
CATHOLIC CHURCH UPDATES: March 2010

11 items

Agenzia Fides - www.fides.org

ASIA/CHINA

Perpetual vows, church consecrated, and pilgrimage characterize Solemnity of Annunciation of the Catholic community on the mainland

Beijing (Agenzia Fides) – A ceremony of vows, the consecration of a church, a pilgrimage, and celebrations for patronal feasts marked the great celebration of the Solemnity of the Annunciation for the Catholic community in the mainland. According to information received by Fides, Chinese Catholics, who are very devoted to the Virgin Mary, lived March 25 in communion with the Universal Church.

Three religious of the Chinese province of the Congregation of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary took perpetual vows on March 25, also receiving the missionary mandate from their superior. Eighteen priests concelebrated the Mass, which was attended by over 600 faithful and 32 sisters.

Bishop Joseph Li Lian Gui, Bishop of the Diocese of Xian Xian, consecrated the new church dedicated to the Annunciation on the day of the Solemnity. The original church was built in 1904 in a Gothic style. Destroyed in 1958, it was rebuilt on its ruins in 1990, influenced by architectural design and the limited resources at hand. The faithful did not consider the church sufficiently dignified and solemn and they wanted to rebuild a new church, to pay another tribute to Blessed Virgin Mary. Thus, with the effort of all the local faithful, in 2008 they were able to begin building the new church, which is now finally completed and consecrated.

The small church dedicated to the Annunciation in the village of Wang Zong, in the city of Ning Guo, Province of An Hui, welcomed – as they do every year at this time - thousands of pilgrims from all over the country, to celebrate the Annunciation of the Lord. The faithful of the parish, all of limited economic conditions, prepared the best rooms of their homes and cooked the best dishes to offer their brothers and sisters in the faith. In fact, the modesty and simplicity of this beautiful church has attracted the attention of the faithful, transforming it into a popular place of pilgrimage. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 29/03/2010)

Hong Kong Sunday Examiner
<http://sundayex.catholic.org.hk/>
Sunday 28 March 2010

Former Vatican representative in Hong Kong made archbishop

VATICAN (Agencies): The former head of the Holy See's study mission in Hong Kong, Monsignor Eugene Nugent, was ordained a bishop in St. Peter's Basilica on March 18, by Vatican secretary of state, Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone. Bishop John Tong Hon of Hong Kong, and his predecessor, Joseph Cardinal Zen Ze-kui participated in the ceremony.

Many from the Chinese Catholic community in Rome, including priests and religious sisters, were among the around 1,000 people in attendance. The Irish diplomat had, from 2001, until this year, headed the Holy See's Study Mission in Hong Kong from where he monitored the life of the Church in China and liaised with people there.

Bishop Tong said that "the new archbishop is a good and spiritual man, faithful to the principles of the Church."

Cardinal Zen praised him as "a good man" in that role, both "diligent and wise," who did "a lot for the Church in China."

At thanksgiving Mass on March 19, the feast of St. Patrick, in the Pauline chapel of the Basilica of Sta. Maria Maggiore, Cardinal Zen expressed thanks to the new archbishop for his decade of work in Hong Kong. He said "We, the Church in Hong Kong were fortunate to have him in our family for so many years." He noted that "he came quietly, with no diplomatic status, almost unknown to both the Church community and the society" and "for many years, he shouldered, single-handedly, a huge amount of work for the Church in China, with many letters in a language he had no chance to learn."

The cardinal noted that "the Beijing government didn't show much kindness to this man who was the de facto nuncio to China," but hoped that "the Church in Hong Kong, didn't cause him much trouble."

Cardinal Zen acknowledged that Archbishop Nugent "took all the heat and burden of the extremely complicated situation of the Church in mainland China" and how painful it was for him to work with people he could not meet face-to-face; only communicating through secret correspondence brought, at risk. The cardinal noted that this far-from-ideal mode of communication caused additional suffering when "misunderstanding and complaints arose in response to his hard work and loving care."

The archbishop's one and only visit to China came in 2003, when he represented the Holy See at an international meeting. According to a February 22 report in AsiaNews.it, he was

denied a visa on two subsequent occasions in 2004. The archbishop also expressed his hope of visiting each bishop, both in the official and unofficial Church communities, who is in communion with the pope.

Cardinal Zen said that he and Bishop Tong are proud of having worked with Archbishop Nugent and expressed gratitude for his friendship and trust. He said “We hope to be able to tell our brothers and sisters on the mainland the whole truth of your love and service to them one day, when better times come.”

As a token of gratitude, the archbishop was presented with four Chinese characters: ????, which mean, “bears the hardships and the complaints.”

