

News in Brief

Compiled by the Tripod Staff

Ordination of Bishops

Bishop Benedict Cai Xiufeng, born Jan 24, 1917, ordained a priest Dec 3, 1948, was consecrated a bishop in Guangzhou by Bps. Joseph Zong Huaide, Peter Li Panshi of Jiangmen, James Lin Bingliang of Guangzhou and Anthony Zhong Quanzhang of Meizhou, for the diocese of Wuzhou in Guangxi. Bishop Frederic A. Donaghy, MM, who was expelled in 1955 and who died in 1988, was Wuzhou's first bishop. In 1949, the diocese had 20,000 Catholics. Today, the Catholics number only 5000. Bp Cai wants 1) his diocese to become self-supporting (by regaining church property and building a hostel with money from a HK Catholic) and 2) to train religious vocations. He presently has only 3 young priests, 2 major and 4 minor seminarians, 14 Sisters, 4 novices and 17 aspirants (*UCAN* and *HSSC*).

The new Bishop of Nanjing, Joseph Liu Yuanren, was consecrated on December 7 by Bishops Zong Huaide, President of the Bishops' Conference, Ma Longlin of Suzhou, and Yu Chengcai of Haimen in Jiangsu. Born on March 16, 1923, he was ordained on June 3, 1953, and spent 1959-79 in his village doing reform-through-labor. Only 4 of the 9 priests in the diocese are under 70. The Catholic population numbers about 80,000. The diocese is now planning to rebuild the bishop's residence located next to the Immaculate Conception Cathedral. The structure, in need of total reconstruction, has just been returned by the government (*UCAN* and *HSSC*).

Pro-Vatican Bishops and Priests, Sisters and Seminar-ians Detained

According to U.S. sources, Chinese authorities have detained two pro-Vatican bishops and three priests in the northern province of Hebei. Bishops Jia Zhiguo of Zhengding and Joannes Han Dingxiang of Handan were arrested by the Public Security Bureau and placed under administrative detention. Jia was arrested on January 7, 1994, in Zhengding and Han reportedly was detained on November 18, 1993, after he celebrated Mass in Handan.

Also reportedly arrested was Bishop Su Zhiming, 62, of Baoding, during the visit of US Treasury Secretary, Lloyd Bentsen. So far, there are no details of the bishop's whereabouts.

The detained priests are Fathers Chu Tai and Zhang Li, both of Hebei. They were arrested in November after celebrating Mass. According to the same sources, the third priest, Placidus Pei Ronggui

of Shijiazhuang City was arrested in January, 1994. Charges are not known. Pei, 60, was previously arrested in July 1989 and sentenced to five years "re-education through labour". He was paroled on March 21, 1993.

Two priests, three Sisters and four seminarians from the underground were also arrested on December 16 after Mass at a church in Fu'an City, Fujian province.

Restrictions have also tightened on Bishop Li Side, the Bishop of Tianjin, now confined to his own church in a mountainous district of Tianjin and on pro-Vatican Auxiliary Bishop of Tianjin, Shi Hongzhen. (*SCMP* Jan. 24, 1994; (*H.K. Standard*, Jan. 28, 1994).

Priest Ordained after Forty Years

Fr. Zhu Lide, S.J., a distant relative of the late Vincent Zhu, was ordained a priest in Taipei on January 9, forty years and some months after entering the Jesuits. Father Zhu was born into a Catholic family in Shanghai, and three of his older brothers were ordained Jesuit priests. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1953, was arrested in the 1955 crackdown in Shanghai, and spent a total of 28 years in custody. He accompanied Cardinal Gong to the USA, then finished his studies in Taiwan. His 93 year old mother attended his ordination (trans. from Taipei *Christian Life Weekly*, Jan 9, '94).

Bishop Jin Names Greatest Challenge to China's Church

At a recent ecumenical China meeting in Manila, Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian of Shanghai reflected on the greatest challenge facing the Catholic Church in China today. He said that as the people go through this rapid transition from Marxism to consumerism, traditional moral values are eroding. The stability and harmony of the family are challenged, farmers are leaving the land, the rich are praised, honesty is neglected and everyone wants to get rich overnight. "To tell the truth," he said, "I had no fear forty years ago of our Catholics resisting all kinds of challenges--even of persecution. The Church and their faith were the center of their lives. Many were ready to sacrifice everything to keep the faith. But today, facing the challenge of modernization, of pure materialism, of the idolatry of money, of individualism, I have great fears. How to teach the Catholics to live the Gospel in this quickly changing China has become now an issue of life and death" (*HSSC*).

Korean Priest Killed in Auto Accident

Father Thomas Im-kyu Yoon, born in Korea on June 11, 1948, ordained July 5, 1977 for the Korean diocese of Taegu, arrived in

Taiwan, January 18, 1986 to attend Fu-jen University where he received a PhD in Philosophy in June 1993. He was appointed assistant pastor of Holy Cross Parish, Changhua, Taichung Diocese, in October 1993. He went to China on January 7, 1994 to preach a retreat. He was killed in a head-on collision in Lanzhou, Gansu, on January 13, 1994 (*Christian Life Weekly*, Taipei, Jan. 30, 1994; HSSC).

