

# *China Church and News Update 2000*

## *A Review*

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### **News concerning bishops in Mainland China**

#### *Ordination of bishops*

Liu Yuanren, Bishop of Nanjing and President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of China, was the chief ordaining bishop for five ordinations on January 6, 2000. The ordinations were conducted without papal approval in the Nan Tang Cathedral (the South Church) in Beijing. The new bishops are:

**Lu Xinping** of Nanjing,

**Zhan Silu** of Fujian Province

**Fang, Zhanping** of Tangshan in northern Hebei Province

**Jin Daoyuan** of Changzhi in central Shanxi and

**Su Changshen** of Baoding in Hebei Province

#### *Other episcopal ordinations*

**Joseph Li Lian'gui** ordained Bishop of Xianxian (Cangzhou) on March 20, 2000.

**Michael He Jinmin** and **Matthew He Xiande** ordained at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province on May 14, 2000.

**Zhao Fengchang** ordained Bishop of Yanggu and apostolic administrator of Linqing, Shandong Province on May 7, 2000.

**Bishop Joseph Wang Dianduo**, an Augustinian Recollect friar, of Heze, secretly ordained Bishop of Shangqiu, in 1996, now installed as Bishop of Heze Diocese, Shandong Province on April 1, 2000.

**Matthew Cao Xiangde** of Hangzhou ordained on June 25 without an apostolate mandate from of the Holy See.

**Joseph Li Mingshu** ordained Bishop of Qingdao Diocese, August 13, 2000.

#### *Bishops arrested or held in detention during the year*

**Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo** arrested in January and released around February 3.

**Bishop John Yang Shudao** of Fuzhou, arrested on February 10, 2000, now released;

**Bishop James Lin Xili** of Wenzhou;

**Bishop James Su Zhemin** of Baoding;

**Bishop Xie Shigang** of Mindong;

**Bishop Zhang Weizhu** of Xianxian;

**Bishop Han Dingxiang** of Handan, Hebei;

**Bishop Zeng Jingmu** of Yujiang Diocese, formerly in Jiangxi Province; released on October 30.

**Auxiliary Bishop Jiang Ming Yuan** of Zhao Xian, Hebei Province;

**Auxiliary Bishop Francis An Shuxin** of Baoding;

**Bishop Wang Chonglin** of Zhaoxian, Hebei.

Besides bishops, numerous priests, Sisters, a large number of Catholic laymen and women were detained during the course of the year. Members of the Protestant House Churches were also detained as well as many members of the Falun Gong.

### *Deaths of Bishops*

**Bishop Anthony Zhong Quanzhang** (79), of Meizhou, Guangdong Province, died of liver cancer on January 28, 2000.

**Bishop Ignatius Kung Pinmei** (98), of Shanghai died in Connecticut, USA, on March 12, 2000.

**Bishop Han Daoyi** (80) of Kaifeng, Henan Province, died on October 27, 2000.

**Bishop Simon Qu Tianxi** (80) of Changsha, Hunan Province, died on November 2, 2000

### **Other news**

February 17: Beijing releases a White Paper entitled *Fifty Years of Progress in China's Human Rights*. The Paper affirms that the Chinese today enjoy more human rights than they did 50 years ago.

March 3-15: The National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultation Conference takes place in Beijing.

March 4: Hong Kong's Diocesan Synod, the second in the diocese's history, opens on March 4, 2000. It is slated to last for about one year. The Synod consists of some 200 members.

- March 5-15: Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan of Beijing and Father Huang Bingzhang of Shantou attend the third session of the Ninth National People's Congress. Matters under discussion include proposing laws against corruption, returning church properties taken during the Cultural Revolution, strengthening the autonomy of religion, and the developing of the northwestern part of the country.
- March: In late March, the students of the National Seminary in Beijing move from the Handian district to a larger campus in Beijing's south rural area, in Daxian county. There will be no ceremony to commemorate the event for some time to come since lack of funds has delayed the completion of the project. Several buildings, including the chapel, are still to be built. The time estimated for completion is from four to five years.
- April 18: Bishop Jin Luxian officiates at the installation of a new bronze Marian statue placed on top of the Sheshan Basilica in Shanghai. The new statue is a replica of the original damaged during the Cultural Revolution. Sheshan Catholics donated 300,000 yuan for the project. When the basilica was restored in the 1980s, a cross had been put where the Marian statue once stood. The cross has now been relocated to the Sheshan Regional Seminary next to the basilica.
- May 18: The Pope celebrates his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday at a concelebrated Mass with 8,000 priests. The ceremony takes place in St. Peter's Square. In his homily the Holy Father asks for prayers for priests, especially for those who have left the ministry. He encourages those who have left to seek the dispensation necessary to release them from their priestly duties.
- June 15: After being closed for 60 years, the Monte Corvino Seminary in Xiazhuang, Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, reopens. The former major seminary was named after the Franciscan and first archbishop in China, John of Montecorvino, who was invited to China in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Kublai Khan.

