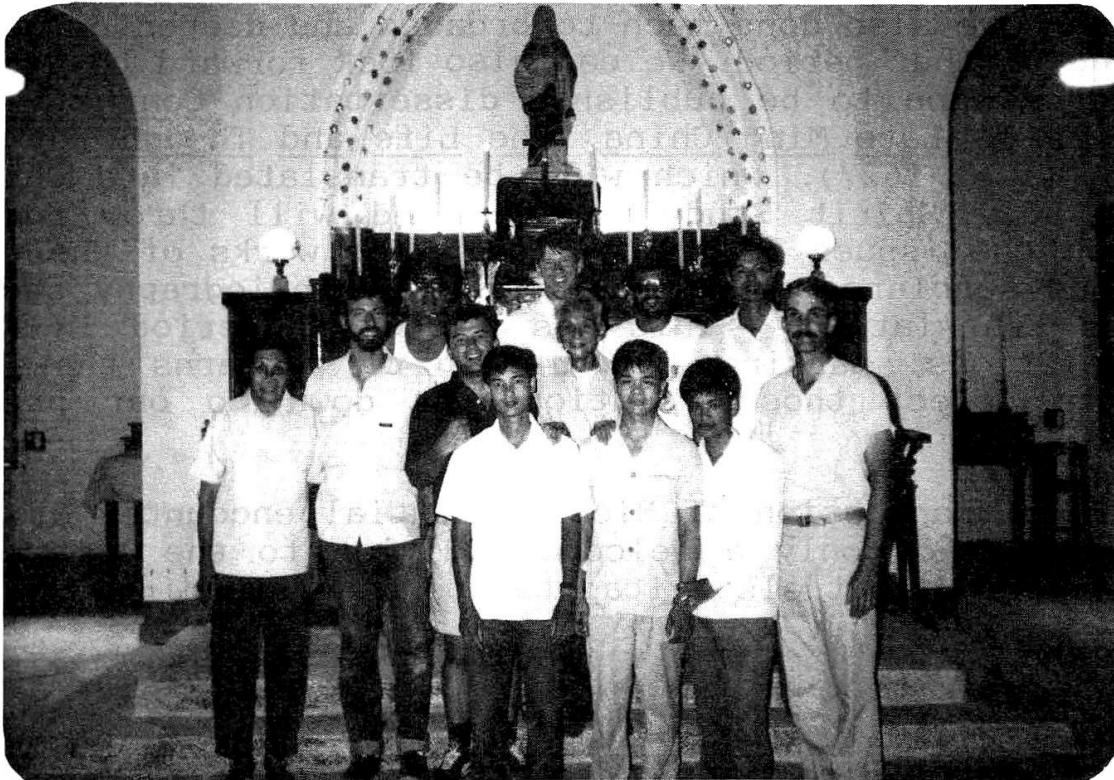


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# JOURNEY TO SANCIAN ISLAND

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by Elmer Wurth



*Fr. Wang, surrounded by Sister and the 10 seminarians*

Sancian Island is famous in Catholic missionary history as the place where St. Francis Xavier died, his dream of reaching the China Mainland unfulfilled.

Since the area has recently been reopened to foreigners, I offered to accompany six American seminarians from Maryknoll there as part of their summer mission orientation program. They had previously visited Thailand and the Philippines before coming to Hong Kong. They were eager to see Sancian Island as it is also an important part of Maryknoll's history, being the site chosen by Maryknoll Bishop James E. Walsh for his consecration as bishop of Jiangmen in 1927. It proved to be a truly spiritual expe-

rience and the highlight of their summer mission study program.

There are various routes to Sancian Island from Hong Kong. We chose the comfortable four hour boat trip to Jiangmen before proceeding on to our final destination by bus and two more short boat trips. We also wanted to visit the old church, seminary and convent buildings where Bishop Walsh and other Maryknollers had worked in former days. Upon arrival, we were warmly greeted by Fr. Linus Wang, a religious Sister, four seminarians home on summer vacation from Wuchang Seminary, and some of the local Catholics. Fr. Wang at 78 years of age, is full of vigor and enthusiasm. He has just moved back to Immaculate Heart of Mary church, which he has redecorated beautifully in preparation for its grand reopening on August 22, 1986. In introducing the Chinese seminarians, he said it would be at least three years before any of them would be ordained and ready to replace him, so he would labor on faithfully in the Lord's vineyard as long as he could.



*Our group at the newly rebuilt memorial chapel and new residence on Sancian Island*