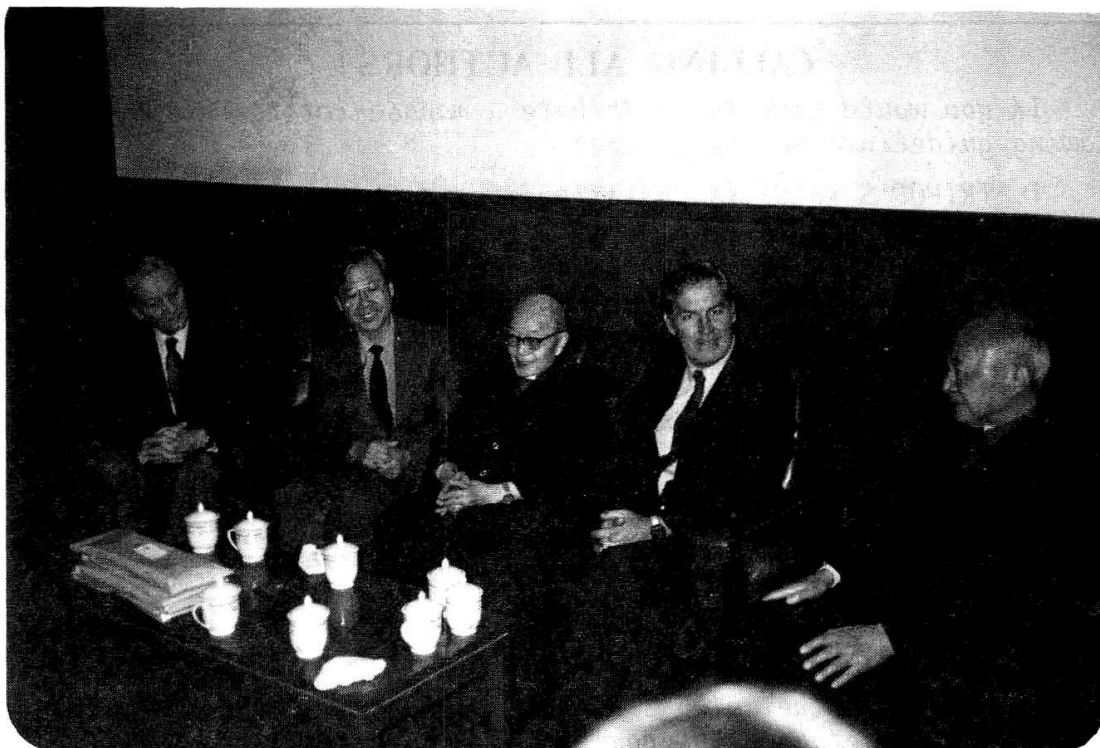


Bishop Gong Pinmei Receives Visitors From Abroad

by P. Barry

On Friday, October 25, 1985, a group of four priests headed by the Superior General of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America Father William Boteler became the first foreign visitors to meet Bishop Gong Pinmei of Shanghai since his release from prison on July 3rd of this year. The visit was arranged by the Bureau of Religious Affairs and the Shanghai Catholic Patriotic Association.



L-R: Fr. Murphy, Fr. Tong, Bp. Zhang, Fr. Boteler, Bp. Gong

Accompanying Father Boteler were two other Maryknoll Fathers, Father Laurence T. Murphy President-Emeritus of New Jersey's Seton Hall University and Father Peter Barry, as well as the Director of the Holy Spirit Study Centre in Hong Kong, Father John Tong.

