

## *China Church Update*

### **Catholics Elected as Members of Congresses**

Bishop Cai Tiyan of Shantou and Bishop Fu Tieshan of Beijing were elected as representatives to the Eighth National People's Congress in March. Twelve bishops, priests and lay Catholics were elected as representatives to the Eighth Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, including Bishop Zong Huaide and Bishop Jin Luxian. Nevertheless, no women and Sisters were elected as Catholic representatives.

### **Beijing Diocese Supports the Municipality's Hosting of the Olympics in the Year 2000**

Bishop Fu Tieshan of Beijing told foreign reporters in February that he hoped Beijing City will be selected to hold the Olympics in the year 2000. He said that the diocese will provide religious services for the athletes and participants in the Olympic Village. Liturgy can also be arranged in hotels according to the visitors' needs. Bishop Fu is now the chairman of the International Relations Committee of the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference.

### **New Priests in Shanxi and Hebei Provinces**

Bishop Liu Jinghe of Tangshan ordained 6 young men as priests at the Tangshan Cathedral on November 18, including a young priest of the Chengde Diocese, Fr. Li Liwen. On November 22, Bishop Chen Bolu of Handan ordained Li Anping a priest at Caozhuang Church and on November 29, Bishop Jiang Taoran of Shijiazhuang ordained Li Zhiyi. Bishop Liu Dinghan of Xianxian ordained three priests on December 6, 1992 and February 2, 1993 respectively. And in Shanxi on December 17, Bp. Li Wei Dao of Changzhi ordained 4 young men and on January 3, 1993, Bishop Zhang Xin of Taiyuan ordained four deacons as priests. In 1992 altogether twenty-one young priests were ordained in Hebei province.

## **Women Vocations Flourishing**

After a few years of formation, 20 novices of the Guiyang Diocese, Guizhou, made their first vows on February 24. On February 2, 13 young ladies took their vows in Tangshan Diocese, Hebei. Xuzhou Diocese, Jiangsu, had their first group of young sisters taking their vows in November 1992. Shantou Convent, Guangdong, was re-opened on January 28, 1993, after being closed for over 40 years. Over 1000 people took part in the open-air Mass celebrated in Mandarin by Bp. John Cai Tiyan. The Mother Superior, Huang Peijun, a former barefoot doctor, is only 40. There are 3 elderly Sisters, 25 aspirants, mostly from the rural villages, and 30 novices in the Shantou convent. The diocese has 10 priests to serve some 60,000 Catholics.

## **Believers from Other Christian Congregations Join Catholics for Christmas in Puqi, Hubei Province**

Eleven members of a Christian Congregation in Puci fulfilled their wish to join the Catholic Church at Christmas Eve Mass. The parish priest, Fr. Wang Shukai, officiated at the ceremony. Twenty more Christians will be received into Catholic Church at a later date. Puqi is one of the oldest dioceses administered by a Chinese bishop. It was inactive after the death of Bishop Li Daonan in the early 1970s. Now the administrator is Bishop Dong Guangqing of Hankou.

## **Only 600 Catholics Exist in Tibet**

According to the White Paper of "The Current Situation in Tibet," published in November 1992, there are about 2 million people living in Tibet. Most of them believe in Lama Buddhism. Only 600 are Catholics. Presently, only one Tibetan seminarian is studying at the National Catholic Seminary in Beijing.

## **Priests' Deaths Reported**

Auxiliary Bishop Li Side, 85, of Shanghai Diocese passed away on March 9. Father Zhang Zhiyu of Wanxian Diocese, Sichuan Province, passed away on January 26 at the age of 83.

Father Du Rui, 82, of Hohhot Diocese in Inner Mongolia died in January. Another priest of Inner Mongolia, Father Duan Wanke passed away at the end of 1992. After a long period under house arrest, Father Wang Leiyi of Tianjin Diocese passed away at the Tianjin Cathedral on December 19, 1992. Father Jia Shushan of Xianxian Diocese, Hebei Province, passed away in September 1992.

### **State Council Gives Green Light to Non-Government Higher Education**

According to a document entitled "Suggestions on speeding up and actively promoting higher education," the government should change the present practice of monopolising all higher education into a pluralistic educational system. Paid private higher education, corporation supported and local community supported education will be allowed. The Education committee also suggested amending the regulations to allow overseas institutes and individual persons to operate higher education institutions in China. The central government will provide the main direction and macro planning. Provincial governments have the right to manage the details of higher education.

### **Salvation Army Negotiating Properties**

International leader of the Salvation Army, General Eva Burrows, was invited to visit Beijing and Nanjing in February. After the trip she told reporters that the Salvation Army will keep negotiating with the China Government about 40 pieces of real estate which belonged to the SA before 1949. SA suggested using some of this property to run social service programs. The Ministry of Civil Affairs in China said, however, that occupied property is not easy to get back, but that the government could arrange other places in exchange.

### **Mother Teresa Receives Honorary Degree in Hong Kong**

The Foundress of the Missionaries of Charity, Mother Teresa, visited Hongkong in March at the invitation of Hongkong University to receive an honorary degree in social

sciences. Later, she shared her faith experiences with clergy, religious and lay Catholics. She also expressed her eagerness to serve the brothers and sisters on mainland China.

### **Death of Bishop Liu Difen Revealed**

Bishop Liu Difen, 80, of the Anguo Diocese, Hebei Province, who was not recognized by the Chinese government, died on November 14, 1992 at a government "rest home." Although the officially announced cause of death was brain embolism, a number of reported wounds of various sizes on the bishop's body raise questions about how he was treated in this form of extra-judicial detention. Of the 10 elderly underground bishops arrested at the end of 1990, Bishop Liu is now the third one to die in mysterious circumstances. According to reports the corpses of Bishops Shi Chunjie and Fan Xueyan of the Baoding Diocese, who died on November 4, 1991 and April 16, 1992 respectively, also exhibited signs of maltreatment when returned to their homes for burial.

### **Recent Releases**

A number of jailed or recently arrested Catholics have been released in the past few months, according to John Kamm, a Hong Kong based human rights activist and business man. The group includes 10 priests, 1 deacon and 6 lay people.

### **Shanghai Diocesan Press Publications**

The Shanghai Diocesan Press (Guangqi Research Centre) hopes to publish more than 20 books in 1993 on the Bible, theology, spirituality, the history of the Catholic Church in China, children's books and hymnals. Since the books cannot be sold in public bookstores, distribution is a problem.

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