- July 25: Cardinal John Baptist Wu celebrates the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his episcopal ordination on July 25, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Hong Kong. The Cardinal is joined in the Eucharistic celebration by over 100 members of the local clergy, and the church packed full with some thousand religious and laity, both local and expatriate.
- August 15-20: Millions of youth gather in Rome for the World Youth Day. About 1,000 are from the China Mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. Although there is no official delegation from the Mainland, priests, nuns, seminarians and lay people from the Mainland who are in Europe at the time attend the events.
- August 28-31: Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan of Beijing, CCPA chairman and vice-president of the government approved Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church of China, leads a seven member delegation to attend the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual leaders at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Delegates include leaders of the China Christian Council, the Buddhist Association of China, the Taoist Association of China, the Chinese Islamic Association and the director of China's Religious Affairs Bureau, Ye Xiaowen. More than 1,000 religious and spiritual leaders attend the summit and discuss ways to promote peace, eliminate poverty and protect the environment in cooperation with the United Nations.
- September 14-16: Cardinal Etchegaray, president of the Central Committee for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, is invited to participate in a symposium on "Religion and Peace," sponsored by the Italian-Chinese Cultural Association. Following the symposium, the Cardinal is invited to visit Beijing and Shanghai where he meets with church officials and visits the seminaries in Beijing and Shanghai. The Cardinal's request to meet with some members of the underground church is denied.

September 27-October 1: The Holy Father appoints Hong Kong Cardinal John Baptist Wu as his envoy to the first National Mission Congress of the Philippines.

September 27: Ye Xiaowen, director of the State Administration of Religious Affairs, issues "Rule for the Implementation of the Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Foreigners within the Territory of the People's Republic of China."

According to Ji Wenyuan, the director of the Religious Affairs Bureau in Beijing, the number of religious believers in Beijing now exceeds 500,000. This is approximately 3.9% of Beijing's 12.8 million people. Of these more than 40,000 are Catholic and 25,000 are Protestant.

November 11: President Jiang Zemin and Bill Clinton agree to resume talks on human rights, interrupted in May.

November 16: Census takers in Hunan Province, contrary to the rules for taking the census, are reporting on families who have violated the One-Child policy. The government's Family Planning agency is fining any family with one child too many 3,500 *yuan* (US\$ 422).

### ***Two events threatened to derail progress in Sino-Vatican relations***

During the course of the year, two events threatened to derail any progress made so far in Sino-Vatican relations, and to undermine whatever unity that may have developed up to now between the Church in China and the Universal Church, and between the Universal Church and the government. These were the ordinations of bishops without papal mandate on January 6 and June 25, and the canonization of 120 China martyrs on October 1. Below is a synopsis of these two events:

#### ***Ordinations without papal mandate***

January 3: The year opens with many rumors that diplomatic ties between the Holy See and China are imminent.

January 4: The Vatican learns that Open Church officials are scheduling ordinations for January 6. Rome warns that the

election and ordination of Chinese bishops without Rome's approval can seriously damage any progress made in Sino-Vatican relations. "The Vatican regrets the decision by the Catholic Church in China...to ordain three new bishops," stressing that this will only add to already existing obstacles to normalize relations between Beijing and the Vatican.

- January 6: China ordains five bishops without Vatican approval. Coadjutor Bishop of Hong Kong, Joseph Zen, calls this an "act of confrontation."
- January 6: Over 130 teachers and seminarians of the National Seminary boycott the ordinations saying that they are "against the principles of the faith and against the Catholic Church."
- January 7: Many express the wish that it would have been better for China and the Vatican to dialogue about the ordinations before going ahead. Many brand ordinations "a mistake."
- January 21: Both the members of the underground church and official church personnel experience uneasiness on the ordinations. In view of the positive thrust toward Sino-Vatican relations, many express the opinion that the action of the Chinese government cannot be justified. The ordinations could have been delayed to secure the approval.
- February 16: Angelo Sodano, Vatican Secretary of State says that unofficial channels of communications had been established between the Holy See and Beijing.
- June 6: Zhu Rongji, Chinese Premier, confirms that there have been many contacts on both sides and talks are "underway" between China and the Holy See.
- June 24: Vatican issues statement warning of "severe sanctions" against bishops ordained without papal approval.
- June 25: Matthew Cao Xiangde ordained bishop of Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, without papal approval.

