

China Church and News Update (January to December 2010)

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Death of Bishops

February 2: Death of Bishop Raymond Wang Chonglin (1921-2010), retired bishop of Zhaoxian Diocese, Hebei.

August 28: Death of Bishop John Yang Shudao (1909-2010), unofficial archbishop of Fuzhou Diocese, Fujian.

November 15: Death of Bishop Paul Jiang Taoran (1926-2010), retired bishop of Shijiazhuang / Zhengding Diocese, Hebei.

Ordination of Bishops

April 18: Bishop Paul Meng Qinglu was ordained bishop of Hohhot Diocese, Inner Mongolia, with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities.

April 21: Bishop Shen Bin, 40, was ordained bishop of Haimen Diocese, Jiangsu, with the approval of both the Holy See and Chinese authorities.

May 8: Bishop Cai Bingrui was ordained bishop of Xiamen Diocese, Fujian, with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities.

June 24: Bishop Joseph Han Yingjin was ordained bishop of Sanyuan Diocese, Shaanxi, with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities.

July 10: Bishop Anthony Xu Jiwei was ordained bishop of Taizhou Diocese, Zhejiang, with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities.

July 15: Bishop John Baptist Yang Xiaoting was ordained coadjutor bishop of Yan'an Diocese, Shaanxi, with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities.

September 16: Bishop Paul Meng Ningyou was ordained coadjutor bishop of Taiyuan Diocese, Shanxi, with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities.

September 21: Bishop Peter Wu Junwei was ordained bishop of Yuncheng Diocese, Shanxi, with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities.

October 31: Bishop John Baptist Li Suguang was ordained coadjutor bishop of Nanchang Diocese, Jiangxi, with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities.

November 15: Bishop Joseph Yang Yongqiang was ordained coadjutor bishop of Zhoucun Diocese, Shandong, with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities.

November 20: Bishop Joseph Guo Jincai was ordained as the first bishop of Chengde, Hebei, without the mandate of the Holy See.

GENERAL NEWS

January 2010

January 6: Some 4000 believers, under the conditions of snow and polar temperatures, attended the funeral of Bp. Leo Yao Liang (1923-2009), coadjutor bishop of Xiwanzi, who died on 30 December 2009, after almost one year since his release on January 25, 2009, from a 30-month detention in prison. He was ordained a priest in 1948 and clandestinely ordained coadjutor bishop in 2002.

January 9-13: The superiors general of 11 Chinese religious congregations of Sisters of Hebei province visited the earthquake affected areas of Sichuan Province, in collaboration with Jinde Charities, the Chinese charitable organization based in Shijiazhuang, Hebei.

February 2010

February 2: Death of Bishop Raymond Wang Chonglin (1921-2010), retired bishop of Zhaoxian (Xingtai), Hebei. He was ordained a priest in 1950 and, after 21 years of imprisonment, he was secretly ordained a bishop in 1983. In 1998 he was recognized by the Chinese authorities,

and retired in 2005. He wrote his own memoirs “与主同行感恩路” (literal translation: Walking the Road of Gratitude with God).

February 7 – March 20: An exhibition on Fr. Matteo Ricci, to commemorate the 400th anniversary of his death, was held at the Capital Museum in Beijing. The exhibition was also shown in Shanghai (Shanghai Museum: April 3 to May 23) and Nanjing (Nanjing Museum: June 5 to July 25).

February 10: Letter of the Cardinal Secretary of State, Tarciso Bertone, to Bishop Francis An Shuxin, coadjutor bishop of Baoding, Hebei, with suggestions to solve the impasse within the diocese.

March 2010

March 3: Fr. John Baptist Luo Wen, 39, an underground priest from the Diocese of Mindong (Fujian) was arrested and put in “administrative detention” in a guest-house of the Fuan government, for organizing a winter camp for 300 students. Arrest warrants for three other priests, Fathers Guo Xijin, Miu Yong and Liu Maochang, were issued, but the police did not carry out the arrests. Three others were fined 500 yuan each.

