

Some Key Events Related to the Catholic Church in China, 1980-2005

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1980

- Twelve churches in Beijing, Shanghai, Taiyuan, Wuhan, Tianjin and Guangzhou reopened since their closing during the Cultural Revolution.
- Vatican Radio broadcasts Mass in Chinese language to China.
- Cardinal Etchegaray and Koenig visit China.
- Chinese Bishops' Conference and Church Administrative Committee are established.
- Bishop Dominic Deng Yiming of Guangzhou is released from prison after 22 years.
- Bishop John Baptist Wu, Bishop of Hong Kong, establishes the Holy Spirit Study Centre and appoints Father John Tong as its first director.
- Bishop Dominic Deng of Guangzhou arrives in Hong Kong for medical treatment.

1981

- Pope John Paul II appeals from Manila to the Chinese for dialogue saying it is possible to be truly Christian and authentically Chinese at the same time.
- Pope John Paul II appoints Bishop Dominic Deng Archbishop of Guangzhou. The reaction of the Chinese Patriotic Association and Chinese government is very negative and the Religious Affairs Bureau removes Bishop Deng as Bishop of Guangzhou.
- China consecrates 14 bishops for the open church.
- Deng Xiaoping proposed the "one country, two systems" for the unification of China.
- Montreal hosts international conference on Church in China. The ecumenical Chinese delegation includes three Catholic leaders.

- Forty-three Catholic churches are now open for worship.
- Four priests and some 16 Catholics are arrested in Shanghai for having “engaged in criminal activities against China.”

1982

- Pope John Paul II sends a letter to the bishops of the world asking for prayers for China and reaffirming papal primacy.
- Publication of Document 19: “The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country’s Socialist Period,” and reaffirmation of freedom of religious belief (Article 36) in the new Chinese Constitution.
- Sheshan Seminary in Shanghai reopens, the first to reopen after the closure of all seminaries in 1957.
- China celebrates 4th centenary of Matteo Ricci’s arrival in China.

1983

- Three hundred Catholic churches are now open, with about 1,300 priests and 48 bishops in active ministry.
- Pope John Paul II renews appeal for dialogue with China.
- Chinese Sisters begin to reorganize and restore their religious congregations.
- National Catholic Seminary in Beijing reopens along with other seminaries.
- Father Zhu Shude, SJ, Bishop Fan Xueyan, 80, of Baoding, and others arrested for counter-revolutionary activities.

1984

- Premier Zhao Ziyang visits the United States and Canada, the first visit of a Chinese Premier since 1949.
- China garners 15 gold, 8 silver and 9 bronze medals at the 23rd Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, and begins to emerge in the international sports arena.
- China and Britain initial Sino-British Joint Declaration on the future of Hong Kong.
- Five Asian bishops visit China and meet with open Church leaders and leaders of other religions.
- Cardinal Sin of Manila becomes the third cardinal to visit China since 1949.
- Hong Kong Catholics receive personal letter from John Paul II regarding 1997.
- Premier Zhao Ziyang and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher

sign the Sino-British Declaration on the future of Hong Kong in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

1985

- Jin Luxian and Li Side consecrated Auxiliary Bishops of Shanghai. The Communist Government returns the Beitang, Beijing's largest cathedral, to the Church. The cathedral formally reopens in December.
- John Baptist Wu, Bishop of Hong Kong, becomes the first Hong Kong bishop to visit China officially since 1949.
- Bishop Gong Pinmei of Shanghai released on parole after 30 years of imprisonment.
- Bishop Jin Luxian leads Shanghai Catholic Delegation on a visit to Hong Kong, Macao, and the Philippines.
- Deng Xiaoping speaks of need for reform and to find a way to build "socialism with Chinese characteristics."
- Chinese Catholic Friendship Delegation, led by Bishop Fu Tieshan of Beijing, visits Louvain, and other Catholic institutions in Belgium. It is the first such Catholic group to travel abroad since 1949.