### ***Canonization of the China Martyrs***

March 13: News of the 120 China martyrs to be canonized brings joys and worries among Church leaders in the Mainland. One bishop says that the Church in China will certainly celebrate this important event. Another bishop says that his diocese may not celebrate the event at all. Still another maintains that since this is a religious affair and of long ago, the government will not see it as the Vatican interfering in China's internal affairs. Still another responds that "The government may not be happy about the canonization since historically, these martyrs died during a nationalistic uprising."

March: 14: The announcement of the canonization of the 120 China martyrs brings great joy to the people of Hong Kong. When asked whether the canonization would affect Sino-Vatican relations, Bishop John Tong, Auxiliary Bishop of Hong Kong, replies that the matter is purely religious and should not be politicized.

March: 14: In expressing its displeasure at the forthcoming canonization, the Chinese government through a spokesman from the Foreign Ministry says, "We hope the Vatican will not do anything again that wounds the feelings of the Chinese."

September 13: Chinese throughout the world prepare to celebrate the canonization of the China martyrs. Mainland priests, nuns, seminarians and lay people in Europe rejoice at the prospect of joining in the celebration. Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau set up activities to celebrate the event.

September 20: Chinese officials warn Cardinal Etchegaray during his trip in China that the canonization is putting a great deal of pressure on the Catholic Church in China. They object to the canonization since, they maintain, the event contradicts the Chinese version of history. School texts now teach that the 1900 Boxer Rebellion during which many of the martyrs died was a "correct anti-imperialist movement," and this is what is presently taught in China's schools. The Foreign

Ministry issues a strong statement accusing the Vatican of distorting history, of canonizing monstrous criminals and mixing up right and wrong, adding that the Vatican's action is "extremely hurtful to the feelings of the Chinese people, and to the dignity of the Chinese nation, and will not be tolerated by the government and the people of China."

September 25: The Vatican insists that the canonization is a strictly religious event. The choice of date, October 1, is a very sore point since it coincides with China's National Day.

September 27: Xinhua reiterates China's grave concern over the planned canonization of so-called "martyrs" because it tampers with history.

September 27: China imposes strict controls over the liturgies of October 1. Clergy are forbidden from mentioning the event. The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church in China join the government in denouncing some of the martyrs to be canonized. People are pressured to attend political meetings and to criticize the event. Some Catholics and priest argue with officials during the propaganda sessions.

September 28: Church leaders from Hong Kong and Taiwan defend the canonization in spite of criticism from the China government and official church.

October 1: A crowd of 100,000 pilgrims gather in St. Peter's Square for the canonization of the 120 China martyrs, an African Canossian Sister, Josephine Bakhita, and two foundresses of religious communities: Mary Joseph of the Heart of Jesus Sancho di Guerra, Basque, and Katherine Mary Drexel, an American. The Pope thanks God for "the holiness of these sons and daughters of China." He adds, "through these canonizations the Church only intends to recognize the martyrs as an example of courage and coherence, and to honor the noble Chinese people."

China's Foreign Affairs Ministry expresses "utmost indignation and "strong protest" against a "canonization" ceremony held by the Vatican....This event "will exert a grave negative impact on the normalization of Sino-Vatican



relations and the Vatican should be held responsible for all this.” He also accused some of the foreign missionary martyrs of taking part in the imperialist invasion of China, raping, looting and committing other heinous crimes.

The Chinese government expresses “the height of indignation” over the canonization of 120 martyrs killed in China between 1648-1930. Michael Fu Tieshan says, “To choose today’s date to canonize those so-called saints is a clear insult and humiliation. Today is a great holiday that celebrates the liberation of the Chinese nation from the invader and from the violent robbery of the imperialists and colonialists.”

October 2: In a long address to a large group of pilgrims, the Pope personally responds to some of the China’s attack on the martyrs. He also asks pardon for any human faults the European missionaries who were proclaimed saints may have committed.

October 5: Beijing through an agent in Hong Kong asks the Hong Kong church to keep the celebrations low key. The Hong Kong Diocese decides to proceed with the celebrations as planned.

October 10: China suspends visas of Hong Kong pilgrimage tours to China. Others also denied visas or asked not to come for events in the mainland as planned.

October 29: Hong Kong celebrates the canonization with a solemn Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.