

News In Brief

More than ten thousand Catholics attended Holy Week Services this year in Beijing's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. On Easter Sunday, Bishop Fu Tieshan officiated at the Solemn Mass. The 300 year-old Church was decked with flags, ribbons and flowers. Religious articles were also made available for purchase by the worshippers.

Also, more than 1,800 Catholics attended Easter Sunday Masses at Sacred Heart Cathedral and the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes on Shamian Island in Guangzhou. In accordance with the traditional Tridentine Rite, Masses opened with the Asperges. Each Mass was also followed by Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Over one hundred teachers and students celebrated Easter at Nanjing Union Theological College. Bishop Ding Guangxun (K.H. Ting) officiated at the communion service at 7:30 a.m. There was a second Easter worship service at 9:30 a.m.

The Imperial Observatory of Beijing, with a history of over 500 years and where Jesuit and Chinese astrologers once competed for the Emperor's favour, had been recently reopened to the public after 20 years. The Observatory had been in continuous operation until 1929. Its deterioration continued during the Cultural Revolution, then, in August of 1979, part of its walls collapsed due to heavy rains. Now restored, it still contains eight of the original fifteen instruments used to measure the stars.

In February and March, four Jesuit priests were sentenced guilty in Shanghai of crimes "against the security of the country" and given prison terms at hard labour. They were identified as Vincent Zhu Hongsheng (66), Joseph Chen Wentang (74), Stephen Chen Caijun (66) and Stanislaus Shen Baishun (80). Fr. Vincent Zhu was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, Fr. Joseph Chen 11 years, Fr. Stephen Chen 2½ years and Fr. Stanilaus Shen 10 years.

Franciscan Bishop Anthony Zhou Weidao, long-time bishop of Fengxiang, died 14 February at the age of 79.