

China Church and News Update

October 2005 – December 2006

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Ordination of Bishops

2005	
Oct. 18	Father Paul He Zeqing, age 37, was consecrated Auxiliary Bishop of Wanxian in Sichuan. He was ordained a priest in 1993.
Oct.	Father Martin Wu Qinjing, age 37, was secretly consecrated for Zhouzhi, Shaanxi, by ailing Bp. Li Du'an, with Vatican approval. His consecration was not announced until May 22, two days before Bishop Li Du'an died.
2006	
Apr. 20	Father Joseph Xu Honggen, age 45, was consecrated Bishop of Suzhou in Jiangsu, with Holy See and government approval.
Apr. 30	Father Joseph Ma Yinglin, age 41, was consecrated Bishop of Kunming in Yunnan without Holy See approval. He was ordained a priest in 1989.
May 3	Father Joseph Liu Xinhong, age 41, was consecrated Bishop of Wuhu in Anhui without Holy See approval. He was ordained a priest in 1990. The ordination of these two bishops without Holy See approval was the biggest setback in Sino-Vatican diplomacy in 2006.
May 4	In response to the episcopal ordinations of Fathers Ma Yinglin and Liu Xinhong, the Holy See's Press Office issued a statement on the position of the Holy See.
May 7	Father Paul Pei Junmin, age 37, was consecrated Coadjutor Bishop of Shenyang in Liaoning with Holy

	See and government approval. He was ordained a priest in 1992.
May 14	Bishop Zhan Silu of Mindong, Fujian, was ordained in Beijing at Epiphany 2000, but was finally installed in an almost empty official church. He put the mitre on his own head. Almost all the Catholics in Mindong belong to the underground Church..
Nov. 30	Father Wang Renlei was ordained Coadjutor Bishop of Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, without Holy See approval. It was the third such ordination (in addition to those in April and May) to take place in 2006.

Death of Bishops

2005	
Oct. 12	Unofficial Bishop Peter Zhang Boren of Hanyang in Hubei, age 90. He was ordained a priest in December 1942, and a bishop in 1986.
Oct. 27	Fr. Zhang Chang, administrator of Hengyang in Hunan, age 94. He was ordained a priest in 1936.
Dec. 3	Bishop Matthew Pan Deshi of Baoding in Hebei, age 81. He was ordained a priest in 1950 and a bishop in 1991.
2006	
Feb. 23	Bishop Joseph Sun Yuanmo of Linfen (Hongdong) in Shanxi, age 86. He was ordained a priest in 1948 and a bishop in 1982.
Feb. 28	Bishop Peter Fan Wenxing of Hengshui in Hebei, age 85. He was ordained a priest in 1948 and a bishop in 1981.
Mar. 18	Bishop Yu Chengcai of Haimen in Jiangsu, age 89. He was ordained a priest in 1946 and a bishop in 1959.
May 24	Bishop Li Du'an of Xi'an in Shaanxi, age 79. He was ordained a priest in 1951 and a bishop in 1987. He was one of China's best-known bishops. Bishop Martin Wu Qinjing of Zhouzhi, whose consecration was only announced on May 22, presided at the funeral, dressed as a priest but wearing his episcopal ring. The government was not happy with this.

June 29	Retired Bishop Guo Wenzhi of Qiqihar in Heilongjiang, age 88. He was ordained a priest in 1948 and a bishop in 1989.
July 16	Bishop Augustine Zheng Shouduo of Xinjiang (Yuncheng) in Shanxi, age 90. He was ordained a priest in 1949 and a bishop in 1982.
Sept. 24	Bishop Andreas Zhu Wenyu of Chifeng in Inner Mongolia, age 87. He was ordained a priest in 1957 and a bishop in 1990.

Arrests/Beatings/Releases

2005	
Nov. 7	Bishop Jia Zhiguo of Zhengding in Hebei, age 71, was arrested for the eighth time since June 2004, along with two of his priests, and taken for political education. The bishop was released on Nov. 21, as soon as President Bush flew out of Beijing. The usual suspected dissidents are often rounded up before a big meeting or the arrival of foreign dignitaries and detained for a week or two.
Nov. 22	Armed thugs escorted a bulldozer to demolish an old school that had once been church property next to the cathedral in Xi'an. Some Sisters who stood in the way were beaten, so 50 Sisters in habit marched in the street the following Sunday. Bp. Dang agreed to pay a hefty 6.5 million RMB for the return of church property. The motive seems to have been greed for real estate, not any hatred of the faith.
Dec. 11	Father Wang Wenzhi, 20 years ordained and the senior underground priest in Yongnian in Hebei, was arrested.
Dec. 16	48 priests and 2 Sisters from Taiyuan went to Tianjin to reclaim former church property, where some of them were beaten by 30 armed men in plain clothes. But the city government finally admitted that the church owned the site.
2006	
June 25	Bishop Jia Zhiguo of Zhengding in Hebei, age 72, was arrested for the ninth time since June 2004. He was ordained a bishop in 1980.

June 28-30	Underground Bishop Joseph Wei Jingyi, age 48, and one priest were detained just long enough to miss the death and funeral of his predecessor, Bishop Paul Guo Wenzhi
July 30	Auxiliary Bishop Yao Liang of Xiwanzi in Hebei, age 82, was arrested.
Aug. 24	Bishop An Shuxin, age 57, of Baoding, Hebei, was released after ten years in prison.
Sept. 11-16	Bishop Martin Wu Qinjing of Zhouzhi in Shaanxi was arrested at night from the open cathedral and released to a large crowd of waiting Catholics six nights later, but suffering from a mild concussion.
Sept. 25	Two priests who had traveled to Rome from Wenzhou in Zhejiang, vicar general Shao Zhoumin and chancellor Jing Sunian, were arrested a few hours after returning to China. They will be sentenced for leaving China on false passports.
Oct. 27	Sequel to the event of the beating up of Sisters in Xi'an on November 22, 2005: The Sisters reconciled with the offending parties outside of court on October 27, 2006. The accused acknowledged the serious injury they had inflicted, and showed profound sorrow and repentance. The Sisters forgave them, showing them the loving attitude of Christ, and hoped that they could return to the mainstream of society. The Sisters hoped that the tribunal would treat the case in a lenient manner.