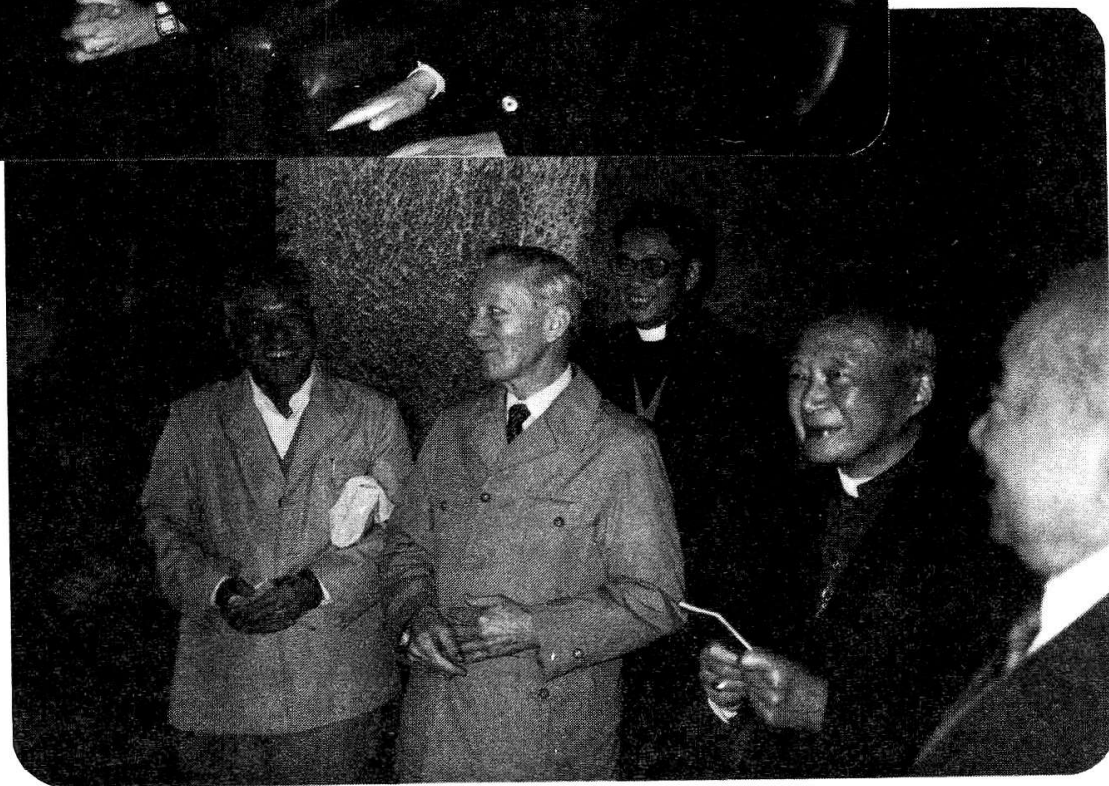
The luncheon engagement took place at the bishop's residence which is located next to the Shanghai Xujiahui Cathedral. The four foreign guests first met with 93 year-old Bishop Zhang Jiashu before Bishop Gong was ushered into the guest parlor. Bishop Gong appeared to be well-rested and in good spirits. The 84 year old bishop said that he is receiving excellent care and confirmed that he was in good health. When Father Boteler mentioned that he was Maryknoll's 8th Superior General in a line that included Bishop James Edward Walsh, an old friend of Bishop Gong's who served under him in Shanghai after the war before they both were arrested and sent to the same prison, Bishop Gong said simply: "Bishop Walsh was a model for me. I consider him a saint." Later, the Bishop told Father Boteler: "Bishop Walsh lives in my heart forever". (Bishop Walsh was released from prison in 1970 and died at Maryknoll in July of 1981)



L-R: Fr. Boteler, Bp. Zhang, Fr. Tong

A delicious meal was then served in the guest parlor. Besides Bishops Zhang and Gong and the four visitors, also present at the luncheon were Bishop Jin Luxian the Auxiliary

(L-R: Bp. Zhang, Fr. Boteler, Bp. Gong)



