

# Cardinal wants Vatican to reveal Chinese bishops

HONG KONG – The Vatican should consider disclosing the names of Chinese bishops who are in communion with the Holy See, said Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kium of Hong Kong.

“The names of those Chinese bishops in communion with the pope could not be too open in the past; otherwise, they would be imprisoned,” the cardinal said at a July 16 meeting with about 200 Hong Kong Catholics. “Now, the Vatican should consider disclosing their names.”

The cardinal was meeting with the group to promote Pope Benedict XVI’s June 30 letter to Catholics in mainland China. The letter established new guidelines to favor cooperation between clandestine Catholic communities and those officially registered with the Chinese government.

In the past, some clandestine Catholics were hesitant to participate in sacraments or Masses with bishops registered with the government, since they did not know if those bishops were in communion with the Holy See.

Cardinal Zen said fewer than 10 Chinese bishops were not in communion with the Holy See. He said most young priests elected as bishops by Chinese Catholics “would seek the approval from the Holy See before they were ordained bishops.”

Hong Kong Catholics can help mainland Catholics, especially clergy, to know more about the pope’s letter by sharing copies with them, said Cardinal Zen. He said that, while the official response from the Chinese government toward the papal letter had been moderate, several mainland Catholic Web sites had been forced to remove the pope’s letter from their sites.