1986

- Bishop John B. Wu visits his home province and his family for the first time in 40 years. He reaffirms the bridge role of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese.
- Director Ren Wuzhi of China's Bureau of Religious Affairs visits Hong Kong at the invitation of Hong Kong's six major religions.
- World Conference on Religion and Peace meets in Beijing. Religious leaders from 20 nations attend, representing 11 world religions.
- First delegation of Chinese Catholic bishops and lay leaders of the open church since 1949 visit the United States.
- Sheshan Seminary dedicates new building. Seminary has an enrollment of 115 students.
- Four new bishops of the open church ordained in Beijing.
- By December 1986, China bishops number 48, of whom 22 have been self-elected and self-consecrated since 1981. According to government statistics, dioceses number 112.

1987

- Shake-up in Communist Party: Hu Yaobang forced to resign as

Secretary General of Communist Party, and is replaced by Zhao Ziyang.

- Thousands of university students demonstrate in favor of democracy.
- Eight men are ordained at Sheshan Seminary, the first ordination since the seminary's reopening in 1982.
- By December of 1987, China has re-opened 2,100 churches. There are 56 bishops and 1,200 priests, 7 major seminaries and 4 minor seminaries, and 700 men in formation for the priesthood. Twenty convents have also been opened.

1988

- In January 1988, Bishop Gong Pinmei of Shanghai has his civil rights restored.
- Bishop Joseph Zong Huaide, 71, named President of Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, Chairman of Chinese Catholic Church Administrative Committee and President of the Chinese Bishops' Conference.
- Bishop Gong Pinmei leaves Shanghai to visit relatives in the USA.
- Hong Kong Bishop John Baptist Wu, 63, elevated to rank of Cardinal.
- Bishop Philippe Ma Ji of Pingliang, Gansu Province, resigns from CCPA after openly denouncing its leaders.
- Joseph Cardinal Tomko, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, sends document to all Bishops' Conferences giving directives on relations with the Church in China.

1989

- Central Office of the Communist Party and the State Council issue Document 3: "On Stepping up Control over the Catholic Church to Meet the New Situation."
- Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo (underground) of Zhengding, Hebei, arrested in Beijing in April and released in September.
- Police attack Catholic village of Youtong in Hebei.
- One hundred thousand students and workers demonstrate in Tiananmen Square for democracy. People's Army put on alert. Premier Li Peng declares martial law in Beijing. One million people in Hong Kong demonstrate in support of the students. Students' call for democracy in Tiananmen Square ends on

June 4th in massacre. Officials who support the pro-democracy movement are purged.

- In September, Berlin Wall falls.
- Bishop Fan Xueyan released from prison. Underground Bishops' Conference holds its first meeting in November. Bishop Fan arrested again. Many other underground clergy also arrested.

1990

- British and Chinese governments accept the Basic Law for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region after 1997.
- Chinese governments issue document on regulating religious activities for cities and provinces.
- Staff of Holy Spirit Study Centre attend International Conference on History of Catholic Church in China in Louvain, Belgium.
- Catholic Printing Press in Shanghai (Guangqi), shut down in 1949, reopens.
- Three thousand Catholic churches are now open for worship. Six bishops appointed by Pius XII are still alive. There are now 64 bishops in the open church.

1991

- Six new bishops ordained during the year.
- The Beijing and Nanjing dioceses celebrate their 300th anniversary.
- Publication of Document 6 on supervision over religion.
- Bishops called to meet in Beijing to study the government's religious policy.
- Bishop Gong Pinmei, residing in the United States, receives the red hat in Rome on June 28. He was made a cardinal *in pectore* in 1979.
- Reports maintain that some 20 bishops from the "official church" have sought, and have been given, recognition by the Vatican, indicating communion with Rome.

1992

- 1992 is a banner year for major religious conferences on China: 400th Anniversary of Johann Adam Schall Von Bell; Christianity in China—Foundations for Dialogue; The Significance of the Chinese Rites Controversy in Sino-Western History; The Historiography of the Catholic

Church in China; and Prospects of Catholic Cooperation with China in the Present International Context.