Archbishop Nugent is the new apostolic nuncio to Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles. He is succeeded in Hong Kong by a Croatian, Monsignor Ante Jozic.

UCA News - www.ucanews.com

VATICAN - Vatican's China commission urges bishops to work for unity

Published Date: March 26, 2010

By Gerard O'Connell, Special Correspondent in Rome

VATICAN CITY (UCAN) — The Vatican's Commission for the Church in China is urging bishops in China to “work for the growth of unity, faith and life among all Catholics” and avoid “gestures that run counter to communion with the Pope” and “create difficulties” for their respective Church communities.

The commission's position was made in a press statement yesterday following its third plenary meeting in Rome from March 22-24.

A source told UCA News the commission is making it clear to China bishops that to live in a fully coherent way, their communion with the Pope means they must avoid whatever contradicts this and causes distress and confusion to their communities.

This means, he said, bishops in China should avoid celebrating the Eucharist with “illegitimate” bishops (a bishop who does not have papal approval), participating in episcopal ordinations if one of the consecrating bishops is illegitimate, and participating in meetings that are incompatible with the Church's constitution and Catholic doctrine, such as the National Assembly of Catholic Representatives, expected to be held later this year.

Sources described the fourth paragraph of the statement, which talked about promoting unity within the Catholic Church in China, and to overcome the difficulties it faces in relations with civil society, as the most important point to emerge from the plenary meeting.

The commission discussed three other major topics: formation; unity and reconciliation in the Church; and Sino-Vatican dialogue.

AsiaNews - www.asianews.it

03/25/2010 17:31

VATICAN – CHINA

Card. Zen appreciates "clarity" and work of the Vatican Commission on the Church in China

by B. Cervellera - A. Lam

Among most salient points, the stress on communion with the pope, avoiding participation in contradictory meetings, reference to bishops and priests still in prison, the responsibility of Chinese bishops in forming church personnel. Accord and integration among the different members of the Commission.

Vatican City (AsiaNews) - Card. Joseph Zen has expressed great satisfaction for the "clarity" of the final communiqué of the Vatican Commission on the Church in China. In an initial response to the statement released today, the retired bishop of Hong Kong, tells AsiaNews that "the clarity of the statement allows many more Catholics in China to understand the current and most essential issues". Among them he cites the request made to the bishops for greater communion with the pope by not participating in meetings that contradict this communion, and mention made of bishops and priests who "are deprived of liberty."

The Vatican Commission for the Church in China was called at the express request of Benedict XVI after the publication of his Letter to Chinese Catholics in 2007. This weeks gathering (March 22 to 24) was its third plenary session, and drew together 30 people from members of the Curia (Secretary of State and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples), Chinese bishops from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau, various experts and members of religious congregations and missionary institutes. At the end of the meeting, the group met the Pope, who thanked them all for their commitment.

The press statement – the full text of which is available on our website - highlights four issues which were addressed during the session: the formation of seminarians, priests and religious and the role of bishops in this field; unity and reconciliation of bishops, priests and faithful of the official and underground communities; communion in the Church and the

relationship with the pontiff; relations with the Chinese government and the situation of imprisoned bishops and priests.

The training of religious personnel is a key issue for China. Because of the difficulties of the past and present, China lacks professors, experts, spiritual directors, while Chinese society is evolves at a spiralling rate. An important affirmation of this statement is that it has designated the bishops of the diocese as responsible for formation: they should therefore be accorded to them "full dignity and responsibility as leaders of the church communities...engaged firsthand in the task of formation".

On communion in the Church and with the pope, the participants were unanimous in the desire that "all bishops in China are increasingly engaged in fostering the growth of unity of faith and life of all Catholics" and so they must avoid "making gestures (such as, for example, celebrating the sacraments, ordinations of bishops, attending meetings) that contradict communion with the Pope, who appointed them shepherds, and creating sometimes agonizing difficulties within their ecclesial communities. "

This clarification is important because it actually refers to the gathering of the National Assembly of Catholic representatives, due to be held in the second half of 2010. This meeting is considered superior to the bishops and which "democratically" decides pastoral guidelines, candidates to the episcopate, etc It is one of the structures deemed "incompatible with Catholic doctrine" (see the Pope's Letter to Chinese Catholics, n.7). The Assembly is set to decide the future president of the Patriotic Association and the head of the council of Chinese bishops (a sort of Episcopal conference not recognized by the Holy See).

In the past months Card. Zen has explicitly asked Chinese bishops not to participate (See: AsiaNews.it, 03/01/2009 Cardinal. Zen asks Chinese bishops for more courage) and his appeal must have been accepted because the Patriotic Association has continuously postponed the date of the meeting, perhaps because it is unable to find a sufficient number of prelates willing to be manipulated.