March 4-13: The 3rd Session of the 11th National Committee of the CPPCC (2,252 delegates) was held in Beijing, parallel with the National People’s Congress. Six Catholic delegates (Bishops Ma Yinglin, Zhan Silu, Lu Xinping and Fang Xingyao, Mr Liu Bainian and Mr. Liu Yuanlong) took part in the former meeting, and three (Bishop Fang Jianping, Fathers Guo Jincai and Huang Bingzhang) in the latter.

March 16-31: First training course in 2010 organized by the State Religious Affairs Administration (SARA) for 212 religious professionals, coming from five provinces and regions. Contents included: the Marxist view of religion and education, the government’s religious policy, the legal approach to religious activities, and the sharing of experiences.

March 18: Mgr Eugene Martin Nugent, head of the Study Mission in Hong Kong, appointed (on February 13) as the new Apostolic Nuncio to Madagascar, the Apostolic Delegate to the Comoros Islands and the

Apostolic Delegate to Reunion Island, was ordained an archbishop in St. Peter's Basilica, in Rome by Card. Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican Secretary of State. Archbishop Nugent had been working at the Hong Kong Study Mission since 2000.

March 22-24: The third meeting of the Commission for the Church in China was held in Rome. The Commission issued a press communiqué, which took a clear stance on avoiding initiatives contrary to Pope Benedict's 2007 Letter to the Catholics of China. The official reaction from the Chinese authorities (*Ta Kung Pao*, April 7) was that the communiqué marks a step backwards, shows mistrust toward China, and is a reversion to a conservative and closed attitude.

March 30: Card. Joseph Zen published his reaction to Gianni Valente's article that appeared in the January 2010 issue of *30 Giorni*, entitled "Litterae communionis between Rome and Baoding." The article dealt with the letter addressed to Bishop An Shuxin by the Secretary of State Cardinal Bertone, and Bishop An's response, which gave reasons for his participation in the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA).

APRIL 2010

April 8: Bishop Matthias Du Jiang of Bameng in Inner Mongolia was openly installed, almost six years after his clandestine episcopal ordination in 2004. The ceremony at the Sanshenggong Church meant that the Chinese authorities now officially recognize the Vatican-approved prelate as the head of the official Church community in Bameng. Bishop Joseph Ma Yinglin of Kunming, vice-chairperson of the CCPA who arrived from Beijing, concelebrated the installation Mass.

April 10: At the commemoration of the 5th anniversary of the Regulations on Religious Affairs, the first formal rules on religious affairs issued by the State Council, Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu assured participants that the government would improve its management of religious affairs in line with laws and regulations. With the assistance of religious affairs administration officials, religious groups should keep clergy records and standardize religious education.

April 14: Earthquake of magnitude 7.1 on Richter scale hits southern Qinghai province, followed by more than 1,000 aftershocks, which

have killed 2,220, injured 12,135 and left 70 missing. Since mid-April, Catholic Social services such as Jinde Charities, Xi'an Catholic Social Service Center and Catholics in Xining provided relief services for the quake victims.

April 18: Bishop Paul Meng Qinglu, 47, was ordained the seventh bishop of Hohhot, with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities. He was the first bishop ordained in China since December 2007. For five years the diocese was without a bishop. He was elected as bishop candidate in June 2005, a month after his predecessor Bishop John Baptist Wang Xixian died. The main celebrant was Bishop Paul Pei Junmin of Liaoning. Concelebrating prelates included Bishops John Liu Shigong of Jining and Matthias Du Jiang of Bameng, both from Inner Mongolia, and Bishop Joseph Li Jing of Ningxia.

April 18: In Yixian Diocese the official inauguration of the Sacred Heart Catechetical Centre run by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart took place. It provides a two-year course, combining theory and practice, for about 25-30 Sisters.

April 21: The second episcopal ordination for the year was held in Haimen, Jiangsu, of Bishop Shen Bin, 40, former vicar general of the diocese. He was approved by both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities. The main celebrant was Bishop John Fang Xingyao of Linyi, Shandong, assisted by Bishops Francis Lu Xinping of Nanjing and Joseph Xu Honggen of Suzhou. Some 30 priests and 1,500 laypeople attended the ordination ceremony.

April 24: During a visit to Hong Kong, at the invitation of the leaders of Hong Kong's six religions, Wang Zuo'an, Director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, visited Holy Spirit Seminary, and met Bishop John Tong.

