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## Baoding Catholics call for safe return of missing Father Yang

by Victoria Ma

*Father Yang, who belonged to the Church community not recognized by the Chinese government, went with his coach and a few lay Catholics who were sitting for the same driving test, but he "disappeared" at the Number 3 Driving Test Venue in Dingxing county of Baoding area, between 12 noon and 12:30 pm as his mobile phone was powered off, local sources of Baoding said.*

Beijing (AsiaNews) – Father Yang Jianwei, parish pastor of Anzhuang, Baoding diocese (Hebei), was found missing at a driving test venue since noon of April 15. His whereabouts and reason for missing are not known.

Father Yang, who belonged to the Church community not recognized by the Chinese government, went with his driving coach and a few lay Catholics who were sitting for the same test, but he "disappeared" at the Number 3 Driving Test Venue in Dingxing county of Baoding area, between 12 noon and 12:30 pm as his mobile phone was powered off, local sources of Baoding said.

The coach asked the venue's officials for the videos of surveillance cameras installed at the venue to find out what happened to the priest, but his demand was rejected.

In that afternoon, Father Yang's family rushed to the place and reported to the police at a nearby police post. Having waited for a long time, a police officer eventually contacted the driving test venue to check on the case. However, the venue officials refused to let them see the videos, unless a permission was sought from the Public Security Bureau of Baoding City. Therefore, the local police officers did not investigate further. Father Yang's whereabouts remains unknown.

Local Catholics then sent out messages via social media to alert other Catholics to help find the missing priest.

"We have to protect the human rights and safeguard the security of our priests," a layman said. "We will not just watch our priests go missing. We will continue to look for Father Yang," he noted.

Father Yang, 40s, is active in pastoral work of Anzhuang parish.

Recently, priests in Xuanhua and Fuzhou dioceses, not recognized by the Chinese government, were taken away. Details

are not known.



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