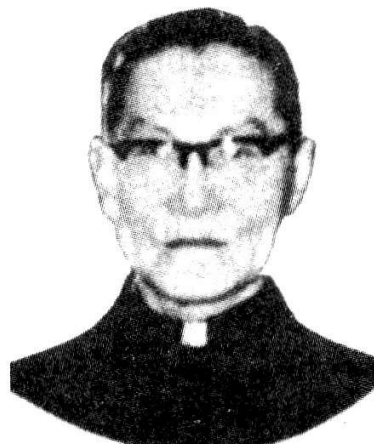


Personality

Profile in Valor: Vincent Zhu Hongsheng, S.J. (1916-1993)

When Father Vincent Zhu, 77, died of a heart ailment on July 6, 1993, in Shanghai, he had spent more than 30 years of his life either in prisons, labour camps or in other forms of detention. Ironically, in March of this year, either for reasons of compassion or expediency, the Chinese government had cancelled what was left of his last 15 year sentence and rehabilitated him as a normal citizen. It had been a



long, long road to freedom and nothing in his early life and cosmopolitan education in Europe and the United States had foreshadowed the sufferings that would test the depth of his faith in God and fidelity to the Church.

Born of a prominent old Catholic family in 1916, Vincent learned to love the faith in his earliest years from his devoted Catholic family. In 1933, accompanied by his Jesuit uncle, Bishop Zhu, Vincent joined a pilgrimage to Rome to take part in the Holy Year celebrations taking place that year. This was the beginning of a long fourteen year sojourn away from his beloved China. Vincent completed his secondary school at St. Paul Jesuit High School in Namur, Belgium. In 1935, at the age of nineteen, he entered the Society of Jesus and joined the Jesuit minor seminary in Laval, Paris. When World War II broke out, Vincent was eager to return to Shanghai, but every attempt on his part failed. In 1941, he decided to pursue his studies in theology in Lyons, France, and was ordained a priest on June 24, 1944. In 1945, he was sent to Dublin, Ireland, to complete his fourth year of theology. He spent his tertianship in Auriesville, New York, and in 1947, he was assigned as Prefect of Studies at St. Ignatius

High School in Xujiahui, Shanghai. When the government closed the school in 1951, Vincent went to work at Christ the King Church.

Things in China were in turmoil. Mao Zedong was engaged in a campaign to suppress what he called "counter-revolutionaries" and Church workers fell under this category. The Churches entered an era of persecution. By the end of 1951, the Communist government had closed Fu Jen University in Beijing and the Jesuit Aurora University in Shanghai. All Catholic institutions were quickly nationalized. In 1952 alone, the Communists imprisoned 220 Chinese priests and 94 foreign missionaries. Vincent Zhu's arrest on October 3, 1953 came as no surprise. He was released one year later only to be arrested again on September 8, 1955, together with Bishop Gong Pinmei and a large number of priests, men and women religious, and lay people. On March 17, 1960, he was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment and sent to a reform through labour farm in Anhui Province in central China. He did not return home to Shanghai until November of 1978. Even with the end of the Cultural Revolution, freedom eluded him. He was arrested for a third time on November 19, 1981 and on March 22, 1983, sentenced for another 15 years' imprisonment but placed on bail for medical treatment in February 1988. He was now permitted to live with his relatives in Shanghai and free to walk around the city but prohibited from leaving it. On December 24, 1992, he was hospitalized for a heart attack. Although quiet and unassuming, Father Zhu was much sought after by people in all states of life. They came just to see him and talk with him. He was also well known outside of China and admired for his courage and loyalty to his own conscience for refusing to be affiliated with China's official Church. He died on July 6, 1993, and his funeral took place on July 10, in Shanghai.

The Holy Spirit Study Centre obtained the funeral eulogy from friends, outside of China, who attended the service. We publish here the approved translation of the original text delivered in Chinese at the crematorium.

