

## **Presentation on justice and peace in Korea given by Park Chanboo**

### **PART 1**

#### **Brief introduction to Korea**

##### **1.1 Location**

Korea lies on the north-eastern section of the Asian continent, adjacent to China and Japan. It is on a similar latitude to the Iberian Peninsular and Greece. Korea is similar in size to Britain. Seoul's local time is nine hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

##### **1.2 Climate**

Korea has four distinct seasons. Spring and autumn are rather short, summer is hot and humid, and winter is cold and dry with abundant snowfall. Autumn, with its crisp air and crystalline blue sky, is the season most widely loved by Koreans.

##### **1.3 Language**

All Koreans speak and write the same language, Hangeul. The Korean alphabet, hangeul, was created by a group of scholars under the patronage of King Sejong the Great in the 15th century. Hangeul consists of 10 vowels and 14 consonants. It is easy to learn and use, which has greatly contributed to Korea's high literacy rate and advanced publication industry.

##### **1.4 Religion**

Unlike some cultures where a single religion is dominant, Korean culture has included a wide variety of religious elements that have shaped the people's way of thinking and behaviour. Historically, Koreans lived under the influence of Shamanism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, and in modern times Christianity has brought an important change in the spiritual landscape of the people.

### **PART 2**

#### **Brief introduction to the Korean Province**

##### **2.1 The present condition**

The Korean province was founded in 1964. As of September 2003, there are 218 members: 170 finally professed, 33 juniors, 15 novices. Seven of the finally professed are studying nursing science or social welfare for qualifications in Korea and ten finally professed are studying theology, psychotherapy, counselling, psychology, Chinese and music for qualifications in foreign countries. Nine members are in their twenties, 63 in their thirties, 75 in their forties, 47 in their fifties, 23 in their sixties, 1 in her seventies.

##### **2.2 Apostolic activities**

The Korean province goes forth and preaches the Gospel to almost all age groups. There are six kindergartens, two schools (St Mary's Elementary School and St Mary's Girls' High School), a university campus ministry, a youth camp, an old people's hospital, a social welfare centre and Jerusalem School, Rome Dormitory, English & Germany Korean Parishes abroad. The missions in Mongolia and China have been working and preparing since 1993.

##### **2.3 St Mary's Girls' High School**

St Mary's Girls' High School was opened in 1969. The first principal was Sister Maria Annuntiata Pak, who later became the 23rd General Superior of Congregatio Jesu. The school motto is to be *a woman who will sincerely serve for justice, truth and love*. Under the ideal of hongik-ingan (contributing to the overall benefit of mankind, the founding spirit of the first kingdom in Korean history) and rooted in an Ignatian spirituality, we teach students to

appreciate everything, to be honest, not to hesitate in doing good to others, to do their tasks by themselves, to be diligent in learning and practice and to control themselves. We emphasise teaching traditional culture, conscientious behaviour, environmental preservation and various self-development activities.

### **Part 3**

#### **On Justice and Peace in the Educational Community**

##### **3.1 Challenges and difficulties**

- 1) Family problems: divorced parents, bankrupt families, double-income families, dispersed families in South and North Korea, etc.
- 2) Ethical problems: the widespread almighty dollar principle (mammonism), the loss of traditional values, excessive egoism or selfishness, the neglect of life, rapid increase in suicide, etc.
- 3) Political problems: nuclear issues and escapees from North Korea, Iraq war, kidnapping, terrorism, military power and dispatch of troops abroad, controversy about capital movement and the abolition of national security law between political parties, etc.
- 4) Social problems: increasing unemployment of youth, increasing numbers of old people, juvenile delinquency, generation gap, economic difficulties, etc.
- 5) Educational problems: unstable education policy, college entrance, exam-oriented curriculum, students and parents' lack of confidence in school and teachers, etc.

##### **3.2 Courses of action and visions for the future**

- 1) Centering on the school of heart and soul acting for the preferential love of the poor
- 2) Helping poor students with school expenses and awarding scholarships
- 3) Operating study rooms after class for the poor
- 4) Taking all school exams without supervision by teachers for a clear conscience and justice
- 5) Giving shelter to runaway girls
- 6) Concern about and praying for the people of North Korea
- 7) Extending Bible class to various peer groups
- 8) Educating students to practise the theological virtues (faith, hope, charity) in their daily lives
- 9) Helping students to acquire abilities essential for progressing along their chosen career paths
- 10) Helping students to develop a well-harmonised character along with a sound body and mind and a mature sense of self-identity
- 11) Helping students to endeavour to build and develop an awareness and attitude as global citizens

**With the Lord, we are coming unto you now!**