

NEWS IN BRIEF



Developments in the Youtong Case

Almost half a year has passed since security forces beat up the Catholics of Youtong Village, near Shijiazhuang in Hebei Province. In that time there have been both happy and sad developments in the case.

Father Bei Ronggui, the parish priest who was forced to flee the village on April 18, the day the incident took place, was arrested on September 3 in Beijing. When arrested, Father Bei was on his way to offer Mass in the western district of the city, having just administered Extreme Unction to a sick Catholic.

On the other hand, Bishop Jia Zhiguo, who was arrested in April, was released on September 12. Bishop Jia had been held in detention at both the Baoding and Shijiazhuang police stations for 130 days.

On June 25 more than 300 security personnel and demolition workers arrived in Youtong. They immediately began to dismantle the tent which had been erected on the grounds of the grammar school. The villagers did not try to stop them. After the tent was pulled down, classes resumed at the school. There was no summer vacation this year for the students. The Catholics also sent their children back to school.

For the time being, the Catholics have set up an altar in a large garden and Mass is celebrated there every Sunday afternoon. Three or four hundred Catholics attend. Father Li Baocun, former vice-rector of the Shijiazhuang seminary, comes from Shijiazhuang each week to celebrate the Mass. On weekdays the Catholics conduct a prayer service by themselves.

The local authorities have admitted that the property on which the school stands belongs to the church. They are prepared to return part of the land to the Catholics so they can build a church. However, the details are still being worked out.

Death of Two Old Priests Announced

Father Zhou Xingyu, vice-rector of the South-central Catholic Regional Seminary in Wuhan, Hubei Province, died of a stroke on August 19. He was 74 years old.

Father Guo Zongyan of Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, died on September 13 at the age of 84. Before his death Father Andrew Guo had been pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Yangzhou City.

Two New Bishops in Sichuan Province

On July 31, Bishop Duan Yinming of Wanxian consecrated two new bishops at the Pingan Bridge Catholic Church in Chengdu. Bishop Xu Zhixuan was ordained as auxiliary bishop of the Wanxian diocese and Bishop Huang Woze as ordinary of the diocese of Nanchong. Bishop Xu will remain in Chengdu to teach in the seminary. Bishop Huang will reside at the Suining Catholic Church in his diocese.

24 Seminarians from Shijiazhuang Seminary Ordained Priests

24 seminarians from Shijiazhuang seminary have been ordained by the end of September this year. This makes Hebei the province with the most newly ordained priests. These new priests belong to nine different dioceses. Two of them belonging to the Baoding diocese have returned to Baoding and have been given assignments by Bishop Fan Xueyan.

Father Hou Jinde Elected Bishop of Xingtai

On May 26, Father Hou Jinde, spiritual director of Shijiazhuang seminary, was elected bishop of the Xingtai diocese. Father Hou will be consecrated by Bishop Chen Bolu in Handan on October 28. Seventy-one year old Father Hou has been spiritual director at Shijiazhuang seminary since 1984. After episcopal consecration, he will resign from his seminary job to concentrate his efforts on pastoral work in his diocese.

Jinan Seminary Ordains Ten Deacons

Ten seminarians from Jinan's Holy Spirit Seminary in Shandong Province were ordained to the diaconate on September 24. They will be ordained priests on December 17.

A WORD OF THANKS

We have received several phone calls from Hong Kong Protestant churches expressing appreciation for Tripod No. 52 which had the special topic: "Conversion, Reconciliation and Unity." The Hong Kong Christian Council's journal Message has also requested permission to reprint part of Francis J. Buckley's article, "Healing and Reconciliation in the Gospel according to Luke." Moreover, a letter from China stated that "the analysis of the Chinese Government's Document #3 in Tripod No. 52 was quite objective." We are very grateful for the encouragement given us by our readers, and resolve to make greater efforts in the future.

Editors