General Information

2005	
Oct. 2-23	Four Mainland bishops who were invited by Pope Benedict XVI to attend the Synod of Bishops in Rome could not leave China, and poor health was not the only reason.
Nov. 13	An explosion at a chemical factory in Jilin dumped 100 tons of benzene into the river, shutting the water supply to Harbin. If the pollution had not reached

	Russia, the cover-up might have lasted longer than ten days.
Nov. 15-17	Holy Spirit Study Centre in Hong Kong celebrated its Silver Jubilee with an informal sharing on China.
Nov. 19-20	U.S. President George Bush visited Beijing and attended Protestant services at Gangwashi Church, a fact not mentioned in the Chinese media.
Nov. 21-27	Cardinal Jean-Luis Tauran, retired Foreign Minister of the Vatican, visited Taiwan and met with President Chen Shuibian.
Dec. 11	Protests against the World Trade Organization meeting in Hong Kong led to arrests, but charges were later dropped.
Dec. 31	Catholics of the Taiyuan Cathedral in Shanxi, which was rebuilt after the Boxer Rebellion, celebrated its 100 th anniversary with a procession around the church and on city streets. They also commemorated 26 local martyrs from 1900.
2006	
Feb. 11	Diocese of Shanghai launches Year of Evangelization with 2000 Catholics in attendance at Xujiahui Cathedral for the 500 th anniversary of the birth of St. Francis Xavier.
Feb. 22	Pope Benedict XVI names 15 new cardinals, including Joseph Zen of Hong Kong, all of whom received red hats in Rome on March 24. Chinese Catholics were happy, but the government was initially at a loss as to how to respond.
Mar. 4	President Hu Jintao lists Eight Glories and Eight Disgraces (Love the motherland, don't harm it...Work hard, don't be lazy...) for the National People's Congress. A brief campaign to promote the latest version of socialist morality makes big news for several weeks.
Mar. 8-10	Liu Bainian, vice-chair of CCPA, sees Vatican plot to undermine Communism in naming Card. Zen, who counterattacked.

Apr. 11	Jinde Charities (Catholic Social Service Centre) of Shijiazhuang in Hebei became the first Catholic non-profit organization to be registered with the Chinese government.
May 16	Liu Bainian said that consecrating bishops independently of the Vatican is “the arrangement of Christ,” so China’s policy since 1958 will continue. “The Chinese Catholic Church will be doomed to fail if the bishops it appoints go against China’s socialist system,” he said.
May 19	United Front and SARA began a meeting in Beijing with 20 bishops to stress patriotism and correct stance in wake of consecrations without Vatican approval. Illicit consecrations of bishops are the biggest church story of the year.
June 9	Catholics happy that censors stop screening of <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> after 3 weeks in Chinese cinemas. Fear of Catholic unrest may have been the reason for not letting the movie play for a full 6 weeks.
July 14-29	Seminar and retreat in London for 87 Chinese priests, Sisters and lay people who are studying in England, Ireland and continental Europe.
July 28 – Aug. 5	Fourth Asian Youth Day held for first time in Hong Kong, with over 500 participants from over 20 nations and areas, but officially no one came from the Mainland. The topic was “Youth: The Hope of Asian Families.”
Sept. 27	Pope Benedict XVI meets privately with Cardinal Zen in Rome; will consider Zen’s request to retire as Ordinary of HK in January 2007.
Oct. 7-21	Dr. Rowan Williams tours five cities to see churches and government officials. He is the third Archbishop of Canterbury to visit China since Mao died. The head of the Anglican Church sees progress but admits greater freedom is needed.
Oct. 9	North Korea tests atomic bomb; tension in the region.
Oct. 11	The Central Committee formally endorsed Hu’s call for a Harmonious Society, with emphasis on improving the

	rural majority. This comes amid worsening air and water pollution, and a Gini Coefficient that has risen above 0.4 (measuring a serious gap between rich and poor). Class struggle is history, and officials admit that religion can play a positive roll in promoting a Harmonious Society.
Oct. 14-15	A seminar on "Christian Faith and Modern Media" was held in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, to commemorate the 15 th anniversary of Faith Press. On October 14, Father Zhang Shijiang, founder and present director, thanked all those who had supported Faith Press over the years.
Oct. 18-22	First Asian Mission Congress in Chiang Mai, Thailand, drew 1000 delegates (but none from Mainland China) on the theme "The Story of Jesus in Asia: A Celebration of Faith and Life."
Oct. 23	Hu Jintao marked the 70th anniversary of the conclusion of the Long March with a call for Party unity in the fight against corruption. Several high officials in Shanghai were caught embezzling huge sums.
Oct. 31	Hong Kong Church websites inaccessible from China, and many Church websites in China were also inaccessible from Hong Kong, at least for a few days. This is called the Great Firewall of China.
Dec. 6-11	The Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society celebrated the 10 th anniversary of its foundation, with a day long seminar presented by four visiting scholars. This was followed by its 3 rd International Young Scholars' Symposium on "Christianity and Chinese Society and Culture," during which 33 papers were presented.