

News In Brief

FATHERS VINCENT ZHU AND JOSEPH CHEN RELEASED

Fr. Vincent Zhu SJ, was released from prison on February 6, 1988 and is now staying with his niece's family in Shanghai. Another Jesuit priest, Fr. Chen Yuntang, was also released earlier this year and is staying at the Dongjiadu Church in Shanghai.

Fr. Vincent Zhu Hongsheng was born on July 17, 1916 in Shanghai, and Fr. Joseph Chen, was born on February 13, 1908, also in Shanghai. The two priests had been imprisoned since the 50's and were released at the end of 1970's.

On November 19, 1981 they were re-arrested and sentenced to ten and fifteen years of imprisonment respectively. The main offence the authorities charged them with was conspiring with foreigners. According to a dependable source, they have been released for "medical reasons."

BISHOP FAN XUEYAN RELEASED

Bishop Fan Xueyan of the Diocese of Baoding in Hebei Province was released from prison for the second time and placed on parole on November 17. He is now in residence at the Baoding Catholic Church. Bishop Fan was born in 1907 and ordained in 1934. In 1951, Pope Pius XII appointed him ordinary of the Baoding Diocese. He was first arrested during the 1950's for refusing to join the Catholic Patriotic Association and subsequently sentenced to 15 years in jail. Released in 1979, he was again arrested in December of 1983. This time he was charged with ordaining priests secretly and maintaining contacts with foreign countries and upon conviction received a sentence of ten years. Imprisoned at the same time with Bishop Fan was the Vicar General of the Baoding Diocese, Father Huo Bingzhang. In May of last year, Amnesty International publicised the news that Bishop Fan was not in good health. According to a religious spokesperson in Beijing, Bishop Fan is in satisfactory health at the present time. Recent reports also say that the Bishop has been visited by many clergy and Catholic lay people.

BISHOP GONG PINMEI'S CIVIL RIGHTS RESTORED

The civil rights of Bishop Gong Pinmei of the Shanghai diocese were restored on January 5, 1988. Bishop Gong was arrested in 1955 for alleged anti-revolutionary activities. He was released on parole in 1985 and took up residence at the Xujiahui Catholic Church. During his period of parole, Bishop Gong was allowed few visitors, spending much of his time in semi-seclusion. He was allowed, however, to celebrate Mass for Sisters of the Shanghai diocese and occasional visits with newly ordained priests from Sheshan Seminary.

Cardinal Jaime Sin, Archbishop of Manila, has also reported that a Father Wang, a Jesuit priest, has been recently released from a work camp.

THREE BISHOPS CONSECRATED IN HUNAN AND JIANGXI PROVINCES

Two new bishops were consecrated in Hunan Province last December. They are Qu Tianci of Changsha and Wang Zicheng of Lixian.

Bishop Qu served as administrator of the Changsha Diocese for many years. Bishop Wang is the former vicar general of the Yueyang Diocese, and has been the vice-rector of the Chinese Academy of Philosophy and Theology in Beijing since its inception in 1983.

Catholics of Jiangxi Province have elected Father Wu Shizhen as their auxiliary bishop. He will serve as assistant to Bishop Chen Duqing. The ordination ceremony took place in Beijing on September 6, 1987. The episcopal ordinations were performed by Bishop Zong Huaide, chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association.

DEATH OF BISHOP FAN DAOJIANG

Bishop Fan Daojiang of the Nanchong diocese in Sichuan Province died in a Chongqing hospital on December 17, 1987. He was 74 years old. Bishop Fan, whose baptismal name was John the Baptist, was ordained a priest in 1942 and assigned to teach in the Nanchong seminary. He was elected bishop in 1963. In 1984, Bishop Fan was appointed vice-rector of the Chengdu seminary.