

To: ALL media colleagues

Date: 4 December 2021

Press Release

THE MOST REVEREND STEPHEN CHOW SAU YAN, S.J. INSTALLED AS THE 9TH BISHOP OF HONG KONG

The Most Reverend Stephen Chow Sau Yan, S.J. was installed as the 9th Bishop of Hong Kong on 4 December 2021 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The whole Diocese welcomes our new bishop and we earnestly request the faithful to keep praying for the Diocese of Hong Kong.

Full text of the brief address of Bishop Stephen Chow Sau Yan, S.J. as below :

Dear Cardinal Tong, Cardinal Zen, Bishop Ha, Msgr. Herrera, Abbot Kao, Priests and Religious, Sisters and Brothers of the Non-Cantonese Speaking Community, Fellow Christian Leaders, and Friends,

It has been a long liturgy; I should not make this even more intolerably lengthy for you. I want to take this opportunity to give thanks to all those who are attending my episcopal consecration via live stream. Some of the participants are my dear family, good friends, Cardinal and Bishops, including Cardinal Tagle, Bishop Overbeck, Archbishop Prendergast, S.J., and Bishop O'Kelly, S.J., who cannot travel to Hong Kong. And some of you are probably burning mid-night oil right now. How I wish you could be here with me!

Today I stand before you as Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, a role which I would not consider assuming in any serious ways. Well, not until the fateful message from the Holy Father. I don't want to repeat here what I have said at the Press Conference on May 18 this year.

As the Bishop, it is my desire to be a bridge between the government and the Church in HK, and between the Catholic Church, fellow Christian denominations, and other religions. It is through sincere connection with one another, including within our own Diocese, that empathic understanding can be established, appreciation can be fostered, respect and trust can be deepened, and hopefully, collaboration can

become a living culture in our community.

I am quite aware that it is not easy, given the painful damages that different parties had experienced in their own ways in the past two years. Along with its destructive effects, the pandemic has, ironically, been a blessing in disguise in a strange way. Hong Kong people have, to a certain extent, reached out to help each other regardless of political or religious persuasions.

This makes me ask if the current pandemic not a time for us to become united through deeper and life-giving connections with each other. It is possible that we can take this opportunity to build up a more compassionate global community if we can learn to live for and with each other.

As the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese in Hong Kong, and as a local Church, we would very much like to take up a meaningful role to foster healing and connections in our Church and for our hometown.

Nevertheless, we must not forget that this Catholic Diocese is also an important part of the universal Catholic Church, as a fellow Jesuit Bishop, Terrence Prendergast, S.J., Archbishop Emeritus of Ottawa-Cornwall has written in his letter for my episcopal consecration. He had visited Hong Kong during the time of the late Bishop Michael Yeung. Here is an extract from his letter:

“At this time in history our world and church thirst for unity. Here the Church has an important role in fostering unity through its apostolates and services. In my short time in Hong Kong, I discovered the significance of the Church for the wider community through Caritas Hong Kong and the Church's educational and health care services benefitting the whole society. The Hong Kong Church is established, vibrant and a well-respected See in Asia and the world.... Given the history of the Church in China and Hong Kong, Catholicism can no longer be seen as a foreign religion, but as integral to Hong Kong society....”

Finally, a message from Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, which I received late last night:

“Your Excellency and brother Bishop Stephen. You and the Church in HK have been very much in my thoughts and prayers these days. A new life starts for you. A new stage begins for the diocese and people of HK. The Lord, whose faithfulness never fails, will do great things. We only need to discern and follow His ways. In the name of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, I thank you again for

your generous response. You can count on my prayers and support. Greetings to your family, the Jesuit Community and the Diocese of HK. Cardinal Tagle.”

Hence, I humbly ask for your prayers, generous support and collaboration so that together we can carry out our mission to its blessed fruition, for God’s salvific mission through our Church, for Hong Kong and for our neighbors.

+ Bishop Stephen Chow, S.J. 4th December 2021
(04/12/21)

Photos of the Episcopal Ordination can be downloaded from the link below :
<https://catholic.hk/e17e50>

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