- Eight elderly bishops die during the course of the year.
- National Catholic Seminary officially opens its new headquarters in Beijing. Enrolment includes students from 12 provinces.
- From 1980 through mid-October 1992, a total of 421 seminarians have been ordained in the official church.
- Bishop Matthias Duan Yinming of Wanxian, Sichuan, and Bishop Anthony Tu Shihua of Hanyang, Hubei, visit Italy and Belgium in September. Bishop John Liu Dinghan of Xianxian, Hebei, visits the Philippines in November and December.
- The Fifth National Catholic Representatives' Congress at its meeting decides to introduce the vernacular in the liturgy in all of China's dioceses.

1993

- Deputies to the Eighth National People's Congress gather in the Great Hall of the People to elect their top leaders. Jiang Zimen is elected President. Members amend China's Constitutions to include a socialist market economy.
- China releases a number of famous political prisoners including 11 Catholic bishops. Many priests, lay Catholics, and Protestants are arrested or remain in detention.
- Four elderly bishops die and seven bishops are ordained.
- Pope John Paul II indicates his strong desire to visit China. Cardinal Etchegaray visits China at the invitation of the Sports Minister, Wu Shaozu. Both China and the Vatican confirm that some negotiations have taken place between them.
- China relaxes regulations on studying abroad that were imposed after June 4th 1989 crackdown.
- China loses the vote to host the 2000 Olympics.
- The first 50,000 copies of the Chinese Catholic Bible in simplified characters published. Projected number is 200,000.
- Three hundred priests, Sisters and lay Catholics receive the Advanced Workers or Model Workers awards on the state, provincial, and city levels.

1994

- Chinese priests from seven major seminaries in China attend study sessions arranged by the Verbiest Foundation in

Louvain.

- Twenty-four priests attend liturgical course in Shanghai.
- Father Joseph Zen of Hong Kong and Father Joseph Li Zhexiu of Taiwan give special course in homelitics and the New Catechism at the Sheshan Regional Seminary.
- Fifty young men have been selected to do part of their priesthood studies abroad in the United States, Europe and the Philippines.
- Underground church ordains 71 seminarians.
- Sichuan seminarians leave seminary in protest at the nomination of a non-Catholic Communist cadre as vice-rector of the seminary, replacing Bishop Joseph Xu Zhixuan.
- Scholars from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, meet to study the contribution made by Martino Martini, 17th century Jesuit, to the advancement of culture in China and Europe. Another conference celebrates the 7th centenary of the arrival in Beijing of Giovanni da Montecorvino, the first Franciscan evangelizer of the Chinese people.
- China issues two major documents concerning religious venues and the religious activities of foreigners, Documents No. 144 and No. 145.

1995

- Talks of unity and reconciliation in the Church in China surface several times in 1995.
- Pope John Paul II addresses China and the Chinese delegation at the Tenth World Youth Day in Manila.
- Cardinal Josef Tomko comes to Taiwan to celebrate 700th anniversary of the arrival of Giovanni da Montecorvino in Beijing.
- Open church bishops issue their first pastoral letter
- *Catholic Church in China* magazine publishes the photo of Pope John Paul II for the first time.
- Deng Yiming, Archbishop of Guangzhou, dies on June 27 in the United States at the age of 87.
- Beijing's West Church reopens.
- Cardinal Godfried Danneels, Archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels, Belgium, postpones visit to China when a member of his delegation fails to obtain a visa for the visit.

- Religious Affairs Bureau begins the publication of a quarterly entitled *Religion in China*.
- Ye Xiaowen, former head of Section 2 of the United Front Department, is appointed new head of the State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau.
- Catholic Church opens a number of orphanages, clinics and hospitals following the past traditions of the Catholic Church.
- Groups of underground Catholics are arrested and fined, along with Protestants worshipping in house churches.

