

8TH VERBIEST FOUNDATION SYMPOSIUM HELD

Sponsored by the Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation, the 8th International Symposium on the History of the Chinese Catholic Church was held in Louvain, Belgium, August 31-September 3, 2004. The topic of the symposium was "The Contribution of Chinese Priests, Religious and Lay People to the Building Up of the Local Chinese Catholic Church in Imperial China."

During the symposium, scholars from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Europe and the United States delivered 36 papers. Dr. Nicolas Standaert, Professor of Chinese Studies at Louvain University, gave the keynote address under the general title: "Contact Between China and Europe." Dr. Noel Golvers, Researcher at the Verbiest Foundation, made the closing summary remarks.

This symposium was unique, and participants felt that it was long overdue, because the focus was on the contribution of the Chinese clergy, religious and laity to the development of the Chinese Catholic Church. Past conferences on Chinese Church history had concentrated on the contributions of the foreign missionaries. While foreign missionaries did get a mention at this symposium, it was mostly in an adjunct role, e.g., as founders of Chinese religious orders, who in turn carried out the work of preaching the Gospel and of building up the Church. The Verbiest Foundation will publish the papers of the symposium some time in 2005.