May 2010

May 8: Bishop Cai Bingrui, 44, was ordained bishop of Xiamen Diocese (Fujian) in the presence of Bishop Joseph Cheng Tsai-fa, Bishop Emeritus of Taipei (Taiwan), and five bishops from China. Bishop Fang Xingyao, Linyi diocese, Shandong, presided, but a non-Roman approved bishop, Zhan Silu of Mindong, Fujian, also

participated. Born in 1966 to a Catholic family, Bishop Cai completed his studies at the Sheshan seminary, Shanghai, and was ordained a priest in 1992. In 1996, he was appointed administrator of the diocese and in June 2009 was elected bishop. The Holy See later approved him.

May 11: Shanghai's Fudan University opened its Xu-Ricci Dialogue Institute, while, at the same time, Taipei's Ricci Institute launched a digital edition of its 'Ricci Dictionary'. The new institute, which comes under the university's School of Philosophy, hosted a colloquium the same day to commemorate Ricci's contribution to East-West dialogue. The new center is named after Fr Ricci and his closest Chinese friend, Paul Xu Guangqi, the first Catholic in Shanghai.

May 12: The Catholic Diocese of Chengdu, Sichuan, offered a series of Masses in memory of the almost 70,000 victims of the Sichuan earthquake of May 12, 2008, and the Qinghai one of mid-April 2010. In Mianzhu, where 8 Catholics died, the pastor, Fr. Li announced that the parish still did not have sufficient funds to repair the church.

May 13: 'Global Times' carried an interview with Zhuo Xinping, Director of the Institute of World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and with Liu Peng, Director of the Pushi Institute for Social Science, on the topic "Bishop appointment consensus hints at Sino-Vatican entente".

May 30: Two underground priests, Fathers Wang Jianchen and Li De of Xuanhua diocese, Hebei province, were taken away by police.

June 2010

June 19: Following the official closure of the Year of Priests in Rome with a Mass at St. Peter's Square, presided over by Pope Benedict XVI (June 11), several dioceses in China held their own ceremonies.

June 23: About 20 priests and nuns met in Haimen Diocese, Jiangsu, to mark the end of the Year for Priests and for Church unity in China. It was the first activity the local clergy and nuns celebrated after the episcopal ordination of Bishop Shen Bin.

June 24: Bishop Joseph Han Yingjin, 52, was ordained as the new coadjutor bishop of Sanyuan Diocese, Shaanxi, with the approval of the Holy See and the Chinese authorities. It took place in the church of

the Sacred Heart in Yuanmenxiang. All the bishop concelebrants were in communion with the Holy See. The main consecrator was Bp. Joseph Zong Huaide, bishop-emeritus of Sanyuan, 88. Also present were Bp. Anthony Dang Mingyan of Xian, Bp. Louis Yu Runchen of Hanzhong (co-consecrators), Bp. Tong Changping of Weinan, Bp. Li Jing of Yinchuan (Ningxia), and Bp. Han Jide of Pingliang (Gansu). Eighty-five priests attended the ceremony. Bishop Han was born into a Catholic family in Sanyuan in 1958. In the 1980s he completed his seminary studies. He was ordained a priest on November 8, 1992 by the same Bp. Zong.

July 2010

July 1-7: The Central government's United Front Work Department and the State Administration for Religious Affairs held a study session for new bishops and bishop-candidates (5 days in Beijing and 2 days in Shanghai World Expo). More than 50 participants took part.

July 4-13: A course on Christology and Spirituality for about 30 Sisters coming from the whole of Sichuan province was held in the Sichuan Major Seminary. Shandong province also organized a similar course for Sisters.

July 4-13: Bishop Claudio Giuliodori of Macerata, Italy, led some 200 Catholics on a pilgrimage through China in the footsteps of Fr Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), to celebrate the 400th anniversary of his death. The pilgrimage passed through Hong Kong, Macao, Guangdong, Shanghai, Xian and Beijing. Its climax was a visit to Ricci's tomb in Beijing.

July 5: Fr. Joseph Zhang Shulai, vicar general of the underground diocese of Ningxia (Inner Mongolia) and Sr. Mary Wei Shu were killed in the district of Wuda, Wuhai, Inner Mongolia. The two religious persons worked in a hospice for about 60 elderly persons housed in the residence of the local church. A former seminarian, 43-year-old Zhang Wenping, was arrested on September 6 in Hohhot, and charged with the murder.

