



SUPPORTING THE CHINESE CATHOLIC CHURCH

A journey of conversation,
prayer and discovery.

April 22 to May 5, 2019

Dear brothers and sisters of the universal Church, all of us are called to recognize as one of the signs of our times everything that is happening today in the life of the Church in China. We have an important duty: to accompany our brothers and sisters in China with fervent prayer and fraternal friendship. Indeed, they need to feel that in the journey that now lies ahead, they are not alone. They need to be accepted and supported as a vital part of the Church. “How good and pleasant it is, when brothers dwell together in unity!” (Ps 133:1).

Point 9 from the **Message of Pope Francis to the Catholics of China and to the Universal Church**, September 26, 2018

Join us on an exclusive 14-day journey through Catholic China.

Sino-Immersion has crafted an in-depth experience for journalists and editors of Catholic news media, as well as for educators, administrators and other thought leaders within the Australian Catholic church, so that you and your team members can accompany our sisters and brothers in China.

Much has been written about the recent Provisional Agreement between the Vatican and the government of the People’s Republic of China, and yet most Australians know little about either the history or the lived reality of Chinese Catholics.

As interest in the Chinese Church grows, it is vital to have an immersed experience of ‘the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties’ of the women and men who comprise this community of more than 12 million people. They are waiting for us with open arms.

The goals of such an immersive educational journey are fellowship and understanding. Journalists would comprehend more deeply the challenges of the church communities, editors might choose to commission more stories about these lives of faith, and educators and thought leaders could incorporate a greater Chinese (and Asian) influence in their curricula and lesson plans.

More so, visiting sites that often trace their continuous history of Christianity to more than 400 years, and praying alongside people whose own family history contains stories of struggle and of hope, enlivens the hearts of those who are privileged enough to enjoy this experience. If “This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears” (in the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins), then how much more does seeing China with one’s own eyes, and praying with our Chinese sisters and brothers bring about *metanoia*, and growth in understanding!

Sino-Immersions is now calling for applications from interested parties to join this privilege of a lifetime: see below for more information.



Memorial Church on the shores of Shangchuan Island, where St Francis Xavier died



Parishioners outside a church in Wuhan



Pilgrims visiting Ricci’s tombstone, in Beijing

SUPPORTING THE CHINESE CATHOLIC CHURCH

April 22- May 6 2019, from Macau to Beijing

“Each local Catholic community in every part of the world should make an effort to appreciate and integrate the spiritual and cultural treasures proper to Chinese Catholics.”

-Pope Francis, September 26 2018, letter to Catholics in China

In order to provide an immersive educational experience, Sino-Immersions has composed a 14-day itinerary that accompanies people to sites of historical interest (such as Macau and Shangchuan Island, where St Francis Xavier died), as well as to active church congregations in some of China’s largest cities as well as remote rural settings. Along the way, we will meet with Chinese Catholic communities, pray alongside them at local masses and also have the chance to converse with our sisters and brothers. These are sites far from the usual tourist trail, but are real communities and places rarely included on normal itineraries, as most travel companies do not have Sino-Immersions’ unique experience and knowledge.

For instance, in addition to the Crypt of the Martyrs of Japan and Vietnam in Macau, the Shrine to Our Lady of Sheshan in Shanghai and the various churches along the way, we will also visit the cemetery of Matteo Ricci and other early missionaries in Beijing. Fear not though, we will also climb the Great Wall as well!

“Jeremy combines learning and pleasure, putting the anxious and curious equally at ease.”

