



NEWS IN BRIEF

THE POPE INVITES THE FAITHFUL TO STUDY THE THOUGHTS OF MARTIN LUTHER

Pope John Paul II urged the people within the Church to study the theology of Martin Luther. In a letter to Cardinal Willebrands, the head of the Ecumenical Secretariat, Pope John Paul II remarked that the study of accurate historical writings and to dialogue in good faith are essential conditions for understanding Martin Luther and establishing unity among Christians.

This letter was written on October 31st, the date in 1517 on which Martin Luther posted his famous "95 Theses" on the wall of Wittenburg Church. The letter was published by the Vatican on November 5th to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth on November 10th.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY VISITS CHINA

Dr. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury and spiritual leader of 64 million Anglicans throughout the world, arrived in Shanghai on December 1st to start a fifteen day tour. It was Dr. Runcie's second visit to China; the first, in January of '82, was of a private nature. This time he was the guest of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Chinese Christian Council. Touring with the Archbishop were also representatives of major Protestant Churches: Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and the Salvation Army. On his arrival in Shanghai, he received a warm welcome from thousands of Christians led by Bishop K. H. Ding, President of the CCC and Rector of Nanjing Theological Seminary. In the afternoon, the Mayor of Shanghai Wang Daohan hosted a reception in his honour. The Archbishop's itinerary included Beijing, Hengzhou and Xian. Everywhere he was received with

great courtesy and was able to meet with political, scientific, educational and religious leaders. After his tour, Dr. Runcie stopped off for two days in Hong Kong before returning to England.

CHINA PARTICIPATES IN THE INTERNATIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION

After four days of discussion, the third general assembly of the International Planned Parenthood Federation announced that China along with six other nations were accepted as new members. The meeting was chaired by Mwai Kibaki, Vice-President of Kenya. More than 100 member-nations sent delegates. Li Xiuzhen (栗秀真), Vice-President of China's Birth Planning Commission, in her report to the assembly, noted that the birth rate in China has decreased from 25.59 per 1,000 in 1970 to 14.55 per 1,000 in 1981.

THE CATHOLIC ASIAN LAITY MEETING IN HONG KONG

A meeting of the Catholic Asian Laity was held in Hong Kong during the first week of December. The theme of the meeting was "The role of the laity in the Church's life and mission in Asian society." The meeting was organized by the Pontifical Laity Commission. Delegates came from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. More than 80 people took part. Among them 7 were from Hong Kong.

CHINA TERMINATES ITS DISCUSSION ON ALIENATION IN MARXISM

The self-criticism of Zhou Yang (周揚) marked the end of the controversy concerning alienation in Marxism which has been taking a place in China for the past eight months. The problem regarding alienation originated from an article written by Zhou Yang, entitled "An Inquiry into Some Theoretical Problems in Marxism" which appeared in Renmin Ribao on March 16. The article discussed the relationship between humanism and Marxism. Zhou Yang remarked that in the past China's understanding of Marxism emphasized class struggle and the dictatorship of proletariat, but neglected the idea of humanism in man's quest for his ultimate destiny. In November, Zhou Yang offered a criticism of his own remarks, stating that he did not make a correct evaluation of general trends in the past few years. While he had felt deeply that the leftist inclination brought serious danger to the revolutionary enterprise, he did not consider at the time that foreign capitalistic ideology resulting from China's opening to the west also had a serious negative influence. He also admitted that he gave attention only to leftist ideas, while

neglecting to oppose rightist inclinations. At the same time, Hu Jiwei (胡績偉), the director of Renmin Ribao and Wang Ruoshui (王若水), the deputy general editor of Renmin Ribao, who also mentioned alienation in his writings, were transferred from their posts in November.

CHINA PUBLISHES DIVORCE SURVEY FINDINGS

According to the latest figures published in China, there were 370,000 couples divorced in 1982. This was the highest number within the past three years. A survey on the causes of divorce conducted by the Sociology Institute of the Social Science Academy of Shanghai revealed that the most frequent causes for divorce were: extra-marital relationships, interpersonal emotional conflicts, financial problems, sexual incompatibility, and improper motives for marrying.

COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF XU GUANGQI HELD IN SHANGHAI

On the 8th of November, people from all walks of life gathered in Shanghai to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the death of Xu Guangqi (徐光啓), a Catholic scientist of the Ming Dynasty. Wang Daohan (汪道涵), the mayor of Shanghai and Secretary General of the Shanghai CCP, spoke of the achievements of Xu Guangqi in the areas of astronomy, mathematics, agriculture and public works. He emphasized that Xu was a patriot in that he also devoted himself to training soldiers and making weapons to defend China from foreign invaders.

The People's Government of Shanghai City has renovated Xu's tomb and changed the name of Nandan Park (南丹公園), where his grave is situated, to Guangqi Park. A granite bust of Xu was unveiled by Mayor Wang.

Nie Rongzhen (聶榮臻), the Vice-President of the General Military Committee, Fang Yi (方毅) and Lu Dingyi (陸定一) also sent letters of commemoration extolling the achievements of Xu.

TIANJIN UNIVERSITY DISCUSSION ON THE HONG KONG QUESTION

At the end of October, Tianjin University in Hebei Province held a discussion on "The Hong Kong Question." The discussion, conducted by the Student Union and the Department of Humanities, was well attended. Content focused on a variety of subjects including the history and geography of Hong Kong, the heroism displayed by Hong Kong people during their brief but turbulent history, and the concrete arrangements now being made by the Chinese government in its efforts to regain sovereignty

over Hong Kong while guaranteeing its prosperity and stability.

FIRST CHINESE UNIVERSITY FOR THE ELDERLY

The first university ever established for the elderly in China was inaugurated this autumn in Jinan, Shandong Province. It offers professional courses in health education, physical training for the aged, nutrition, gardening and landscaping, calligraphy, art, modern science, history, geography and classical literature. At present, the university has an enrollment of 930 students.

THOUSANDS IN TAIWAN PARTICIPATE IN A MASS COMMEMORATING MATTEO RICCI

More than 10,000 catholics gathered to celebrate a Thanksgiving Mass on November 13th in the China Athletic Stadium in Taipei to commemorate the Fourth Centenary of Matteo Ricci's arrival in China. The theme was "Spreading the Gospel among the Chinese people." Archbishop Lourdasamy, the Vice-Prefect of the Congregation of Evangelization, was the chief celebrant. Archbishops Luo Guang (羅光) and Jia Yanwen (賈彥文) were among the principle concelebrants who included 24 bishops and 260 priests.

MOTHER TERESA OPENS THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE IFFLP

The 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Mother Teresa, came to Hong Kong on the 20th of November to deliver the keynote address at the opening assembly of the Third International Congress of the International Federation for Family Life Promotion. There were in attendance more than 300 delegates from more than 60 countries, including Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao.

In her address, Mother Teresa pointed out that the problems of abortion and the abandoning of infants are more serious in the developing countries than in the poorest regions of Africa and India. "It is a tragedy of human progress," she said. Topics of discussion during the Congress included: natural family planning, family life education on the primary and secondary school level, interpersonal relationships and sexual-psychological problems.

Mother Teresa, who was born in Yugoslavia, has gained world renown for her many years of dedicated service to the destitute and the dying of Calcutta.

---translated by B. Leung & E. Wurth---