1996

- In early January China identified three main tasks related to religion: registration of all places of worship, dealing with difficult problems of public concern, and cultivating contingents of young patriotic religious preachers.
- Fearful of fast-growing Christian churches, the Public Security Bureau declares Protestant House Churches as "enemy forces."
- Beijing warns South Korea not to send missionaries to China.
- Archbishop Claudio Celli, papal representative, meets officials in Beijing in an attempt to discuss diplomatic relations.
- The open church begins the publication of an English edition of the periodical *Catholic Church in China*.
- The Chinese government publishes nine documents related to religion.

1997

- China issues "White Paper on Religious Freedom" to refute allegations of religious rights violations. Beijing also promulgates four more documents concerning religious activity.
- Hong Kong is assured that after the handover, religious affairs will be managed by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in accordance with the Basic Law.
- Deng Xiaoping dies on February 19.
- On July 1, China resumes sovereignty over Hong Kong under the "one country, two systems" concept.
- Jiang Zemin is re-elected President at the 15th Party Congress.
- Bishops Joseph Zen and John Tong and Vicar-General Dominic Chan go to Beijing in May to meet with state officials and religious representatives concerning Hong Kong

church matters after the handover.

- Permission from the central government must now be obtained for foreigners to teach in China's seminaries.
- Chengdu Seminary reopens after having been closed for more than two years.
- Cardinal Stephen Kim of Seoul, South Korea, visits government and church officials in China, and Korean Chinese Catholics in northeast China.
- Bishop Matthias Duan Yinming, Bishop of Wanxian, Sichuan leaves hospital to attend his triple celebration: 90 years of life, 60 years of priesthood, and 48 years of episcopacy.

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1998

- President Jiang Zemin invites President Clinton to send a delegation to observe the situation of religious freedom in China. The delegation consists of three US clerics: Reverend Don Argue, president of the National Association of Evangelicals; Archbishop Theodore McCarrick of the Newark Archdiocese, New Jersey; and Rabbi Arthur Schneier, president of the New York-based Appeal of Conscience Foundation.
- President Clinton and his wife Hilary visit Bishop Jin Luxian and discuss religious freedom. Chinese leaders meet with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who also addresses the religious rights question.
- Mary Robinson, the UN Commissioner for Human Rights, visits Beijing, Shanghai, and Lhasa.
- China signs the United Nations' International Convention on Human Rights.
- Following the death of Bishop Zong Huaide in June 1997, the Sixth Chinese Catholic Congress in January 1998 elects Michael Fu Tieshan of Beijing chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, and Bishop Joseph Liu Yuanren of Nanjing as the new president of the Chinese Bishops' Conference.
- Synod on Asia takes place in Rome. Pope John Paul II announces that he has invited Bishop Matthew Duan Yinming and his auxiliary Joseph Xu Zhixuan of Wanxian, Sichuan, to attend the Synod, but China denies them exit visas.

- Pope John Paul names Bishop Paul Shan, SJ, of Kaohsiung, one of the 22 new cardinals.

1999

- Pope receives birthday wishes from Bishops Duan Yinming and Xu Zhixuan of Wanxian.
- Cardinal Gong celebrates a triple anniversary: 70th as a priest, 50th as a bishop, and 20th as a cardinal.
- Bishop Li Du'an of Xi'an issues pastoral letter calling for spiritual renewal to welcome Jubilee Year 2000.
- China's women religious leaders meet for the first time in Beijing to exchange ideas on convent management and formation.
- China bans the Falun Gong, imprisons its leaders and arrests hundreds of its followers.
- Macau celebrates its return to China in December.

2000

- China ordains five bishops without papal approval on January 6 in Beijing, which turns out to be very controversial. There are six other Episcopal ordinations during 2000.
- Eleven bishops are arrested or detained.
- Cardinal Gong Pinmei dies in the United States at the age of 98. Also, four other elderly bishops die in China.
- Beijing releases White Paper, *Fifty Years of Progress in China's Human Rights*.
- Hong Kong opens its second diocesan synod in March.
- Bishop Jin Luxian officiates at the installation of the new bronze Marian statue placed on top of the Sheshan Basilica. The original was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.
- Montecorvino Seminary in Taiyuan reopens after 60 years.
- Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan, CCPA chairperson and vice-president of the government-approved Bishops' Conference, leads a seven-member delegation to the United Nations in New York for the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual leaders.
- Cardinal Etchegaray is invited to participate in a "Religion and Peace" symposium sponsored by the Italian-Chinese Cultural Association. Following the symposium, the Cardinal is invited to visit Beijing and Shanghai, and meets with church officials. Request to meet with underground church is denied.

