

News in Brief

THE HONG KONG CATECHETICAL CENTRE GRADUATION CEREMONY

On the 10th of July, the Hong Kong Catechetical Centre held its 19th graduation ceremony during a Mass with Bishop John Baptist Wu presiding. The present graduating class numbers 147 and includes 7 sisters, 34 lay teachers, 14 college students, 4 nurses, a number of pastoral agents, social workers, factory and office workers. Among the graduates of the two year course, one commuted weekly from Macao, while another is from Singapore.

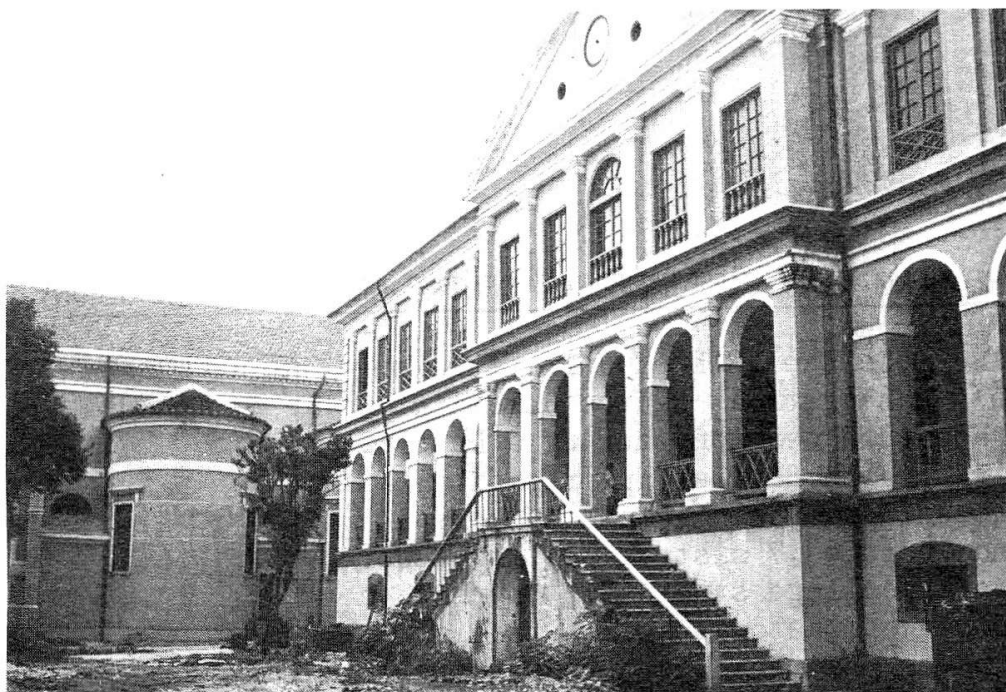
The Centre, which was established twenty years ago, endeavours to serve the catechetical needs of local schools and parishes. Miss Pauline Cheng is the Centre's present director.



CATHOLIC SEMINARIES REOPEN

Some Catholic Seminaries in China have re-opened during the past few years. The Church now has Xu Jia Hui Seminary in Shanghai serving the eastern district, Shengyang Seminary the northern district, and Chengdu Seminary the western district. This summer, Beijing Seminary will begin to register new students for admission in the Fall. The renovation of Hua Yuen Hill Seminary in Wuchang of the central-southern district is in full swing. It is hoped that the work will be completed in time for the Fall Semester. The Hua Yuen Hill Seminary is designated to serve the

The New Wuchang Seminary, at Hua Yuen Shan.



five provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Hubei and Henan. It is located on the hilltop campus of the former Hunan-Hubei Seminary, and still maintains the original library which has an outstanding collection of books. Bishop Tung Guangqing has been appointed rector. Preparation is also going on for the setting up of a new seminary near Xian for the north-west provinces.

CONVENT TO REOPEN IN GUANGZHOU

In Guangzhou, seven Chinese Sisters of the Immaculate Conception Congregation now reside in a home near the Cathedral while two others are living nearby to the Shamian Church. Besides living together, they are also involved in active church work. It is reported that the Guangzhou city government plans to restore a former convent for them before the end of this year. The Sisters, who were sent to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, will be able to return to their former community life.

