

China Church Update

Archbishop Dominic Tang Yee-Ming Interviewed

On July 24, 1991, Archbishop Tang was interviewed by Fr. Arregui of Vatican Radio. When asked about the church in China, Archbishop Tang responded, "Our priests, religious and lay Catholics work with great zeal and a spirit of sacrifice. Thanks to them the church in China is not only able to carry on her mission, but fervour is also increasing." In reply to a question on China's future, following the collapse of communist regimes in many places around the world, the archbishop said, "I look with great hope towards China's future. Things will change, particularly with regard to religion and the spiritual life. There will be many conversions and this will transform the face of the nation."

The 84 year-old archbishop of Canton, who spent 22 years in Chinese prisons, has just written a book entitled, *In the Prisons of Mao*. This book is an account of the archbishop's pastoral life and his long years of imprisonment in the People's Republic of China.

New Sect Spreading in China

Founded in 1985 by Mr. Hua Xuche, who maintains he is the second incarnation of Christ, the *Ling Ling Jiao* sect is spreading like wildfire throughout Jiangsu province. Mr. Hua affirms that disease is the result of diabolic possession and practices exorcisms, often with tragic results. The government, so far, has not curtailed any of the sect's activities.

Arrests and Releases

Fr. Wei Jingyi, ordained in 1980 in Baoding, Hebei province, and serving in Heilongjiang, was arrested in Harbin, Northeastern China in March, 1991. He was sentenced to three years in prison. Fr. Wei participated in the November 1989 meeting of the underground episcopal conference held in

Shaanxi. So far, Fr. Wei is still serving his term.

Bishop Guo Wenzhi, 73, arrested on December 14, 1989, was released in March 1990. He is restricted to his village in Qiqihar. Bishop Guo also participated in the November 1989 underground episcopal conference.

Jesuit Bishop Joseph Fan Zhongliang of Shanghai arrested in June, along with his lay assistant, Qian Zhijing, while traveling to Wenzhou, Zhejiang province in Eastern China, was released on August 17. He is presently living with his niece in Shanghai and remains under close government surveillance. Mr. Qian was released on July 19.

Bishop Joseph Li Side of Tianjin, who had been missing for eighteen months, has been released from prison. He has returned to Tianjin diocese. Arrested on December 1989 Bishop Li is a vice-president of the underground episcopal conference set up in Shaanxi in November 1989. Bishop Li is living at St. Joseph's Church in Tianjin city, about 112 kilometer from Beijing. The bishop's episcopal appointment in 1986 has never been recognized by the government. He is, however, allowed to function as a priest in the open church.

Minor Seminary to Open in Guangzhou

A minor seminary is being set up on the grounds of Sacred Heart Cathedral, Guangzhou, Guangdong province. China appointed Bishop James Lin Bingliang said that several young men had expressed interest in becoming priests. The new two-storied building will provide living accommodations and classroom facilities for 20 students. The faculty at the new seminary will include priests to teach theology and spirituality and lay people to teach the secular subjects.

Caritas Hong Kong Sends Volunteers to Southwest China

Caritas Hong Kong has initiated a development program for the poor children of the *Yao* ethnic minority. Volunteers have repaired the electric power service in the school and organized educational and recreational activities for children who live in extremely poor and difficult conditions in the mountain areas of Nanganshan, Guangdong province. Caritas hopes to bring the

plight of these children to the attention of the people of Hong Kong.

Northeastern Provinces Celebrate Assumption Day with more than 300 baptisms

The feast of Our Lady's Assumption is one of the four major festivals observed by the Catholic church in China. The other three are Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. This year, on Our Lady's feast, the combined churches of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces in Northeastern China administered over 300 baptisms. A large number of converts also received their first Holy Communion. Many of the newly baptized were ethnic Korean-Chinese from the Korean speaking areas and the Korean Autonomous Prefecture of Yanbian.

Young Priests Join Faculty at Wuchang Seminary

Three young priests, Frs. Joseph Gan Junqiu of Guangzhou, Joseph Huang Bingzhang of Shantou and Francis Wu Zhengfu of Hankou, all in their 20's and 30's, will begin teaching in the Central and Southern Regional Seminary in Wuchang, Hubei province. Bishop Bernadine Dong Guangqing said that this decision was taken at the meeting of the seminary's board of directors during their annual meeting in Guangzhou, July 9-11. Present lecturers at the seminary are all elderly and in urgent need of successors to assist with the formation of students, and provide for management and the general affairs of the seminary.

New National Seminary of Philosophy and Theology in Beijing

The National Institute of Philosophy and Theology in Beijing, formerly housed in the same building as the Headquarters of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association on Liu Yin Street, No.14, has been moved into a new building in the district of Haidian, near the Foreign Language Institute.