The Cardinal welcomes this emphasis on communion with the Pope and says that now "the Commission, despite having members with different histories and experiences, after three years has reached a maturation of shared understanding" despite the different "sensibilities that are mutually enriching".

In order to enhance the communion of the Church in China with the universal Church, the statement recalled the World Day of Prayer May 24, feast of Our Lady of Sheshan, the national shrine not far from Shanghai, where for decades Catholics have come together to pray for all China. Since the pope has mentioned this in his letter, every year the police create difficulties making it almost impossible to reach the shrine.

"With the day of prayer for China, May 24 – says Card. Zen - the universal Church is reminded of China. Through the spiritual ties difficulties can be overcome and we can seek greater unity in the Church community and among the pastors and the people. "

Finally, the statement calls for "a respectful and open dialogue between the Holy See and the governing authorities" of China, to the benefit of the Church and civil society. But it also remembers "those bishops and priests, who have long been deprived of liberty."

As often noted by AsiaNews, currently there are three underground bishops in China in police custody, segregated in unknown places and dozens of priests in prison or forced labour camps and dozens more bishops unable to carry out their ministry. Card. Zen has often asked the Chinese government for their release (see: AsiaNews.it, 24/09/2009 Cardinal Zen calls on China to release imprisoned bishops on its 60th anniversary).

Vatican Information Service

MEETING CONCERNING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CHINA

VATICAN CITY, 25 MAR 2010 (VIS) - The Holy See Press Office released the following communique late this morning:

"The commission established by Benedict XVI in 2007 to study questions of importance concerning the life of the Catholic Church in China met in the Vatican from 22 to 24 March".

"The participants examined the question of the human, spiritual and pastoral formation of seminarians and consecrated people, as well as the permanent formation of priests, focusing particularly on their spirituality. The difficulties that emerge in the field of formation and new pastoral requirements - connected with the task of evangelising Chinese society which is so dynamic and complex - represent considerable challenges. The bishops of the Catholic Church in China, who are recognised as having full dignity and the responsibility to guide their ecclesial communities, are personally committed to formative work and, in union with them, fraternal collaboration will continue to be offered".

"In the light of Holy Father's Letter to Chinese Catholics of 27 May 2007, the commission reflected on the way to promote unity within the Catholic Church in China, and to overcome the difficulties she faces in her relationship with civil society. Progress made in response to the Pope's call for authentic ecclesial communion was noted with satisfaction, a communion which is not expressed without a personal commitment to searching for truth and spiritual reconciliation. In the awareness that the journey of forgiveness and reconciliation cannot be undertaken in a day, there emerged the certainty that the entire Church accompanies this journey and will raise insistent prayers to this end, especially on 24 May, liturgical memory of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Help of Christians, and the Day of Prayer for the Church in

China. The importance of taking tangible steps towards increasing and expressing spiritual ties between pastors and faithful was also emphasised.

"At the same time, the participants expressed the unanimous hope that all bishops in China may become increasingly committed to favouring the growth of unity, faith and life among all Catholics, avoiding gestures (such as, for example, sacramental celebrations, episcopal ordinations and participation in meetings) that run counter to communion with the Pope who appointed them pastors, and create difficulties - sometimes severe difficulties - in the bosom of their respective ecclesial communities.

"In keeping with the desire expressed by the Holy Father in the above-mentioned Letter, the commission reiterates its hope that, through respectful and open dialogue between the Holy See and the government authorities, the current difficulties may be overcome and a beneficial agreement be reached, of advantage to the Catholic community and to social coexistence. In this spirit, the participants join all Catholics in China in constant prayer that those bishops and priests who have long been deprived of their freedom may, as soon as possible, once again exercise their episcopal and priestly ministry in support of the faithful entrusted to their pastoral care.

"In a meeting that took place at the end of the plenary assembly, His Holiness underlined the need of ensuring solid formation, based on friendship with Christ, for everyone preparing for the priesthood or consecrated life. This will be a guarantee of success in personal life and in pastoral work. The Holy Father reiterated the important role played by those in charge of formation and recalled that this is a priority task of bishops. Finally, he thanked the participants for their commitment in favour of the Catholic Church in China".

OP/MEETING/CHINA

VIS 100325 (590)

Vatican Posts Catholic Catechism in Chinese

VATICAN CITY, MARCH 19, 2010 (Zenit.org).- The Holy See added the Catechism of the Catholic Church to the Chinese section of its Web site Thursday.