July 7: Bishop Jia Zhiguo, underground bishop of Zhengding, Hebei, was released after 17 months of detention in an unknown location. In the evening, surrounded by a hundred faithful, he celebrated Mass at

the cathedral of Wuqiu village, where he now lives. Cardinal Ivan Dias of the CEP sent him a congratulatory message.

For the Mid-Autumn Festival (September 22), Bishop Jia sent greetings to the official, but legitimized, retired bishop Jiang Taoran. On this occasion, for first time in decades, some unofficial priests and laity of the diocese visited Bp. Jiang, as a sign of better cooperation.

July 8: After 48 years as a vacant see the Diocese of Taizhou, Zhejiang finally got a new bishop, Bishop Anthony Xu Jiwei, 75, who was recognized by both the Holy See and the Chinese authorities. The ordination was presided over by Bishop Li Mingshu of Qingdao, Shandong, with the participation of Bishops Zhao Fengchang of Liaocheng, Shandong, Xu Honggen of Suzhou, Jiangsu, and Han Yingjin of Sanyuan, Shaanxi, all legitimate and all approved by the government. Bishop Xu is a native of Shanghai and worked as a priest in Ningbo. From 1960 to 1985, due to various political campaigns in China, he was sentenced to five years in prison and then to long years of forced labor, including a period of six years as a high school teacher. Since 1999 he has been serving the Church in Taizhou.

July 14: Bishop John Baptist Yang Xiaoting, 46, was ordained coadjutor bishop of Yulin (Yan'an, Shaanxi), approved by both the Holy See and the Chinese government. All nine bishops present were also Vatican-approved and Chinese government-recognized. Bishop Aloysius Yu Runchen of Hanzhong was the main consecrator. Bishop Dang Mingyan of Xi'an and Bishop Han Yingjin of Sanyuan were the co-consecrators. Bishops Tong Changping of Weinan, Han Jide of Pingliang, Li Jing of Ningxia, Zong Huaide of Sanyuan and Huo Cheng of Fenyang concelebrated. The ceremony was held in the courtyard of Xiaoqiaopan Catholic Church in Jingbian County, and drew more than 6,000 Catholics, 110 priests and 80 nuns. Bishop Yang is among the few new bishops to have a doctorate in theology, earned at the Pontifical Urbanianum University in Rome.

July 24: Authorities in northern Hebei province arrested Fr. Peter Wang Zhong, a priest of the Diocese of Xiwanzi, who was detained immediately after being released from a Tangshan prison, where he spent the last three years for having celebrated a Mass without

government permission on July 24, 2007. The authorities want to force Fr. Wang to join the Patriotic Association.

July 29: A "Letter to the Bishops and Priests in mainland China", dated July 5, was published today by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and signed by the Prefect, Cardinal Ivan Dias, and the Secretary, Archbp. Robert Sarah. The letter aimed to encourage China's bishops and priests to continue along the path begun with the Year for Priests. The letter recalled famous priestly figures, such as the Curè d'Ars and Matteo Ricci.

August 2010

August 1-20: Invited by the Prado Seminary, a group of 17 Chinese priests visited France.

August 7: Bp. Francis An Shuxin, former underground auxiliary bishop of Baoding, was installed as the official 'bishop' of the diocese of Baoding, Hebei, in a ceremony held at the cathedral. The underground bishop, Bp. James Su Zhimin, has been imprisoned in an unknown location since 1997. Bishop An presided over the liturgy and two other bishops concelebrated, Liu Jinghe, bishop emeritus of Tangshan, and Fang Jianping, current bishop of Tangshan. Twenty-four priests and 300 Catholics attended the ceremony.

August 8: Mudslides in Zhouqu, Gansu province, killed more than 1,364 people and caused hundreds of villagers to be listed as missing. Catholics both inside and outside of China provided relief for the victims.

August 28: Death of Bishop John Yang Shudao (1909-2010), unofficial archbishop of Fuzhou. He was ordained a priest in 1947, and went to prison from 1955 to 1986. On March 7, 1987 he was ordained a bishop. From 1988 to 1991 he was again confined to prison. After his release he was appointed archbishop of Fuzhou.