The Congregation of Chinese Sisters of the Immaculate Conception was founded in Guangzhou in 1932. Their work has focused on education, helping in parishes and teaching Christian doctrine. Some of the Sisters came to Hong Kong in 1954. At present, thirteen Sisters are still actively working in Hong Kong, while fifteen are on the Mainland.

SELECTED WRITINGS OF DENG XIAOPING PUBLISHED

The "Selected Writings of Deng Xiaoping" (鄧小平文選) was published on the 1st of July, coinciding with the 62nd anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. The first printing numbered 12,210,000 copies. The book includes forty-seven major addresses by Deng, covering the period from 1975 up to the convening of the 12th Party Congress last year. Thirty-nine of the addresses are here published for the first time. The book, consisting of 260,000 characters, deals with politics, economics, military affairs, science, education, literature, arts, and the rebuilding of the Party. Announcements in the Chinese Press two days after publication urged all Chinese people to study its contents conscientiously. On the 1st of July, the People's Daily published a long article hailing the book as "brilliant writing marking a great historical turning point". The book has enjoyed brisk sales.

CPPCC AND NPC ELECTED NEW LEADERS

The first session of the Sixth National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference elected 297 standing-members on June 17th. The conference was chaired by Deng Yingchao. Among the new members, three religious leaders were elected to serve as vice-chairmen and eight others as Standing Committee members. On the following day, the first session of the Sixth National People's Congress, which was chaired by Peng Zhen, also elected 155 standing-members. Among the 155 newly elected members, one religious leader was chosen to serve as vice-chairman and three were elected to the Standing Committee. On the same day, the NPC elected Li Xiannian as State President, Ulanhu as State Vice-President, Deng Xiaoping as Chairman of the newly-established Central Military Commission, and Zhao Ziyang as Premier of the State Council.

Total membership of the NPC dropped dramatically from its previous high of 3497 to its present 2978 -- almost a 15 percent reduction. Dividing the membership into categories, Peng Chong, Chairman of the Credential Committee of the NPC, pointed out that the first three -- 791 workers and peasants, 636 cadres and 701 intellectuals -- represent 70 percent of Congress membership. 23 percent of the membership are between 30 and 50 years of age. The 55 national minorities which account for 6.7 percent of the population are represented by 403 deputies, or 13.5 percent of Congress membership. The non-Communist deputies have climbed to 10 percent to make up 37.5 percent of the total membership.

TAIWAN BISHOPS REACT TO PROPOSED NEW RELIGIOUS LAW

On June 3rd in Taipei, the Ministry of Internal Affairs invited 15 of Taiwan's Buddhist, Taoist, Islamic, Protestant and Catholic religious leaders to discuss the proposed draft of a law 'to protect religions.'

According to reports in the Taiwan official press, the Ministry of Internal Affairs considers existing legislation, notably the "Regulations for Supervising Temples" now more than fifty years old and dealing solely with Buddhism and Taoism, in need of updating. Because many Chinese have in recent years converted to Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islamism, these regulations no longer fit the present religious situation. The Ministry feels it is time to introduce new legislation. The proposed draft contains twenty-five articles. It is emphasized that this draft has no intention to violate the spirit of freedom of religion as guaranteed by the Constitution; however, it does stress governmental protection and guidance, as well as the responsibility of the religions to be self-governing.

Archbishop Stanislaus Lokuang, Archbishop Mathew Kia and Bishop Joseph Wang represented the Catholic Church at the meeting. It is reported that during the meeting, the majority of religious officials had reservations about the proposed draft and offered differing opinions. Bishop Wang felt that there was no need to set up new legislation which might hinder the further development of religion. He said it would be sufficient to establish some regulations concerning Church property, management, activities, etc., or to revise and supplement existing regulations. Furthermore, the present draft has many deficiencies. Also, the spirit in which the law was drafted seems to stress Government control rather than Church development.

On June 29, the Taiwan Diocesan Catholic Bishops Colloquium, after discussing the issue, moved to submit to the government concrete suggestions representing the Catholic viewpoint.