

The Message of Our Lady of China

Our Lady said nothing at Donglü, neither in 1900 nor in 1995. Unlike her appearances to individuals or groups of two or three, such as at Fatima, Lourdes, and Guadalupe, she appeared in China to large numbers of people. In 1900 she took the bullets of the soldiers as they shot into the sky, causing them to leave the village in peace. In 1995, she



Our Lady of Sheshan, holding her Son aloft and treading on the dragon

appeared with Jesus as the sun moved from west to east in the sky, hurtling toward the people as they confessed their sins and called out “Holy Mother, have pity on your children!” A Mother to her wayward children, she appeared in the sky to help them find the way to heaven even through a godless society on earth. Despite government troops, armored cars, and helicopters mobilized to prevent worship, tens of thousands make the pilgrimage every year. Our Lady’s message is simply that the God has not and will never abandon his beloved Chinese people.

Our Shrine at Star of the Sea

Our statue was handmade after the image painted by John Lu Hung Nien, as she appeared at Donglü: in the sky, among the clouds, wrapped in the sun. She appeared as an empress with her infant son of supreme power, helping people get to heaven.



Our Lady of China by painter John Lu Hung Nien

nation on earth. Our Lady continues to give her people and extraordinary joy and perseverance in the midst of severe repression. In Our Lady of Sheshan, they venerate a mother in heaven, a celestial queen who is all-pure and all-beautiful, help and defense against the rulers of this present darkness. In their great trials, faithful Chinese Christians show the world how to keep faith in God under terribly adverse conditions. Someday, we pray, all Chinese people will be free to worship the true God in right religion.

Prayer for the Church in China

In 2007, Pope Benedict designated May 24 as World Day of Prayer for Church in China, and he gave us this prayer: “Virgin Most Holy, Mother of the Incarnate Word and our Mother, sustain all those in China, who, amid their daily trials, continue to believe, to hope, to love. May they never be afraid to speak of Jesus to the world, and of the world to Jesus.”

China Today

The Church in China today is suffering great persecution. The communist government has declared that it will not tolerate any worship but that of the Chinese state. Despite this, Christianity remains the fastest growing religion in China, which is the most populous

Our Lady of China Historical Facts and Essential Messages of Our Lady in 1900 and 1995



Welcome to Our Lady’s Shrine here in San Francisco. In this pamphlet, prepared by our pastor, Fr. Joseph Illo, you will learn the basic facts and message of this apparition. You are encouraged to spend some time in quiet prayer and perhaps go to confession. Please keep a reverent silence in the Church, especially when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed.

Star of the Sea Church

4420 Geary Blvd.

San Francisco, CA 94118

(415) 751-0450 www.starparish.com

What: Two appearances of Our Lady

Where: Dong Lu, China

When: 1900 and 1995

To Whom: villagers, soldiers, and pilgrims

Christianity and Our Lady in China

China is the most populous country in the world. Its history spans almost 4000 years, comprising perhaps the most complex mix of cultures, religions, and languages of any civilization. Although Christianity had reached China by the 3rd century, it was not until the 16th century that missionaries began large scale evangelization. Christianity seems to be the fastest growing religion in China today, from four million in 1949 to at least 44 million today, about a third of whom are Catholic. Over the centuries, Christianity has been persecuted by many Chinese emperors and governments; neither St. Francis Xavier in the 16th century nor Mother Teresa in the 20th century were allowed to enter China. Today Christianity is severely restricted and at times openly persecuted by the Communist government. Priests and bishops are imprisoned or simply disappear, churches are demolished, laity are monitored, and children under 18 are forbidden to enter any Catholic church. Perhaps because of this persecution, Our Lady seems to have a special love for her beloved Chinese people and has appeared several times in their country. Three Marian apparitions were reported in 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion (Beijing, Donglü, and San Tai Dse). Our Lady of Sheshan in Shanghai is another important shrine, devoted to Our Lady Help of Christians, promoted by Pope Benedict XVI in 2008 and dear to St. Teresa of Calcutta.

Our Lady, Help of Christians



Basilica of Our Lady of Sheshan in Shanghai

Chinese Catholics have a particular devotion to *Our Lady Help of Christians*. This title was first given to Mary by Pius V after the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, when Europe was saved from Turkish invasion through the Holy Rosary. In 1814 Pius VII designated May 24 the feast day of Our Lady Help of Christians, because on that day he returned to Rome from imprisonment by Napoleon. Chinese Catholics call upon Our Lady under this title because Christians have so often been persecuted in their country; they need her special help.

Donglü

In 1900, the Boxer Rebellion, a complex nationalist movement, was attacking all foreigners and Christians in particular. In April 1900, about 3000 soldiers surrounded the village of Donglü, home to a poor Catholic mission founded by the Vincentian fathers. Some villagers took refuge in the church while others fought the attackers, and all prayed to Our Lady for help. At one point, a beautiful lady in white appeared in the sky, powerful in majesty. The soldiers began firing into the sky at her. Then a magnificent horseman, perhaps St. Michael, charged the soldiers, putting them to flight. The people, led by their pastor, Fr. Wu, built a shrine to Our Lady there in gratitude.



The 1904 church and the original painting

The shrine church was completed in 1904, and in 1908 a painting of Our Lady had been painted to hang above the altar. In 1924 the Chinese bishops designated this image “Our Lady of China” and established Donglü as a national place of pilgrimage. In 1938 Pope Pius XI named it an official Marian Shrine. In 1941 Pius XII gave Our Lady of China her own feast day, which was moved in 1973 to the day before Mother’s Day (the second Sunday of May). In 1941 Japanese forces destroyed the 1904 church, and it was not until 1992 that the people of Donglü were able to rebuild the shrine to Our Lady of China.

The Miracle of 1995

On May 23, 1995, 30,000 faithful, 100 priests, and four bishops witnessed a miracle of the sun much like that at Fatima in 1917. It



The current church (1992)

spun in the sky, cast off many colors, and many saw images of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.