



A woman prays Oct. 1 outside St. Joseph Catholic Church in Beijing. (CNS/Isaac Brekken, EPA)

by NCR Staff

[View Author Profile](#)

[Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

October 4, 2018

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

[Soundcloud](#)

The Vatican this month announced the signing of a "provisional agreement" with Chinese authorities to address a seven-decade dispute over the appointment of Catholic bishops in the world's most populous country.

On the show today:

- Mary Li Ma, co-author of [Surviving the State, Remaking the Church: A Sociological Portrait of Christians in Mainland China](#) and research fellow at the Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Jesuit Fr. Michael Agliardo, executive director of the [US-China Catholic Association](#), which was founded in 1989 to support the church in China.

Background reading:

- The four-paragraph Sept. 22 statement announcing the Vatican-China deal [was light on details](#), but it may represent a diplomatic achievement of historic proportions for Pope Francis' five-year papacy. Four days after signing the agreement, [Pope Francis wrote a letter](#) asking the members of China's Catholic Church to have faith in the Vatican's judgment in signing an agreement with their government.
- Catholics in Macau, Taiwan and Hong Kong are [divided over the provisional agreement](#) between China and the Vatican on the appointment of bishops, reports Catholic News Service. The deal is [seen as just a first step](#) by Rome to exerting more influence on the Chinese church.
- [Debate continues](#) about whether the Vatican's provisional agreement with China will improve relations between the Chinese state and members of religious groups, which have had a long history of conflict. A Sept. 27 hearing on Capitol Hill, chaired by Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, drew attention to the challenges faced by the Chinese government in adapting its stance toward religion in modern times.

How do I listen?

We can let you know when new podcast episodes are published. [Sign up for emails here.](#)

From your iPhone or iPad: Open the preloaded app called "Podcasts." It has a purple icon. If you're reading this from your phone, [tap this link](#), which will take you straight there. (You can also use the magnifying glass icon to search; type "NCR in Conversation.") Once you're on the series page, you can tap on an episode title to play it. Tap on the "subscribe" button to have new episodes sent to your phone. If you prefer another podcast player, you can find "NCR in Conversation" there. (Here's the [RSS feed](#).)

From your Android phone or tablet: You can listen and subscribe using the preloaded Google Play app. If you're reading this from your phone, [tap this link](#) to play the latest episode and learn more about the app.

From your desktop or laptop: You can also simply press the play button above to listen on this page. Make sure to keep this window open on your browser, or the audio will stop. You can always find the latest episode of NCR in Conversation at NCRonline.org/podcast.

Advertisement