

**«West learning and Jesuit translations  
of the Confucian Classics»**

**Guangzhou, November 6-8/2015**

Mr. President, Distinguished Authorities, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Professors and Academicians, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning.

It is a great honor and pleasure for me today to welcome all of you to this important and international conference on “West learning and Jesuit translations of the Confucian Classics”, an always stimulating subject.

Everyone here today in this hall is familiar – I am sure – with Prospero Intorcetta, his life, his work; a Sicilian Jesuit missionary whom in an article on the issue of 5 November 2006, the newspaper China Daily called «Italian priest known as “translator of Confucius”».

On the other hand, I am equally sure, that not all of you here know that on 28 December 2007 in Piazza Armerina, Intorcetta’s hometown, a “Prospero Intorcetta – Cultura aperta” Foundation was set up. I, personally, was one of the promoters, the founders, the largest funder and I have the privilege of being the Chairman of this fine cultural institution in which I have invested almost eight years of my life in a continuing back and forth between China and Italy.

Although it would be easy enough to understand the reasoning behind the decision to set up the Foundation, I want to make clear that its primary aim is to enhance the figure of Prospero Intorcetta to whom – in my opinion - historiography has not attributed, so far, an adequate status.

It goes without saying that the Foundation's goal may be better achieved through the enhancement and the promotion of that part of Sicily who gave birth to such a son! And this we will pursue through the organization of conferences, cultural events, exhibitions and what else in order to emphasize the fundamental importance - for mankind's future - of the dialogue between different peoples, countries and civilizations thought that, we can swear, Prospero Intorcetta had already in mind when he decided to cope with the hard work of translating Confucio's books.

In conclusion, I kindly ask each and every one to visit the Foundation's web site ([www.fondazioneintorcetta.info](http://www.fondazioneintorcetta.info)) to get an idea of what – so far - has been done. Needless to say, the Foundation will be more than glad to accept and publish whatever contribution (in terms of paper, information, etc.) you may be willing to offer related to our subject.

I wish you all the best.

Giuseppe Portogallo

Chairman

Fondazione Prospero Intorcetta

Cultura Aperta