



## BRIEF NEWS

FROM THE "CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CHINA"

-After renovations, the Zhang Zhuang Catholic Church of Xianxian, Hebei province, formally opened on Christmas Day, 1980. At 9 A.M. on the 25th, Father Liu Dinghan, head of the Cangzhou diocese, celebrated high Mass with deacon and sub-deacon. Over 3,000 Catholics attended.

- Having suffered destruction during the ten years of catastrophe, and the earthquake, the Qiaotun Catholic Church of Tang Shan city, Hebei province, was completely leveled. During 1980, the People's government, in order to carry out the Party's religious policy and meet the religious needs of the Catholics, gave the church great support by building a temporary structure at the old address of the Qiaotun church. It can hold between 6-700 people. (When the new city plan goes into effect, then a real church building will be erected). The leader of the diocese, Father Liu Jinghe, solemnly celebrated Christmas high Mass, accompanied by a choir which sang in four parts. Over 2,700 Catholics attended the Mass, and three people were baptized. Both the church and garden were packed with people. Many Catholics were moved to tears, and all said with one voice: "The 'Gang of Four' tore down our church, and the People's government has helped us re-build it. This really shows that the Party's policy of religious freedom and the 'Gang of Four's' counter-revolutionary Fascist policy are certainly not the same." Everyone expressed thanks to the People's government.

- In Taiyuan city, Shanxi province, the Christian community, in order that the Catholics would have a good Christmas, and with help from all sides, in both the city itself and the outskirts, opened seven churches. Priests were assigned to each church for Mass. The Catholics who heard Mass at both the central church in Taiyuan and in the outlying districts altogether numbered over 35,600. From the evening of the 24th to the evening of the 25th, three Masses were celebrated. Over 200 young people, on their own initiative, organized a choir, and sang the Mass and Christmas carols in two parts. About 7,000 Catholics attended the Masses. The clergy and Catholics expressed satisfaction with this year's celebration of Christmas, and from now on are going to work hard to make a contribution to the accomplishment of the four modernizations in the motherland.

- The clergy and Catholics of Fushun city, Liaoning province, experienced a very happy Christmas this year. The newly opened church was decorated very beautifully, and all the equipment and articles were fixed or made by the priests, brothers, sisters and Catholics themselves. The church had a cave with a stable, and the lights on the Christmas trees twinkled brightly. The garden, outside the church, also possessed a big cave made of snow, into which were stuck branches of pine trees. The compassionate infant Jesus was lying in the manger of the cave, and candles burned all around. This caused the people to long for that quiet and holy night in Bethlehem. The parish priest, Father Cui Yuxin, offered high Mass with deacon and sub-deacon on the evening of the 24th and on the morning of the 25th. About 1,000 Catholics attended Mass, including over 20 of Korean nationality. Thirty young people were baptized and received first holy communion. On Christmas eve, the traditional Christmas play was presented, and Santa Claus gave candy and other presents to the children. Of the Catholics who came to the celebration, some listened to the melodious hymns of the Christmas Mass, and some took pictures. The clergy and Catholics on this happy festival all personally felt the warmth of the government's religious policy, and with

inspired hearts each expressed the desire to unite with all the people of the country to work hard and increase production, in order to make a contribution to the accomplishments of the four modernizations!

- In order to celebrate Christmas well, the clergy and Catholics of Bengbu city, Anhui province, began to make preparations from the beginning of December. Since the church building was not yet ready, they borrowed a few big offices to serve as a temporary church. Regarding altar, vestments and other sacred instruments, some were bought at the last minute, and some were borrowed from other dioceses. A sign saying "Merry Christmas" hung above the door, and on each side of the door were hung scrolls reading: "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth to men of good will." At 8 A.M. on the 25th, Bishop Zhou Yizhai offered high Mass. The ceremonies were solemn and serious, and full of the warm Christmas spirit. The Catholics who participated in Mass all thanked the People's government for the concern it shows for the religious life of the Christian masses. An old Catholic of 84 years of age exclaimed in a loud voice, "I never imagined that our church would see this day. Thank God! And thank the Party!"

- The church has been renovated and re-opened in Yinchuan city, Ningxia Hui minority autonomous region. Over 500 Catholics attended Christmas Mass. Everyone was moved and eyes were filled with tears. The people's faith in the government's religious policy was increased, and all were inspired to go all out for the accomplishment of the four modernizations.

- The main Catholic church of Xian city, Shaanxi province, was formally opened on December 21, 1980. The administrator of the Xian diocese, Father Ji Huairang, conducted the opening ceremonies and celebrated high Mass. The choir sang the Mass, and musical groups from Xian and environs played sacred music. The atmosphere was very cordial. About 3,000 people attended the opening ceremony. On the 25th Xian's clergy and Catholics solemnly celebrated the feast of Christmas.

- In WenZhou city, Jejiang province, the bishop, priests and representatives of the old Catholics from the Catholic Patriotic Association, held a meeting to celebrate Christmas.

- The clergy and Catholics of Shijiazhuang, Cangzhou, and Zhangjiakou cities (Hebei province) Shanghai, Ningbo (Jejiang), Fuzhou (Fujian), Nanchang (Jiangxi), Qingdao (Shandong), Kaifeng (Henan), and Tongzi and Suiyang counties (Guizhou), all held activities to celebrate Christmas.

- The Lingdong St. Joseph's Church of Fujian's Xiamen diocese, with the help of the Catholic Patriotic Association of Zhangzhou city, held its solemn opening ceremony on January 18 this year. Fathers Chen Mingyuan and Shen Chaoyi each offered Mass with about 1,900 Catholics from every Minnan area in attendance. When these fervent Catholics heard the clear and pleasing to the ear Latin, they were deeply moved. It aroused their spirit of patriotism and love of the church. All demonstrated that they were determined to increase production and make a contribution to the four modernizations.

- Besides this, during the second half of 1980, committee or representatives meetings were held successively by the Catholic Patriotic Associations of Shijiazhuang, Zhangjiakou, Shanghai, Tianjin, Neimenggu autonomous region, Liaoning province, Jilin province, Taiyuan, Jinagsu province, Nanjing, Fujian province, Nanchang, Jinan, Qingdao, Wuhan, Hunan province, Chongqing, Chengdu, Anqing, Wuhu, Hanzhong district and other places. The meetings reported the spirit, decisions and most important speeches of the central leaders at the third assembly of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and of the Chinese Catholic representatives meeting. Everyone was greatly encouraged, demonstrated their wholehearted support, and were determined to completely put into practice the decisions of the meetings.

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