

## Preface

In the 19th century, the Catholic Church expanded its missionary activities from Hong Kong Island to mainland China, including the New Territories. It had an important impact on Catholicism throughout Hong Kong and even southern China. As population grew drastically in Hong Kong in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholic Mission here built different kinds of church buildings with the characteristics of the community in mind, such as the social background of the church members and interaction with the traditional Chinese culture. After the Second World War (1939-1945), due to the change in political situation, the missionary work of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong was limited to the area of Hong Kong. With the influx of refugees in the subsequent decades, demand for social services increased rapidly, and the Church missionaries tried to meet their needs. In the 1980s, with the approaching of the Handover in 1997 and the speedy development of new towns, many parishes were formally established to facilitate missionary work and church constructions. After the reforms initiated by the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II, 1963-1965), there were concrete requirements on liturgical space. The appearance and functions of church building not only needed to stress its mission in order to implement the Vatican II liturgical reform, it was also necessary to establish effectively a local Christian community

so that the believers could feel welcomed and at home when entering the church. It should be beneficial for spreading the Gospel to the wider community as well. Therefore, it was essential for the Catholic Church to strengthen their interaction with the local culture and to take urban planning into consideration.

This booklet will introduce some Catholic buildings by three geographical divisions: Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. At the same time, it will introduce some aspects, from the perspectives of religion, culture and education, of the century-long missionary activities of the Catholic Church in this city that is known to be a place of East meets West. Through these missionary activities and Catholic buildings, it will describe the relationship between Catholicism and social development, such as how the community changes or the planning of new towns affects missionary works. In addition, this booklet also will trace changes in local missionary activities through these historic sites to present objectively the development of the Hong Kong Catholic Church.