- Fr Frank Brennan, SJ,
CEO, Catholic Social
Services

Dr Jeremy Clarke, PhD, Director of Sino-Immersions, first visited China in 1985, and then completed his doctorate in modern Asian and Pacific History at the Australian National University, studying the modern Chinese Catholic Church. He has published much on the Chinese Catholic Church and has been guiding groups to China since 2004. Testimonials about previous pilgrimages and tours through China led by Dr Clarke can be viewed at

www.sinoimmersions.com/reviews

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Cities and communities visited include: Macau, Shangchuan Island (where St Francis Xavier died), Wuhan, Nanfeng, Shanghai and Beijing.
- Sites of note include: the Ruins of St Paul's, Macau and the Crypt containing the remains of martyrs of Japan and Vietnam; the Chapel of remembrance overlooking the beach where St Francis Xavier spent his last days gazing out to the coast of China; the inland diocese of Wuhan, which allows us to visit parishes and a community of religious sisters; the rural city of Nanfeng; the metropolis of Shanghai and finally the nation's capital, Beijing.
- At each site there will be expert input, provided by Dr Clarke and other professionals who have a deep understanding of both the contemporary realities of China and the Chinese Catholic church. We will spend much time being with locals, and hearing also from them.
- There will be time for individual and group reflection, as well as frequent opportunities to participate in local liturgical celebrations.
- Along the way we will also visit the classic scenic sites, including such things as Shanghai's Bund, the Great Wall in Beijing and similar such locations.
- We will eat in local restaurants, and Sino-Immersions will not take you to a jade factory!
- The package is almost all-inclusive (except for alcohol and gifts etc) and is strictly limited in terms of the number of participants.
- Successful applicants will need to show that this premier learning experience will have an impact on their professional and personal lives; it is not a tourist junket!
- This tour takes seriously Pope Francis' invitation to the universal church to journey alongside our Chinese sisters and brothers in faith.
- Tour numbers will be capped at 10 travellers only.

ALL-INCLUSIVE TOUR PRICE:

Twin / double room: \$7499 (\$6999 early bird discount, for deposits received by 14/12/2018).
Single supplement: \$7999 (\$7499 early bird discount, for deposits received by 14/12/2018).

Inclusions

- **Return economy airfare**, Australia-China-Australia. Passengers can use points (if possible) and upgrade if desired. It is also possible to travel separately and join the group at the first hotel.
- **All transfers** from hotels to airports and train stations (only for Sino-Immersion organized flights and journeys, otherwise people make their own way to the hotel).
- **All internal travel** trains, planes and various automobiles, including bullet trains.
- **All accommodation** in at least 4 star hotels, in central locations close to cultural sites.
- **All meals**, except where stated otherwise in the itinerary (such as lunch on a train).
- **Full-time accompaniment** during the whole journey by Mandarin speaking Dr Jeremy Clarke, Director of Sino-Immersion and an expert in Chinese modern history.
- **Bi-lingual local tour guides** will also accompany the group at appropriate times.
- **All entry tickets** to activities, cultural sites and locations specified in the itinerary, as for instance the Great Wall and Forbidden City and so on.
- **Exclusive use** of private tour coaches.
- **All tipping** and gratuities in hotels, restaurants and other locations.

Exclusions

- Meals not included in the itinerary, snacks and drinks in-between meal times, alcohol
- Visa application fees (although Sino-Immersion provides an optional Visa Handling Service)
- Travel insurance (all travellers are highly advised to purchase insurance prior to travel, and this can be organized through our travel agent, if desired)
- Personal expenditure incurred during the journey, such as bicycle hire, private tourist activities, laundry fees, mini bar items and so on
- Souvenirs and personal purchases, and any items not listed in the inclusions.

APPLICATION CRITERIA:

- This is **not** a tour group and while there will be much joy and learning along the way, it is not a leisure trip. Prospective travellers therefore need to indicate in their application how their participation in this immersion will inform and influence their life and work.
- All participants must be able to walk at least 1 kilometre unaided, must be able to walk up 3 flights of stairs unassisted and must be able to carry and lift their own bag. Age is not a factor, but mobility is, because travel in China involves much walking. Special consideration will be given in exceptional circumstances, although if the above mobility criteria cannot be met the individual must provide a personal carer, at full-price.
- Individuals must have a passport that is valid until October 2019, and must be over 18.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

- Interested parties must apply in writing (via email or traditional quill and parchment), stating why they would benefit from this rare experience. Numbers are strictly limited.
- Expressions of interest close November 28, 2018.
- Successful applicants will be informed in the first week of December. All deposits are due December 21, 2018, with a \$500 discount for early-bird deposits by December 12, 2018.

