

China sets conditions for Vatican

by UPI

BEIJING -- China's official Catholic group said the Vatican can normalize relations with China if it ends ties with Taiwan and allows internal appointment of bishops. China Daily on Thursday quoted Liu Bainian, vice president of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, saying that the Vatican, the only European government to recognize Taiwan, wants China to grant the pope supreme authority to appoint bishops on the mainland. China Daily said Liu's remarks were in response to a report in Italy's La Repubblica, which quoted him as saying he "strongly hopes to be able to see the pope one day in Beijing to celebrate mass for us Chinese." Liu told China Daily, "What I meant was I hoped the pope could visit China and celebrate mass but only after normalization of diplomatic ties. If the two issues can be resolved properly, the two sides will have favorable conditions to improve ties." Liu's group has vowed to adhere to independent selection and ordination of bishops and management of its churches, the report said. China has about 5 million Catholics. Separately, the Catholic News Service said in a report from Italy that China continues to insist on not consulting the Vatican for selecting bishops.

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