

PILGRIMS TO NAJU NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT THE THREAT OF EXCOMMUNICATION

The Gwangju Archdiocese's Decree issued on January 21, 2008



The contents of this Decree were brief and blunt: (1) *Anyone, not only those within the Gwangju Archdiocese but any clergy, religious, or lay people in the world, who visit Naju would be subject to automatic excommunication, and (2) Fr. Aloysius Jang, who had been firm in defending Naju, was ex-*

cardinated from the Gwangju Archdiocese. In other words, Fr. Chang was expelled from the Archdiocese. Then, copies of this Decree were mailed all over the world. Numerous people became fearful of being excommunicated, and canceled their plans to visit Naju. It appeared as though this Decree, which apparently was the last resort for the Gwangju Archdiocese in its effort to put an end to Naju, finally succeeded.

Fr. Aloysius Jang appealed to the Holy See



After receiving a copy of the Decree from Archbishop Andrew Choi, Fr. Aloysius Chang immediately wrote a petition to the Archbishop to reconsider his case and remove the penalty of excommunication from him. Archbishop Choi promptly replied refusing Fr. Chang's petition. Then, Fr. Chang prepared extensive legal documents necessary for making an Appeal to the Apostolic Tribunal in the Vatican with the help of a lawyer. On February 12, 2008, he was on an airplane to Rome. On February 16, 2008, Saturday, we were allowed an audience with His Eminence Cardinal Ivan Dias, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, who had just returned from a trip to China. During the audience, His Eminence said that Fr. Chang's case could be promptly resolved, but the overall Naju question would take more time. His Eminence asked us not to worry at all, to be patient and always happy, and to pray harder with firm trust in the Blessed Mother so that she could remove the remaining obstacles (to the official Church recognition of Naju). Then, His Eminence gave us a blessing. We were so grateful

and encouraged. We relayed the good news to Julia and the volunteer helpers in Naju.

Cardinal Ivan Dias sent a letter to Archbishop Andrew Choi suspending the application of the Archbishop's Decree

Several months later, in July 2008, we were informed by Archbishop Giovanni Bulitis, who had visited the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and asked about the situation concerning Naju, and learned that Cardinal Dias had sent an official letter to the Gwangju Archbishop regarding Naju, which contained the following information:

As what has been happening in Naju is considered a private revelation, the restrictions do not apply to the pilgrims to Naju. Likewise, the penalties on Fr. Aloysius Jang should be lifted. Fr. Jang can celebrate Mass.

Thus, the Cardinal was informing the Gwangju Archdiocese that the *penalties mentioned its Decree could not be applied. Therefore, the faithful who consider visiting Naju need not worry about the threat of excommunication any longer* and, also, Fr.



Cardinal Ivan Dias, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (from 2006 to 2011) Apostolic Nuncio to Korea (from 1987 to 1991)

Aloysius Jang is not to be expelled from his diocese and can continue his priestly functions. Nevertheless, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples is the highest pastoral authority, under the Pope, over all of the mission territories in the world including Korea. There is no doubt that Cardinal Dias has the legitimate power and authority to represent the Holy See in issuing pastoral advices and instructions which are binding on the Bishops in Korea.

The Gwangju Archdiocese, however, has not made the letter from the Holy See public yet, leaving the priests and lay people in Korea and other countries in darkness, unaware of the extremely important letter from Cardinal Dias, and still believing that the Gwangju Archbishop's Decree against the pilgrims to Naju and Fr. Aloysius Jang remains valid.

The Gwangju Archdiocese is misleading the priests and the laity all over the world and is being negligent and disobedient toward the instructions from the Holy See. (Mary's Touch By Mail Benedict Sang M. Lee on June 17, 2009)