- The Holy Father appoints Cardinal John Baptist Wu as his envoy to the first National Mission Congress in the Philippines.
- Religious Affairs Bureau issues document regulating the activities of foreigners in China.
- Canonization of 120 China martyrs brings joy to many believers, but arouses a storm of controversy in China.
- In spite of pressure from Beijing, Hong Kong Catholic Church proceeds with the celebrations of the martyrs as planned.
- China suspends visas of Hong Kong pilgrimage tour groups to China.
- Pope asks pardon for any human mistakes the European missionaries may have committed.

2001

- Five elderly bishops die during the year. One was Bishop Matthias Duan Yinming of Wanxian who dies in January. He is the last bishop in Mainland China appointed by Pope Pius XII. He is succeeded by his auxiliary Bishop Xu Zhixuan.
- Fr. Jose Lai Hong-seng is ordained Coadjutor Bishop of the Macau Diocese on June 2.
- The controversial Episcopal ordination of 2000 in Beijing led to “boycotting” seminarians being dismissed.
- One thousand local Catholics and a few overseas visitors attend the opening ceremony of a Catholic Church in the resettlement area of the Three Gorges Dam project.
- The Catholic Church joins in celebrations as China won its bid for the 2008 Olympics.
- Public security officials level the grave of Vatican-appointed Bishop Joseph Fan Xueyan of Baoding Diocese, Hebei Province, to discourage Catholics from paying their respect there.
- In April 2001, the Church in Guizhou regained the property of the site of the former Church-run Sacred Heart School in Anlong county, Guizhou Province. With governmental permission the Guizhou Diocese with Father Li Limin as principal is managing the public school on the property. The teaching of religion, however, is not permitted.
- Although the bishops of Mainland China received the working document for the Synod of Bishops in Rome, none are

permitted to attend the Synod.

- October 12 marks the official inauguration of the Macau Ricci Institute for studies on the impact of intercultural dialogue between China and the West.
- An international conference titled "Encounters and Dialogues, An International Symposium on Cross-Cultural Exchanges between China and the West in the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties" is held at the Beijing Institute of Technology to mark the 400th anniversary of Jesuit Father Matteo Ricci's arrival in Beijing.
- At an international conference at the Gregorian University, Rome, commemorating the 400th anniversary of Matteo Ricci's arrival in Beijing, Pope John Paul II apologizes for all "past and present" wrongs committed in China by members of the Catholic Church.
- A local government demolishes a newly rebuilt Catholic church in eastern China for the third time in 18 months because Catholics there refuse to join the Patriotic Association.
- The Hospitalier Order of St. John of God has been invited to open a facility for terminally ill cancer patients in Jilin Province.
- St. Anthony's, Shenzhen's new Catholic church, opened on December 18 to the joy of some 1,000 Catholics in the city.
- China officially enters the WTO, becoming its 143rd member.
- Li Guangqiang, Hong Kong businessman, is indicted for shipping two truckloads of Bibles to the underground church in Fuying in April and May. The police arrest him and seize the shipment.

2002

- The Grand Ricci dictionary, the largest-ever Chinese-French encyclopedic dictionary, more than 52 years in the making, is available for purchase at the Taipei International Book Exhibition. The dictionary contains some 300,000 multi-character expressions in seven volumes and 9,000 pages. The CD-ROM version will take at least three years to complete since over one million words must be Romanized into pinyin.

