

## BISHOP JIN LUXIAN

### VISITS

## WEST GERMANY



In April, Bishop Jin Luxian, Director of Shehan Seminary in Shanghai began a month-long visit to West Germany at the invitation of personal friends, stopping off in Hong Kong for a few days on his return to China. The Bishop said that it had been for him a very enriching experience. He managed to take in most of the leading cities there, including East Berlin, and along the way visited many seminaries, convents, catholic universities, and the headquarters of Missio, Misereor and Caritas International, as well as meeting with three Roman Catholic Cardinals and a number of Protestant friends. He was particularly impressed by the worldwide development projects of Caritas, and he was pleased with its offer to be of service to China as well.

Accompanying the Bishop on his journey was Fr. Shen Baozhi, also of the Shanghai diocese. He felt that the trip did much to promote understanding between the Church in China and West Germany. He was surprised and happy to learn how knowledgeable and concerned the West German

christians were about China and the situation there. As for the Catholic Church, he remarked on its ancient heritage and how well it has been able to adapt its mission to contemporary German society. Praising the keen sense of social service for which the church in West Germany is well-known, he mentioned that this is an example the Shanghai Church is ready to emulate. Already the diocese has formed a Catholic Professional Association, under the leadership of Dr. Chu Zhonggang, that offers the services of doctors, teachers, architects, and other professionals to the people of Shanghai free-of-charge. The Association is now in the process of setting up a free clinic for needy residents of Sheshan. The Association is supported by local Catholics, and members come from the ranks of the retired who serve without pay. When Fr. Shen asked if Misereor would consider providing a mobile clinic to the project, Misereor responded with interest and asked Fr. Shen to submit a detailed proposal as soon as possible. Fu Jianrong, a seminarian, who at 22 was the youngest member of the visiting group, was on his first trip outside China. He was impressed by the social organization of both church and society. He found a deep sense of religion among the people, with churches everywhere, and he was particularly impressed by the way Protestants and Catholics live side-by-side in peace and harmony. He was happy to have had the opportunity to meet with many German workers and to stay in the homes of local christians. What also surprised him was the great interest among the laity in philosophy and theology with large numbers attending formal classes in religion.

When the group returned to Hong Kong, they were happy but tired, especially the group leader Bishop Jin. On him fell the burden of translating for both sides during days crowded with activities as their exuberant hosts overwhelmed them with their warm hospitality. The Bishop is well-versed in German. He came away with the feeling that the language gap is a problem that must receive immediate attention as Chinese and Western exchange visits multiply in the future.