August 31 – September 11: A meeting for more than 100 Catholics, including priests, Sisters and lay leaders from 14 provinces, was organized by SARA on the outskirts of Beijing, in preparation for the 8th General Assembly of Catholic Delegates to be held later in the year.

September 2010

September 1-7: About 180 middle-aged and young Catholic lay representatives attended a training seminar in Beijing. Liu Bainian, Ma Yinglin, Guo Jincui, and others gave talks. A five-day fact-finding tour of Shandong Province followed.

September 7: The opening ceremony of the 2nd two-year theological formation course for Sisters, organized by the Union of the General Superiors of Sisters' Congregations in Hebei Province, in cooperation with the Hebei Major Seminary, in Shijiazhuang, took place.

September 14-18: The 8th European Catholic China Colloquium on the Chinese communities in Europe, took place in Freising, Munich, Germany.

September 16: Bishop Li Jiantang, ordinary of Taiyuan Diocese, Shanxi, ordained Bp. Paul Meng Ningyou, 47, as his coadjutor bishop. 120 priests concelebrated the ordination Mass, and more than 5,000 faithful crowded into the cathedral or watched the ceremony from a big screen in the outside courtyard. Concelebrating bishops were Huo Cheng of Fenyang, Li Jing of Ningxia, Wang Jin of Yuci (Jinzhong), and Meng Qinglu of Hohhot, all recognized by both the Holy See and the government.

September 16: The Director of China's State Administration of Religious Affairs, Wang Zuo'an, during a visit to Taiwan (from 15 to 22 September), met Archbishop John Hung of Taipei, and discussed the project of sending several mainland priests and Sisters each year to study at the Fu Jen Catholic University. He also met Cardinal Paul Shan Kuo Hsi, and invited him to visit mainland China to give some lectures.

September 21: Bishop Peter Wu Junwei, 47, was ordained the new bishop of Yuncheng, Shanxi, the eighth bishop to be ordained this year with the approval of the Holy See and the recognition of the Beijing authorities. 144 priests concelebrated the ordination Mass, and over 2,000 faithful, and 95 nuns, many from other provinces in China attended the ceremony. The presiding bishop was Bishop Huo Cheng of Fenyang. Concelebrating were Bishop Joseph Li Shan of Beijing, coadjutor bishop of Taiyuan Paul Meng Ningyou, and Bishop John Baptist Yang Xiaoting of Yenan, all bishops in communion with the Holy See.

September 24: Wang Meixiu, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, published a study, proposing that the Chinese government review its religious policy towards Catholics and re-evaluate the role of the Bishops' Conference. She proposes that the Conference be allowed to run the Church, while the Catholic Patriotic Association would act as a "bridge" between Church and State.

October 2010

October 7: Death of Abbot Timothy Kelly, 76, of St. John's Benedictine Abbey in the USA. He was a benefactor of the Church in China, by establishing the Fund for Theological Translation. It is a grant program of the US Catholic China Bureau, in cooperation with the Shijiazhuang-based Faith Institute for Cultural Studies to translate foreign theological textbooks into Chinese. All the major seminaries in China held requiem Masses for him.

October 10 and 17: *Kung Kao Po* and *Sunday Examiner* respectively published a special page on the history and activities of the Holy Spirit Study Centre to mark its 30th Anniversary.

October 11-12: Following the visit of Bishop José Lai of Macau to Shanghai in September, Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian of Shanghai invited Cardinal Joseph Zen, the former ordinary of Hong Kong, to Shanghai for a short visit. It was the first time in six years that the cardinal was able to return to his homeland. It was a visit "full of joy" for Cardinal Zen, who visited the World Expo and met the 95-year-old Bishop Jin and his auxiliary bishop, Joseph Xing Wenzhi.

October 13-17: SARA organized a meeting for religious professionals engaged in publishing religious materials in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province. About 100 persons from the five Religions of Central and South China participated.

October 26-28: Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe, bishop of Naples, Italy, former head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, visited Beijing and Shanghai. The leaders of the Sant'Egidio community accompanied him. He met Bishop Li Shan of Beijing and Wang Zuo'an, the director of State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA).