- The police demolish a Catholic Church in Xiaozhao village, Hebei Province, which belongs to the underground diocese of Zhending. The local Catholic community numbers about 700.
- Sisters from the Sacred Heart of Jesus Convent in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, after attending a two-day training session on the care of AIDS/HIV patients, have formed an AIDS Concern Group.
- Two churches (underground) were shut down in Fujian Province for violations of building regulations. The buildings were being used for worship instead of for secular purposes.
- More than 3,000 Catholics walk the streets of Fuzhou, Fujian Province, to "welcome the Blessed Sacrament and pray for peace."
- Six St. Joseph Sisters, aged 36-69, pronounce their final vows in Beijing's North Church on July 28. This is the first profession of final vows in Beijing since 1949.
- Christian designs found on tombstones of the Eastern Han Dynasty reveal that Christianity entered China some 550 years earlier than the presently accepted date of A.D. 635.
- Cardinal John Baptist Wu of Hong Kong dies on September 23 at age 77. He is succeeded by his coadjutor Bishop Joseph Zen.
- The Beijing municipal government claims to have allocated 120 million yuan in recent years to return its churches to full working order. Beijing has 923 religious venues within the city.
- The US State Department issues its annual report on religious freedom around the world; it finds little improvement in China.
- Cardinal Shirayanagi Seiichi of Japan is the first cardinal to visit Mainland China since the Sino-Vatican furor over the canonizations of the 120 China martyrs in the year 2000. The cardinal was invited by a government-recognized interreligious body in China.
- Eighty years ago, on November 9, 1922, the first apostolic delegate to China, Archbishop Celso Costantini, arrived in Hong Kong. He reached Beijing on December 29, 1922.
- The 16th Party Congress opens in China. In his opening talk, President Jiang Zemin outlines China's achievements and sets

goals for the future of the Party on reform, the economy, Taiwan, and anti-corruption. In a controversial move, private entrepreneurs are approved for Party membership.

- The 16th Congress emphasizes the *Three Represents*, which requires that the CPC be representative of China's strongest productive forces, best culture, and the interests most widely shared by its people.
- Jiang Zemin, core of the third-generation leadership of China's Communist Party, along with five of his colleagues, are not elected to the Central Committee's Standing Committee on November 14. The only member of the 15th CPC Central Committee Political Bureau Standing Committee is the 59-year-old Hu Jintao, who is elected the new General Secretary of the Communist Party.

2003

- Bishop Joseph Zen is voted "the most significant person of 2002" by the readers of the *Apple Daily*, one of Hong Kong's most popular Chinese newspapers.
- Bishop Domingos Lam of Macau, 74, receives the Golden Lotus Award Medal, the second highest decoration conferred by the government of the Macau Special Administrative Region.
- John Baptist Tan Yanquan, 40, is ordained Coadjutor Bishop of Guangxi by Bishop Pius Jin Peixian at Sacred Heart Church in Nanning, Guangxi Province.
- Chinese authorities apprehend underground priest, Fr. Dong Yingmu, in Baoding Diocese, Hebei Province. This brings the number of detained clergy in the diocese to at least 13.
- During a meeting in Beijing in March, 40 bishops and 24 standing committee members of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the Chinese Bishops' Conference pass three documents that aim to standardize the management of the open church. These three documents are: *A Management System for Catholic Dioceses in China*; *Work Regulations for the Catholic Patriotic Association*; and *The System for the Joint Conference of Chairpersons of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and of the Bishops Conference of the Catholic Church in China*.