Beijing Choir Performs in Hong Kong and Macau

The Divine Love choir from Beijing visited Hong Kong and Macao from December 20-28. In Hong Kong, the 43 member choir performed at Good Hope School, St. Benedict Church and the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. Among the members were 2 priests, 2 Sisters, 3 lay Catholics, 2 Protestants, and 34 non-Christians. While in Hong Kong the choir members visited a number of tourist spots as well as institutes and church organizations. The group was hosted by the Holy Spirit Study Centre and the Diocesan Commission of Sacred Music (*HSSC*).

Religious Affairs Bureau Chief Visits Religious Organizations in Hong Kong

Zhang Shengzuo, director of the Religious Affairs Bureau, Beijing, led a delegation to Hong Kong November 24-30. The group, made up of cadres for Buddhists and Taoists and the directors of the RAB of Henan and Anhui Provinces in Central China, visited Buddhist, Islamic, Protestant and Catholic groups and institutions. On November 26, the delegation met with Cardinal John Baptist Wu at the Holy Spirit Study Centre where they also visited the Holy Spirit Seminary. In addition they were invited to observe some of the works of Caritas-Hong Kong. Mr. Zhang expressed both admiration and respect for the social services rendered by the Catholic Church.

During his visit the RAB director said, "The policy of religious freedom in China does not mean believers have the privilege to break the laws of the state." Commenting on Zhang Shengzuo's statement that China has 4 million Catholics, 6-7 million Protestants, and 100 million Buddhists and Taoists, the *China News and Church Report* said, "It is interesting to note that the latter figure (100 million Buddhists and Taoists) corresponds well with the unpublished results of a Chinese Government survey obtained by our Center last year (see CNCR 2026)...the survey also found that there are 63 million Protestants and 12 million Catholics in the country. While the accuracy of these statistics may be debated, what the numbers do reveal is that the Christian movement in China is surprisingly large." The delegation was invited to Hong Kong by the President of the Taoist Association of Hong Kong (*CNCR #2262* and *HSSC*).

Regulations Re-issued

A reprint of "Regulations for Christian Believers" in Handan, Hebei, was re-issued on December 3, 1993. According to the *China News and Church Report*: "This would seem to be a warning that the Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the China Christian Council wish to signal their control over China's large and growing Protestant population" (CNCR #2255)

Monasteries Limit Number of Incoming Members

To avoid being a burden on the population, to set up rules of conduct for monks, and not to have a superfluity of monks, three Tibetan monasteries are now limiting the number of their incoming members (CNCR #2259 and HSSC).

China Celebrates Mao's 100th Anniversary of Birth

The 100th anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong fell on December 26. Mao was praised for "saving the revolution and the Communist party by staging armed uprisings and keeping the red star shining over China." He was also praised for refusing to let China become a vassal state of any big power in the world despite overwhelming pressure. To its glowing account of Mao's contribution the press also mentioned some of Mao's blunders. Among them: the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950's and disastrous Cultural Revolution which raged from 1966-76 and brought misery and havoc to the whole nation (*China Daily*, Dec. 24, and 28, 1993).

Law to Curb Births of "Inferior Quality"

On December 20, the NCNA announced that China has published a bill to "use legal means to avoid new births of inferior quality and heighten the standards of the whole population" by abortion and sterilization...The bill further states that those with certain diseases such as hepatitis, venereal diseases, or mental problems can be banned from marrying in order to prevent these diseases from spreading. However, according to the NCNA, the bill does not state whether euthanasia will be adopted to kill congenitally deformed children because, it says, "the international community has not come to a conclusion on the issue."

Needless to say, the international community reacted very negatively to the proposal, some saying it was reminiscent of the experiments carried out by the Fascist dictatorships of the 1930s and 40s (NCNA, Dec. 20, *China Daily*, Jan 4, 1994 and CNCR #2270).

State Commission Bans Celebrations

The State Education Commission banned the celebration of Western holidays such as Christmas to help maintain "stable cultural traditions" and to promote "the outstanding national life of China" (CNCR #2163).

Controls Tighten on Muslims

Li Ruihuan of the Party's Politburo Standing Committee and Chairman of the CPPCC, told leaders of the Chinese Islamic Association to tighten control over Chinese Muslims after widespread protests in 1993 (CNCR #2272).

Health Project for China

The World Bank expects to work with the Chinese Government on an in-depth study of health financing in 1994. According to reports, the projects would aim to improve basic services, especially preventive care.

Health is the theme for the year's World Bank Development Report and China, with the world's largest population, is one of the major objects of the World Bank's study project.

The studies have already concluded that China faces three major health challenges: 1) the danger of losing some of the gains made against diseases; 2) the dilemmas posed by new patterns of disease; 3) the unmet basic health needs of about 100 million Chinese who still live in poverty (*China Daily*, Dec. 1, 1993).

Life Expectancy Rises in China; Infant Mortality drops

According to a top health official in Beijing, the average life expectancy in China has risen to 71 years. In 1949 when the People's Republic was founded, the average was 36 years. The government also claims that the infant mortality has been reduced to 14.5 per thousand in the urban areas and 23 per thousand in the rural areas. In 1949, according to the same source, the number of deaths per thousand was 200 (*CATW*, No. 128, December 1993).