ALL-INCLUSIVE TOUR PRICE:

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Single supplement: **\$7999** (\$7499 for early bird discount, for deposits received by 12/12/2018).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

Deposit of \$1500 for all parties.	Due 21/12/2018;
Second: \$2999 (twin/dbl) or \$3249.	Due 16/2/2019;
Final: \$3000 (twin/dbl) or \$3250, or early bird discount: \$2400 or \$2900.	Due 23/3/2019.

DETAILED ITINERARY: April 22, 2019 – May 5, 2019

[B= breakfast; L= lunch; D = dinner. Where indicated, this meal is included in the package]

Day 1	April 22, Monday	Fly Australia to <i>Hong Kong</i> , and transit to <i>Macau</i> [l/d]
Day 2 [b/l/d]	April 23, Tuesday	Visit Macau's historical mission sites, including shrine to the martyrs and the Church of St Paul.
Day 3 [b/l/d]	April 24, Wednesday	Half-day in Macau visiting the mission history sites and then walk over the land border into PRC, at <i>Zhuhai</i>
Day 4 [b/l/d]	April 25, Thursday	Full day excursion to <i>Shangchuan Island</i> . Fittingly, this falls on Anzac Day, and so we can seek the intercession of one of Australia's earliest patron saints this day. Overnight in Zhuhai, so as to provide time for reflection.
Day 5 [b/l/d]	April 26, Friday	Morning flight to <i>Wuhan</i> , Hubei province, visit to Catholic parish in afternoon. Wuhan is on the banks of two mighty rivers, the Han and the Yangtze.
Day 6 [b/l/d]	April 27, Saturday	Visit to an order of Chinese religious women, and the Church of St Columban. Dinner in Wuhan.
Day 7 [b/l/d]	April 28, Sunday	Mass in a local parish, followed by afternoon train to <i>Nanfeng</i> , Jiangxi Province, to a rural parish.
Day 8 [b/l/d]	April 29, Monday	Morning mass in parish, and visit to local shrine, before then flying to <i>Shanghai</i> . Evening along the Bund.
Day 9 [b/l/d]	April 30, Tuesday	Mass in local parish, followed by visit to Xujiahui, Shanghai's historical Catholic heartland.

Day 10 [b/l/d]	May 1, Wednesday	China's National Day, a public holiday. Visit to China's famous Marian shrine and pilgrimage site, at Sheshan.
Day 11 [b/l/d]	May 2, Thursday	High-speed train to Beijing, crossing both the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers. Evening banquet of Beijing Duck.
Day 12 [b/l/d/]	May 3, Friday	Morning mass in one of Beijing's inner city churches, followed by day trip to the Great Wall, and other sites.
Day 13 [b/l/d]	May 4, Saturday	Visit to South Church, the site of the first church built by Matteo Ricci and now an active parish and a visit to the cemetery with the tombstones of missionaries Ricci, Verbiest and Schall, and around 60 others.
Day 14 [b/l/d]	May 5, Sunday	Mass in a local parish, meeting local Catholics. Possible visit to National Seminary, before travel to airport for late evening departure. NB: arrive back in Australia, May 6.

[NB: Sino-Immersion has visited all the cities and sites on the itinerary and has stayed in all the hotels we will use. Changes to the itinerary may occur due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, but every effort will be made to keep to the published journey.]



Instruments from the Ancient Observatory in Beijing, designed by Jesuit missionary Ferdinand Verbiest in the 1670s, and a section of the Great Wall in the month of May.