- The oldest private library in Shanghai is Xujiahui Library. Ancient manuscripts and rare books collected in this library created by the Jesuit Fathers more than a century ago will soon be open to the public after being closed for many years.
- Public security officials arrest Father Lu Xiaozhou of the underground church on his way to Wenzhou City Hospital to anoint the sick. Father Lu will not be released if he does not sign an agreement to join the Catholic Patriotic Association.
- Bishop Joseph Zen, the head of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong, supports calls for the introduction of universal suffrage in 2007 for the chief executive, and in 2008 for the Legislative Council.
- Police in Southwestern China arrest eight members of an underground Christian church on charges of spreading superstition.
- Five hundred thousand citizens from all walks of life turn out in Hong Kong to protest the Security Bill, Article 23.
- Pope John Paul II appoints Bishop John Tong, director of the Holy Spirit Study Centre, as a consultant to the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.
- Pope John Paul II accepts Bishop Domingos Lam's application for retirement. The new bishop of Macau, José Lai, pledges to develop the formation and active participation of lay people in the work of the Church.
- Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington, who went on a private visit to China, does not admit to comments China's official media attributed to him on issues related to religion and politics.
- Fr. Wenceslao Padilla from the Philippines is ordained bishop in Ulaan Baatar, capital of Mongolia, and becomes the first bishop there.
- A young Chinese bishop Joseph Han Zhihai, from the underground Catholic Church, writes a letter expressing his desire for communion between the divided Catholic communities in China.
- Fr. Song Zunsheng, parish priest of Yining Church, Urumqi, says that government officials forbid young people under 18 years old, students, teachers, soldier, and government officials, to believe in or join any religion.

- Shandong remembers Joseph Freinademetz, Divine Word Missioner, where he worked and died. He is canonized along with the SVD founder Arnold Janssen.
- The Center for Human Rights and Democracy announces that Communist officials in Zhejiang have shut down 392 temples and churches operating outside government approval and registration. Twenty-four structures have been completely destroyed and 92 others have been converted into entertainment centers.

2004

- Five new bishops are ordained during the course of the year, namely: Peter Feng Xingmao, Paul Ma Cunguo, Zhang Xianwang, Matthias Du Jiang, and Su Yongda.
- Five elderly bishops die: Bishop Francis Xavier Guo Zhengji, Bishop Michael He Jinmin, Bishop Agostino Zhao Jingnong, Bishop John Gao Kexian, and Bishop Alfonsus Yang Guangyan.
- The Holy See seeks clarification on the arrest of Bishop Wei Jingyi. This is the first time that Rome voices its public concern to China regarding the arrest of a religious person. Beijing maintains that Bishop Wei went abroad illegally. Bishop Wei is soon released.
- The Matteo Ricci Institute of Macau begins the publication of its new quarterly magazine in English and Chinese, *Chinese Cross Currents*.
- China publishes a white paper to detail the progress of human rights since 2003 White Paper.
- The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has decreed that any political reform in Hong Kong must first have Beijing's approval before enactment.
- The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress rules that Hong Kong will not have direct elections in 2007 and 2008.
- China lifts its six-year ban on Bishop Joseph Zen, and permits him to visit his hometown, Shanghai.
- Over 60,000 gather in Hong Kong to mark the 15th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown. This is the largest number since Hong Kong returned to China.
- Hong Kong authorities adopt new education bill that the

- Catholic authorities maintain will lessen the Catholic influence and undermine the present Catholic school system.
- Delegates at the Seventh National Catholic Representatives Congress re-elect its top leaders for another five-year term: Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan of Beijing as chairman of the Patriotic Association, and Bishop Joseph Liu Yuanren of Nanjing as president of the Bishops' Conference. There were 262 representatives in attendance from 31 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions.
 - Vatican condemns as a "serious violation of religious freedom" the arrests of 8 priests and 2 seminarians in Hebei Province.
 - The Fourth Plenum of the 16th CPC Central Committee accepts the resignation of 78-year-old Jiang Zemin from the top military post with Hu Jintao to take over.
 - Hu Jintao invites pro-democracy leaders of Hong Kong to Beijing for the first time, along with a delegation of 220 Hong Kong people to the 55th anniversary celebration of the foundation of the People's Republic of China. Three Catholic Church leaders are among the delegates: Auxiliary Bishop John Tong, Diocesan Procurator Fr. Edward Khong and Fr. Luke Tsui.
 - Jackie Hung Ling-Yu, project officer for the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, is among 20 Asian heroes named by *Time* Magazine. Hung is a strong promoter of the call for democracy in Hong Kong.
 - China is showing more openness towards the Russian Orthodox Church in China, and the situation was discussed with President Putin during his current visit to China.