October 31: The episcopal ordination of John Baptist Li Suguang, as coadjutor bishop of Nanchang Diocese, Jiangxi took place at the diocesan cathedral. About 1,000 Catholics attended the ordination Mass. The main consecrator was Bishop Joseph Li Shan of Beijing. Bishops Joseph Shen Bin of Haimen, Joseph Zhao Fengchang of Liaocheng (Yanggu) and 89-year-old John Wu Shizhen of Nanchang also participated in the ordination ceremony. Bishop Li was born in 1965 in Shanxi province. He studied at the Beijing Diocesan Seminary and was ordained a priest in 1992. Prior to Nanchang, he had served as a priest in Shanxi and Inner Mongolia. He was subsequently appointed vicar general of the Nanchang Diocese, and was unanimously elected as bishop candidate in 2009.

November 2010

November 3: In Nanchong, Sichuan Province, 600 faithful attended a ceremony to bless a bronze statue of the Sacred Heart and to found an Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The faithful committed themselves to holding a 24-hour around the clock adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every first Friday of the month.

November 9-12: The seventh meeting of Hebei Faith Press workers was held in Shijiazhuang, bringing together 40 writers and correspondents, to renew their understanding of the inculturation of faith amidst the challenges of contemporary society. The writers came from 18 provinces and municipalities, and included priests, seminarians, nuns and laypeople. Established in 1991, the Shijiazhuang-based Hebei Faith Press runs a nationwide 10-day newspaper and a website, and publishes books.

November 11: During a visit to the Shijiazhuang seminary, officials of the Hebei Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau announced that a section chief from the bureau would become the deputy rector of the seminary and a teacher of the politics class. They took the decision without consulting the Church authorities. All the teachers, with the support of over 100 seminarians, decided to suspend classes on November 15. Some seminarians returned to their home dioceses to report on the issue and to rally support. They said they feared that the

government official would intervene on the management of the seminary.

November 15: The episcopal ordination of Bp. Yang Yongqiang, 40, as coadjutor bishop of Zhoucun; took place. He immediately took over the responsibility of running the diocese since Bishop Ma Xuesheng, the ordinary, was currently in hospital. The ceremony took place in the Zibo cathedral. Bishop Fang Xingyao of Linyi was the main consecrator ceremony, while Bishops Li Mingshu of Qingdao and Zhao Fengchang of Liaocheng served as co-consecrators. Coadjutor Bishop Zhang Xianwang of Jinan and Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Xing Wenzhi of Shanghai, a native of Zhoucun, concelebrated. All the bishops are natives of Shandong, and are in communion with the Holy Father. 46 priests and 1,500 Catholics attended, including a number of underground believers. Born into a Catholic family in Zhoucun in April 1970, Bishop Yang studied in the minor seminary in Jinan (1987-1989) and then in the major seminary in Sheshan, Shanghai (1989-1995).

November 15: Bishop Paul Jiang Taoran (1926-2010), retired bishop of Shijiazhuang/Zhengding Diocese, died. He was ordained a priest in 1953, and worked first in Beijing and then in Yixian (Hebei Province), where he stayed from 1954 to 1959. From 1958 to 1967 he worked first in a hospital, and then was sent to a farm for “re-education through labor.” Between 1978 and 1981 he returned to work in the hospital. In 1982 he started his ministry in Shijiazhuang, and was ordained bishop of the diocese in 1989. In 2008 he was legitimized without jurisdiction, and was ordered to obey the ordinary bishop, Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo. Bp. Jiang ordained a large number of priests, gave new impetus to diocesan religious congregations and succeeded in obtaining the return of a lot of church property.

November 20: Fr. Joseph Guo Jincai was ordained bishop of Chengde, Hebei Province, without a mandate from the Holy See. The ordination took place in the church of Pingquan (Chengde). Bishop Fang Jianping of Tangshan was the main consecrator at the ordination ceremony. Other participants, who were seized and forced by government officials to attend the ceremony, were Bishops Pei Junmin of Liaoning, Li Lianggui of Cangzhou, Feng Xingmao of Hengshui, Li Shan of

Beijing, Meng Qinglu of Hohhot, Zhao Fengchang of Liaocheng and Francesco An Shuxin of Baoding. More than a dozen priests and 500 people, including government officials attended the ceremony, which took place despite the strong protest of the Holy See.

