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China resumes cross removals as virus subsides



Persecution of Christians in China: the Chinese government is in the midst of an all-out campaign to turn Christianity into a weak religion that is entirely subservient to the Chinese Communist Party, and that doesn't teach anything that would lead Chinese people away from Communist Party dogma. In fact, the government is trying to turn the Church into another organ for its propaganda. This is a matter of grave concern for Orthodox Christians in China and all other Christians as well. This story concerns the removal of crosses from churches, which allows for the buildings to be used for other purposes. It is just one small element of the government's larger campaign against Christianity.

Holy Orthodoxy in China predates this war on Christianity. It has a three-hundred year history in China, with the first Orthodox Christians coming into the country in 1685. In the 1980s, the Chinese Orthodox Church began to experience a revival. Pray that it not be snuffed out. The Order of Saint Andrew, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, requests once again that the Chinese government end these repressive measures, grant official recognition to the Chinese Orthodox Church, and give full religious freedom to all the Christians of that nation.

“China resumes cross removals as virus subsides,” UCA News, April 28, 2020:

> The communist administration in China has started another wave of cross removals as the coronavirus pandemic reportedly subsides on the mainland.
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> In the past two weeks, authorities have removed crosses from the top of two church buildings, sources told UCA News on April 27. They fear more such actions.
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> The removals began as the administration reported the discharge of the last Covid-19 patient in Wuhan, the central Chinese city where the coronavirus was first reported last December.
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> China’s National Health Commission said the entire country reported only three cases of Covid-19 on April 26. Two were Chinese people returning from abroad, while one contracted it through local transmission.
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> The cross removals began as government officials became relatively free from the pressure of fighting the pandemic, Christian leaders said.
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> Authorities removed the cross of Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Anhui Diocese on April 18, said John, a source in the diocese.
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> He said the church was considered part of the state-recognized open church but had no priests or nuns to lead its religious activities. Parishioners themselves managed its religious programs.
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> Five days before the incident, John said, parish leaders approached local authorities about repairing the building. But officials said the plan was to remove the crosses of both Catholic and Protestant churches in the area.
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> A local government official, known as the community director, on April 16 asked parishioners for the keys to the church. “They wanted to enter the church and remove the cross,” John said.
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> The parishioners reported the developments to Bishop Liu Xinhong of Anhui. He directed them to go to the local office of the state-sanctioned Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and ask for details. But local

officials of the association denied having information on the matter.

The community director told the parishioners on April 17 that officials were acting on the “directions from superiors.” However, no documents were produced to prove the claim.

On April 18, the community director led a team of young people to remove the cross.

In another incident in Anhui Diocese on April 19, a cross was removed from a church in Yongqiao district of Suzhou City around 4am, probably to avoid Catholics gathering in opposition, parishioner Paul said. The cross was originally scheduled to be removed in the afternoon.

The early-hours operation was carried out under police protection. Police officers did not allow people to enter the church, gather outside or take pictures. A mobile phone was taken away when someone took a picture….

A senior member of the clergy, who did not want to be named, said the diocese recently received a notice from authorities asking for the removal of crosses outside four churches in Feixiang.

The senior priest told UCA News that from 2019 Catholics and other religions had been asked to make changes in their “not legal buildings” to make them legal following the requirements of the law….

“After the religious symbol is removed, the church is changed into an activity centre, a nursing home or something like that. It is no longer a church,” he said….

Source