

China Church Update

400th Anniversary of Johann Adam Schall

(The following information is furnished by Roland Malek, SVD, of China Zentrum)

The year 1992 marks the 400th anniversary of the birth of Johann Adam Schall von Bell, S.J. (1592-1666), the great China missionary and astronomer at the Chinese court of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Various events have been planned in Germany to honor the man who, in an outstanding way, embodied Christianity, science and Europe's unique fascination for China. This anniversary also provides the opportunity to reflect on China and Chinese mission history.

Schedules Events

Planned events include an International Sinological-Missiological Symposium organized by China-Zentrum and the Institute Monumenta Serica, to be held at St. Augustin (located near Bonn) from May 4-8, 1992. The participants are invited scholars, well-versed in matters related to the symposium's theme, *Science, Philosophy, Religion*. A missiological symposium will be held during the week of Pentecost, June 7, 1992, organized by the Missiological Institute of St. Augustin, the Philosophical Theological Faculty and China-Zentrum, to take place at Saint Augustin. Besides dealing with the life and work of Adam Schall, this symposium will commemorate the 500th Anniversary of evangelization in Latin America. Participants will include missiologists, experts in religious studies and other interested persons. Church and popular events are also being planned. On Sunday, 3 May, 1992, the Archbishop of Cologne, Joachim Cardinal Meisner, will celebrate a Pontifical Mass in Cologne together with H.P. Kolvenbach, the Master General of the Jesuit Order, and the Chairman of the Chinese Regional Bishop's Conference in Taiwan, Bishop Paul Shan. On the same day the German China Society plans to unveil the Schall monument in Cologne. Lectures and exhibitions have been

scheduled throughout the year and the German Federal Post is planning to issue a "Schall stamp"

A number of publications have also been scheduled.

The China-Zentrum hopes that these various events will help deepen the awareness of China in Germany and Europe.

Inner Mongolia Church Flourishes

By the end of 1991, 28 Catholic churches had been opened in Inner Mongolia. The Catholic population in the area is estimated to be at least 170,000. Although only 18 of the 81 priests are young men, there is great hope for the future. Presently, there are 45 students in the Hohhot seminary, and 18 more in the national seminary in Beijing. Bishop Wang Xueming is making arrangements to open a convent in the provincial capital to accommodate young women wishing to join the Sisterhood.

Guangzhou Minor Seminary

Nine students, ages 18-30, entered Guangzhou's diocesan minor seminary in November to begin a two year course of study. The men are being prepared doctrinally and academically to enter higher level studies in the major seminary.

Government Frees Detainees

Just before Chinese New Year, 1992, the Chinese government released Bishop Xie Shiguang, 73 of Funing diocese, Fujian province, but originally of Qingyuan county, Hebei province, Fr. Zheng Xingzong, 42, and Fr. Zhu Rutian, 29, Fujian province. They had been detained since July 27, 1990. Reportedly, 8 others, detained on the same date, have also been freed. Four others, arrested at the same time, are unaccounted for. All had participated in unapproved church activities.

Michael Liu Xianru, China-Appointed Bishop of Chengdu

Fr. Michael Liu Xianru, 73, of Chengdu, Sichuan province, Southwestern China, was ordained bishop of Chengdu on February 24, 1992. The See had been vacant since the death of

Bishop John Li Xiting on May 28, 1989. The ordaining bishops were Vatican-appointed Bishop Matthias Duan Yinming of Wanxian, China-appointed Bishops John Chen Shizhong of Yibin and Michael Huang Woze of Nanchong. The ceremony, which took place at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Chengdu, the provincial capital, was conducted partly in the vernacular Sichuanese dialect.

Fr. Tsien Chih-Chun, New Bishop of Hualian

Fr. Tsien was born in 1926 in Yuhuan County, Zhejiang, and ordained in 1953. He studied theology in Italy and obtained his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Sacred Heart University in Milan in 1960. He has taught at several universities in Taiwan. On April 11, the eve of Palm Sunday, he was consecrated the bishop of Hualian in Hualian, Taiwan. Archbishop Dominic Deng Yiming of Guangzhou, now in residence in Hong Kong, was the principal consecrator. The co-consecrators were Archbp. Di Gang of Taipei and Bp. Paul Shan Guoxi of Kaohsiung.

Two Bishops Die in Northern China

Bp. Han Xirang of Qingdao, 74, Shandong, died on March 6 from liver cancer. Bp. Han was a native of Yucheng County, Shandong. He entered the Franciscan Order in 1930, and was ordained in 1949 in Hankou, Hubei. After his ordination he served both as rector of the minor seminary in Shandong, and as a parish priest. In 1958 he was imprisoned for opposing the election and consecration of bishops independently of the Vatican. Released in 1979, he exercised his ministry in Jinan and Qingdao. In 1987 he was elected bishop of Qingdao, and consecrated in Jinan on April 24.

Bp. Xu Lizhi of Zhangjiakou, Hebei, 75, died on January 19, 1992. The Diocese of Zhangjiakou was created in 1987 when the government merged the dioceses of Xuanhua and Xiwanzi.

Vatican and Mongolia Establish Diplomatic Relations

According to the April 4, 1992, Italian edition of the Observatore Romano, the Vatican and the Republic of Mongolia have established diplomatic relations and exchanged ambassadors.