Funeral Oration for Vincent Chu Hongsheng July 10, 1993, Shanghai China

by Fr. Joseph Chen Yuntang

Fr. Vincent Zhu Hongsheng was a Jesuit. He completed his life's mission at 10:25 AM on July 6, 1993. He was 77 years of age when he offered up his priestly office and returned to his Lord. With St. Paul he could say to his brothers and sisters in the Lord and to his relatives and friends: *I have run the full course; I have kept the faith.*

His last will and testament can be summed up in one word: *LOVE*

In 1933 his uncle, who was a bishop, brought him to Rome on a pilgrimage. While there he lived at the Jesuit General Curia. The same year he entered the Jesuit College of St. Paul in Namur, Belgium, to finish his high school studies. He formed deep friendships with his Belgian classmates. Their mothers looked upon him as their own son and treated him as such, tucking him into bed at night, making the sign of the cross on his forehead, and kissing him while saying, "Good Night, my son."

In the autumn of 1935 he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In September of that same year he entered the Jesuit novitiate at Laval. This was in the province of Paris. He often said that he was proud to be a son of the Society. He had a great love and respect for the Society, its superiors, spiritual directors, and his companions considering them to be his own family. He would say:

Our strength as Jesuits lies precisely in this: although each Jesuit, superiors and subjects, has his own character and personality, yet each one is so formed by our Founder's charisma that there is unity in plurality and identity in diversity. The Society of Jesus is intimately united to the Heart of Christ and is incorporated into His Body - the Church. The Jesuit binds himself through vows to the whole Society and through it receives his mission to serve the Pope.

On December 24, 1992, Christmas Eve, he entered Tongren (formerly St. Luke's) hospital. Both doctors and

nurses gave him competent and devoted care. During all the time he was hospitalized, Catholics came in relays to be with him and care for his needs thus surrounding him with Christ's love.

After receiving the Sacrament of the Sick and making his General Confession, he said: "I have little desire to remain in this mortal life." This did not mean that he no longer cared for his family and all the friends he had made. On the contrary, an endless stream of his companions in the Society, other Brother Jesuits throughout the world, Church dignitaries, and people from all walks of life came to Tongren Hospital to visit him. Letters from all over the country and from abroad poured in. He could honestly say: "I have friends and students everywhere in the world." His students were to be found among Government officials while others lived scattered in various parts of the world as did his family and friends.

I speak now to his family here present. You have a responsibility to tell coming generations of the Zhu family: Father Vincent, the third son in his family, was his mother's favourite. That she had such a son was God's gift to her and a glory to the Zhu family. From his youth he never doubted God's personal call.

On July 6, 1993, Father Ai Zuzhang, pastor at the Xujiahui Cathedral, fellow Jesuit companions, Fathers Gabriel Chen Tianxiang, Victor Shen Cengli and Joseph Chen Yuntang went to the hospital to say goodbye and bless Father Vincent. During the last moments of his life he kept repeating: "I cannot breathe; I am about to die." His eyes, however, intimated that he wanted to say something more. Let a companion -- his dear and intimate friend for more than 60 years - interpret his meaning.

"You love me, and I love you."

"If we were to forget each other this would not be true love."

"Alive I served Jesus in His Church, but dying I now go to be with my Lord, the greatest of all joys."

"But my mission is not yet completed, and I am dying. I cannot breathe."

"I am concerned about my family. Will they keep the faith in future generations?"

"And I also am deeply concerned for the Church in China and in Shanghai."

"I cannot breathe; I am about to die."

But, Vincent, third son in your family, be at ease. You are a son of the Church. You have plowed its fields with your sweat; sowed them with your tears; watered them with your blood. Now the Spirit of the Lord will bring forth an abundant harvest so that those who come after you will reap in joy and laughter. Yes, third son in your family, Vincent, rest in peace. Only pray that the Lord of the harvest send more laborers into the field to sow and reap the harvest. Yes, rest and be at ease in the hope of the Resurrection! Goodbye, Vincent, Third Son of your family, Goodbye.

(Delivered July 10, 1993, 10:00 AM at the Youwa Crematorium)



Friends from near and far bid Fr. Vincent Zhu a last farewell.

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