

MACAO CATHOLIC DELEGATION VISITS CHINA



In front of Matteo Ricci's tomb

Coinciding with the opening of Sino-Portuguese negotiations on the future of Macao, which gave the visit an added significance, a Macao delegation of Catholics toured China at the invitation of the Bureau for Religious Affairs. Led

by Bishop Arquimínio Da Costa, the group of ten, which included priests, religious and lay people, visited Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai. While in Beijing, Mr. Ren Wuzhi of the Bureau of Religious Affairs explained present Chinese policy with regard to religion and reiterated China's previously declared guidelines for Macao's future: "One country two systems", and "Macao residents administer Macao". He expressed an eagerness to hear and learn more from Macao's residents, and the group in turn described to Him the present situation of the Church there. Bishop Da Costa expressed hope that Macao's unique historical background along with its present special circumstances would be treated at length at the conference which would determine her future.

The trip was part pilgrimage and part reunion. Members followed in the footsteps of those missionaries who had gone before them, and rejoiced in the opportunity to be once again with their brothers and sisters in Christ, after over thirty years of separation. They were deeply impressed by the sincere devotion and love of the Chinese Christians,

and they were quite pleased to see so many Churches and seminaries being reopened. In Shanghai they were allowed to meet with Bishop Gong Pinmei, who was recently paroled after three decades in prison.



Sr. Khong, Sr. Lau and two Shanghai Novices

The ten days passed very quickly and the group returned to Macao, each appreciative of his and her good fortune to be part of this historic first visit and all were satisfied that their goals of broadening and deepening relationships between Macao and the Church on the mainland had met with satisfactory success. (Summary of Sr. Victoria Lau's account of visit)