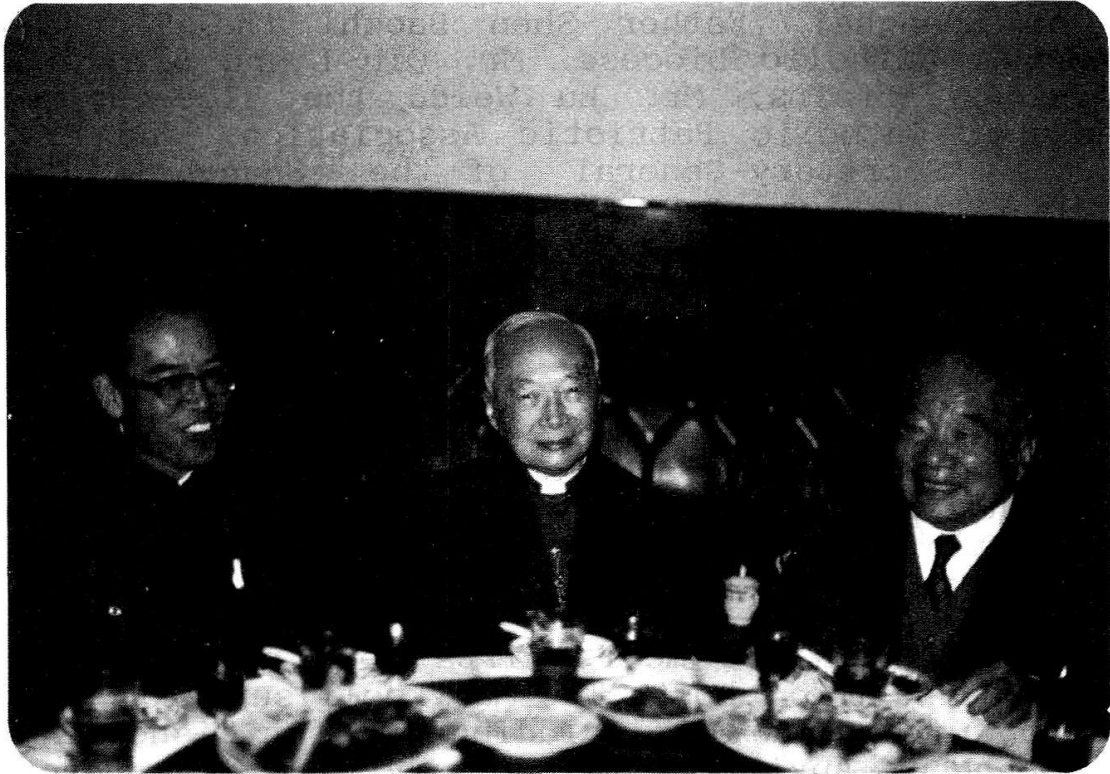
(L-R: Mr. Qiu, Fr. Murphy, Fr. Shen, Bp. Gong, Mr. Lu)

Bishop of Shanghai, Father Shen Baozhi the Secretary of the Shanghai Catholic Diocese, Mr. Qiu Linpu of the Bureau of Religious Affairs, Mr. Lu Weidu the Vice-chairman of the Shanghai Catholic Patriotic Association, and Mr. Tang Guozhi the Secretary-General of the Shanghai Catholic Patriotic Association.

The general atmosphere of the meal was light-hearted and cheerful, with talk again returning to the amazing good health of both Bishops Zhang and Gong. Bishop Gong attributed part of it to the Chinese taiqi exercises which he does three times a day, and a daily diet including a mandatory two apples. Bishop Gong also spoke about his recent holiday trip to Hangzhou, which he made with Bishops Zhang and Jin and during which he celebrated the 36th anniversary of his consecration as a bishop as well as his 84th birthday.

At the end of the meal, gifts were exchanged between the visitors and their hosts. The Maryknoll superior presented each bishop with a stole (including one for Bishop Li Side, another Shanghai Auxiliary bishop, who was not present for the banquet), and in return he received a pair of lacquer vases as a gift from the Shanghai diocese to Maryknoll. After a short prayer in the residence chapel the visitors returned to their hotel.

The visit with Bishop Gong came as the climax of a two-week tour of China by the Maryknoll superior general. Previously, the group had visited Chengdu, Chongqing, and Wanxian in Sichuan Province, and Wuhan in Hubei Province. The trip included a three-day boat trip through the spectacular gorges of the Yangtse. It was at Wanxian in Sichuan that they were invited to attend a banquet celebrating Bishop Duan Yinming's 36th anniversary of consecration. The Bishop is very popular in Wanxian and the banquet was attended by the city's leading officials. It gave Father Lawrence Murphy an opportunity to express the group's gratitude for the "uncommon courtesy of the Chinese people". Father Murphy, in addressing the guests, mentioned that while he himself was far from home, the hearts of the American and Chinese peoples were much closer, sharing as they do the same hopes and aspirations for themselves, their families, and their countries. What came as a happy surprise to most of the guests was the announcement that the American State of New



L-R: Mr. Tang, Bp. Gong, Mr. Lu

Jersey and Zhejiang Province had already signed a sister-state agreement, the honours being done by their two governors at Seton Hall University, which Father Murphy saw as another sign of their countries' growing friendship, mutual respect, and desire to work together. In praising the great energy, vitality, and talent of the Chinese, and their great contributions to the world's arts and sciences, Father Murphy stressed the need for China's continuing international presence in a shrinking world community where peace and justice for all can only be achieved through the mutual respect and sincere cooperation of all nations.

At the Regional Seminary in Wuhan the Maryknollers, in meeting the seminarians, found some who are from their former missions: Jiangmen and Meixian in Guangdong Province and Wuzhou in Guangxi Province. The seminary opened its doors in 1983 and now has a total of 82 students. While in Shanghai the Maryknollers also visited the Sheshan Regional Seminary which has 98 seminarians, before they returned to Hong Kong on October 26th.