November 24: The Holy See issued a strong condemnation of the Chengde ordination in Italian, English and Chinese.

December 2010

December 7-9: The 8th National Assembly of Catholic Representatives was held on those 3 days at the Friendship Hotel, Beijing. Delegates elected the new President and 6 vice-presidents for the Bishops' Conference and the president and ten vice-presidents for the Catholic Patriotic Association. Fang Xingyao is the new president of the Catholic Patriotic Association, and Ma Yinglin is the new President of the Bishops' Conference. Fang Xingyao, Ma Yinglin and Guo Jincan work on both committees. For the first time, two honorary presidents and eight advisers were appointed to both bodies.

December 13-14: "A Forum on Vocations: Formation and Education" was held in Shijiazhuang, organized by the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies and the Ten Major Seminaries in China. About 60 persons attended.

December 17: Communiqué of the Press Office of the Holy See concerning the Eighth Assembly of Chinese Catholic Representatives held 7-9 December 2010 in Beijing. The reactions of the State Administration for Religious Affairs and the United Front were quite strong.

December 18: Bishop Wei Jingyi, the unofficial Bishop of Qiqihar, published a letter expressing solidarity with the communiqués of the Holy See regarding the ordination in Chengde and the 8th Assembly of Catholic Representatives. He encouraged his Catholics to accept the Holy Father's invitation to pray for the Church in China.

December 23: Bishop Vincent Zhu Weifang, 83, was installed as official bishop of Wenzhou, Zhejiang. The ceremony was attended by about 700 bishops, priests and faithful, but not by the unofficial Coadjutor Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin, 47.

December 23: The Holy Father officially announced that he has appointed Fr. Savio Hon Tai-Fai, SDB, from Hong Kong, as General Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

December 25: Pope Benedict XVI, during his Christmas *Urbi et Orbi* message, again expressed dissatisfaction with the situation of Christians in China, and asked God to “inspire political and religious leaders to be committed to full respect for the religious freedom of all.”

STATISTICS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CHINA

(a) According to the Holy Spirit Study Centre

<i>Number of Catholics:</i>	12,000,000 5,700,000 (as stated by the Open Church)
<i>Number of Dioceses:</i>	138 (116 active + 22 inactive)
<i>Number of Bishops:</i> Open bishops Underground bishops	103 65 38
<i>Number of Priests:</i> Open Church Underground Church	1,900 1,300
<i>Number of Seminaries and Seminarians:</i> Open Church – Major seminaries – Minor seminaries Underground seminaries	 10, with 630 major seminarians 30, with 600 minor seminarians 10, with 550 seminarians
<i>Number of Sisters:</i> Open Church Underground Church	3,800 in about 80 congregations 1,550 in about 30 congregations
<i>Number of Sisters' Novitiates:</i> Open Church Underground Church	40, with about 100 under formation 20, with about 100 under formation

(b) According to “Faith Institute for Cultural Studies”

<i>Number of Priests:</i>	
Open Church	More than 3,000
Members of religious congregations	350
<i>Number of Seminaries and Seminarians:</i>	
Major seminaries	10, about 600 seminarians
Minor seminaries	20, about 400 seminarians
<i>Number of Religious Sisters:</i>	
Sisters	About 5,000
Female religious congregations	About 100
<i>Number of Sisters' Novitiates:</i>	
Novices	About 200
Novitiates	More than 30

(c) According to the “Blue Book of Religions”

According to the *Blue Book of Religions*, published by the Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on August 11, 2010, based on the responses of over 60,000 questionnaires carried out in more than 300 counties across China (survey done by Faith Press):

As of December 10, 2009, there were 3,397 Catholic clergy persons (bishops, priests and deacons). Included in the figure are 3,268 priests residing in about 100 different dioceses. In mainland China, there are 10 major seminaries with 628 major seminarians; 106 convents with 5,451 Sisters who have taken their vows, and 30 preparatory seminaries with 630 minor seminarians. There are about 350 members of male religious congregations. There are 5,967 churches or prayer centers throughout the country. According to partial statistics, China has 5,714,853 Catholics. But taking into consideration some special situations, the actual number of Catholics in mainland China should be more than 6 million, and it could be as many as between 6 and 12 million.