

MEETING CHINA

A REPORT OF THE MEETING OF CMA OFFICERS WITH A CHINESE DOCTORS' DELEGATION FROM THE FUJIAN PROVINCE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER AT THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE FOR ENGLAND AND WALES BUILDINGS IN LONDON.



Drs Tony Cole and Rob Hardie with Ms Superintendent Yang Hong

Dr Tony Cole (President of the Worcester Branch) and Dr Rob Hardie (President) met on the afternoon of 7 November 2012 with a delegation of 16 medically qualified and clinically working superintendents and deputy superintendents of 16 different hospitals in the Fujian Province of China. Fujian is on the southeast coast of the People's Republic, just opposite Taiwan. The meeting was organized by Dora Tan of the Sino-Bridge International, a company designated by the Chinese central and local governments to act as a facilitator for training missions and exchanges between the two countries. The delegation specifically wanted to gain in-depth understanding about the CMA as there is no similar organization in China. Ms Superintendent Yang Hong led the delegation. She administers the People's Hospital affiliated to Fujian University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and is a paediatrician (this instantly forged links with Tony).

Rob presented a Power Point Presentation explaining the history and aims of the Association, starting with the foundation of the Guild of Saints Luke, Cosmas and Damian by Surgeon General Thomas Maunsell CB, LLD on 21 Oct 1911 when Mass was offered in Westminster Cathedral for the success of the new society. At that time there was no register of Catholic doctors and the Medical Register was unhelpful to those wishing to identify them. The Guild began with aims that have continued virtually to the letter for the last 101 years, save the inclusion (that we have enjoyed greatly for the last 3 years) of other HCPs being full

and active members. Rob explained that we provide professional support, informed opinion and an effective voice for Catholic doctors, nurses and all allied professionals clinically involved in patient care. The delegation were especially interested in the Liverpool Care Pathway which they had not encountered to date and also our whole ethical approach to Euthanasia. We were delighted when their delegation leader Ms Superintendent Yang Hong joyfully exclaimed that she felt exactly as we do! The delegation explained to Tony's questioning that the limited One Child Family Law in China was relaxing to allow 2 children to Only Child parents. We tactfully and firmly explained the Church's teaching on Abortion, Embryonic Stem Cell Research, Embryo Experimentation and Living Wills. We were especially encouraged that their views were so similar to ours in the ethics of Medicine surrounding end of life issues.

Tony expanded the talk into the importance of being truly Catholic and embracing those HCPs in other world faiths, especially Hindu, Muslim and Jewish faiths who share the Catholic perspective views on Bioethics. He said that overall there is an 80% agreement on all topics, with most variation of opinion being on the ethics of Transplantation. He talked about running the Lejeune Clinic for 22 years and the inherent beauty of Down's Syndrome children.

There was a little confusion concerning the differing Christian denominations, and we helped the party understand that we, like they, have traditions that extend back thousands of years. We explained how there is a great deal of pressure from secularists in this country and mainland Europe to undermine ethics that have been established for centuries.

Without doubt we had an excellent afternoon. We congratulated Ms Dora Tan on organizing the event and explained how enjoyable the afternoon had been for us. We added that we were very willing to host further seminars as and when further opportunities arise for such superb sharing between well meaning doctors of such different cultural and geographical backgrounds.

ROB HARDIE, PRESIDENT OF THE CMA