buono "che non vuole licenziare nessuno". Ma i fatti dicono l'opposto

Francis, the Good Boss "Who Doesn't Want To Fire Anyone." But the Facts Say the Opposite

Francisco, un buen empresario "que no quiere despedir a nadie". Pero los hechos dicen lo contrario

Il virus è un castigo di Dio? "La Civiltà Cattolica" dice di no

Is the Virus a Chastisement From God? "La Civiltà Cattolica" Says No

¿El virus es un castigo de Dios? "La Civiltà Cattolica" dice que no

Sesso, donne, potere. Le tre sfide che la Germania lancia alla Chiesa

Sex, Women, Power. The Three Challenges Germany Is Issuing To the Church

Sexo, mujeres, poder. Los tres desafíos que Alemania lanza a la Iglesia

Francesco e le messe senza popolo. La parola alla difesa

agosto: 2019

L	M	M	G	V	S	D
			1	2	3	4
	6	7	8	9		11
12	14	15	16	17		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	28	29	30			

## LINK

- Santa Sede
- Sala stampa
- Vatican News
- L'Osservatore Romano
- La Civiltà Cattolica
- Il Sismografo
- Diplomazia pontificia
- Vatican Insider
- Avenire
- La Nuova Bussola Quotidiana
- CNA
- ACI Stampa
- ACI Africa
- Crux
- Asia News
- UCA News
- Bitter Winter
- Zen
- Religiondigital.com
- Corrispondenza Romana
- Rossporpora
- Rod Dreher
- Opzione Benedetto
- LifeSite News
- Edward Peters
- messainlatino.it
- Lo Straniero
- L'Isola di Patmos
- InfoVaticana
- Il Regno
- A. Grillo
- A.M. Valli
- finesettimana.org
- Catholic World Report
- First Things
- The Catholic Thing
- MondayVatican
- NCR - Pentin
- Ross Douthat
- Jason Horowitz
- Francis X. Rocca
- Religion News Service
- KNA in English
- Pew Research

## ARCHIVI

Seleziona mese