2005

- Death of bishops: Bishop Guo Yingong of Datong, 87, died on January 4. Bishop Gao Kexian of Zhoucun (Yantai), 81, died on January 24. Bishop Joseph Zhu Huayu of Anhui, 86, died on February 26. Bishop Joseph Shi Hongchen of Tianjin, 77, died on March 3. Bishop Liu Yuanren of Nanjing, 82, died on April 20. Bishop John Wang Xixian of Hohhot, 79, died on May 25. Bishop Zhang Mingqian of Yichang, 88, died on July 24. Bishop Peter Zhang Zengpu (Shizhi) of Mindong, 88, died on August 5. Bishop Thomas Zhao Fengwu of Yanzhou, 85,

died on August 15. Bishop James Xie Shiguang, 88, underground bishop of Mindong, Fujian, died on August 25. Bishop Peter Zhang Bairen, 91, underground bishop of Hanyang, died on October 12; provincial authorities have allowed his funeral to take place publicly, and priests of both the official and underground Church attend.

- Consecration of bishops: On June 28, Father Xing Wenzhi, 42, is consecrated Auxiliary Bishop of Shanghai. On July 26, Father Dang Mingyan, 38, is consecrated Auxiliary Bishop of Xi'an. On October 18, Father Paul He Zeqing, 37, is consecrated Auxiliary Bishop of Wanxian. All three bishops have the appointment of the Vatican and are accepted by the Chinese government.
- The *Religious Affairs Regulations* takes effect on March 1. They supersede the *Regulations on Managing Places for Religious Activities* that had been in effect since January 31, 1994.
- Tung Chee-hwa resigns as Chief Executive of Hong Kong on March 10. Donald Tsang succeeds him on June 24.
- Cardinal Godfried Danneels of Belgium visits China. His trip is cut short by the death of Pope John Paul II on April 2.
- Pope John Paul II dies on April 2.
- President Chen Shuibian draws criticism from Beijing for attending the funeral of Pope John Paul II in Rome on April 8 as the only representative of China. The PRC government is conspicuous by its absence among heads of state from all over the world.
- On April 19, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine and the Faith, is elected Pope and takes the name of Benedict XVI.
- Chinese Foreign Ministry congratulates new Pope Benedict XVI, but repeats call for Vatican to break ties with Taiwan.
- Chairmen of two Taiwan opposition parties, Lien Chan of KMT (Nationalist) Party and James Soong of the People First Party, visit the Mainland on April 29 and May 12 respectively, and meet with President Hu Jintao.
- On May 12, Pope Benedict XVI greets diplomats from 174 countries at the Vatican, and says he hopes "nations with which the Holy See still hasn't entered into diplomatic

relations will soon do so.” Everyone interprets this as a call for ties with China. Speculation is rife in newspapers and on the Internet about the establishment of ties.

- Pope Benedict XVI invited 26 high-ranking clergy to a Synod on the Eucharist Commencing on October 2 in Rome, which included four Mainland bishops, namely, Bishops Li Du'an of Xi'an, Jin Luxian of Shanghai, Li Jingfeng of Fengxiang (all recognized by the government), and Bishop Wei Jingyi of Qiqihar (not recognized by the government). They are not granted a passport or permit to leave the country.
- The Hong Kong Catholic Diocese contributes HK\$7 million to set up a Catholic Research Centre in the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- On October 22-23, Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles visits Shanghai.
- On November 8, Bishop José Lai, Vicar General Pedro Chung, and Fr. João Evangelista Lau of Macau visit Bishop Fu Tieshan at Nantang (South Church), in Beijing, and are received warmly.
- On the night of November 23, sixteen nuns are brutally attacked and seriously injured by a group of young hooligans. The nuns had been urging the workers to stop the demolition of an empty school building. The property belonged to the diocese but the city authorities sold it to a commercial company.

The arrest and detention of underground bishops, priests, and laity have not stopped throughout all 25 years.