The Vatican's semiofficial newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, reported today in its Italian edition that an online Chinese version of the Catechism is now available, and that the Code of Canon Law and texts from the Second Vatican Council would become available in that language in the coming months.

The Holy See launched the Chinese section of its Web site a year ago, which includes both traditional and simplified Chinese characters.

The Web site of the Holy See is currently available in eight languages: Italian, English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Latin and Chinese.

CHINA - Catholics back reform of registration system

Published Date: March 11, 2010

GUANGZHOU, China (UCAN) — A UCA News survey of mainland Catholics has revealed that about half believe the household registration system should be reformed rather than abolished.

Zhang Hong, a Chinese journalist, was fired after writing an editorial last week criticizing the registration system, which was run by 13 newspapers.

The March 1 editorial said that the household system had created inequalities of status between urban and rural populations. It urged reforms to ensure equality in job opportunities, healthcare, education and services for the elderly.

The decades-old system has a significant impact on Chinese Catholics, about 80 percent of whom live in the countryside, Church workers told UCA News.

Many rural Catholics are moving to the cities for job opportunities but do not receive retirement benefits or medical insurance as city households do, they said.

Children belonging to a household registered in the countryside are not entitled to free education in the city.

UCA News interviewed 30 Catholics, mostly living in the southern cities but belonging to households registered in rural areas.

Improvements to system needed

Half of the group said they would prefer to see improvements made to the scheme rather than have it scrapped. About 20 percent refused to comment while the remaining 30 percent showed little concern as they said they have no say in government policy.

However, some prefer to keep their rural household because of more preferential government policies granted in recent years, or simply because they cannot afford the cost to change their rural registration to a city one.

The editorial appeal for reform was made before the annual sessions of the National People's Congress, China's parliament, and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body, held March 5-14 and March 3-13 respectively.

Zou, a woman doing business in southern China, told UCA News that she paid more than 4,000 yuan (US\$586) each semester to her daughter's kindergarten in Guangdong.

She lamented the discrimination and other difficulties she had when trying to find a city school for her child.

Another mother, Zeng, said tuition for her two children in a private school costs her 10,000 yuan a year.

Current system seen as restrictive

A priest in Henan province, central China, said reform was imperative as it has caused discriminations between urban and rural households.

"The current system only facilitates the government's management, particularly it restricts movements of religious personnel and political dissidents," he said.

Some of those interviewed said they thought abolition of the system was not necessarily a good thing.

Maria, a Catholic doctor, told UCA News that criminals can hide themselves easily across the vast country if the system did not exist.

"The key is how the government reforms the system to bring in equality," she said.

A school teacher said canceling the system might result in a massive influx of rural students to the cities.

"By then, many village schools may have to close down and city schools may lure outstanding rural students to study to improve their reputation," she said.

The household registration system was introduced in 1958 when the Communist government was following the planned economy model.

With the large rural population of poor farm workers, the system was aimed at limiting mass migration from the rural areas to the cities to ensure some structural stability. It also facilitated the distribution of daily necessities and food.

CH09080.1592 March 11, 2010 61 EM-lines (555 words)

CHINA - Fujian priest detained over youth camp

Published Date: March 11, 2010

FU'AN, China (UCAN) — Police have detained an “underground” priest of Mindong diocese, eastern China, and fined his fellow priests a month after they organized youth camps for university students.

Father John Baptist Luo Wen, 39, pastor of the Holy Family Church, has been in “administrative detention” at a government-run guesthouse in Fu’an city since March 3.

Fathers Guo Xijin, Miu Yong and Liu Maochun received notices of detention but security officers have not taken any action yet, local Catholics said.

Another three priests were fined 500 yuan (US\$73) each. However, Church sources said, “They would rather be detained and will never pay the fine.”

The seven Mindong priests organized four-day winter camps for about 300 Catholic university students in two batches in late January and early February.

Church sources told UCA News yesterday that the priests are now “facing revenge” from public security officers.

In mainland China, public security officials can hold a person in custody for a maximum of 15 days as punishment for violating public order provisions or impose a fine, or both.

Father Luo, who is active in online evangelization, and who uses the Internet name, “Father A Sip of Tea,” had anticipated the outcome.

He told UCA News before the detention that he “would be happy to serve as a witness of God and a follower of martyr-saints.”

On Feb. 3, public security officers arrived at Saiqi Church, where the youth camp took place and ordered the priests to close the event down.

“We decided not to and told the students about the situation. We asked those who were afraid to go home and said that we priests would accompany the remaining ones until the end,” Father Luo said.

Fewer than 20 participants left while some gained support from their parents after phoning home for advice, he said.

The priests were questioned by security officers on Feb. 4, but no one was detained until a month later.

Church sources believed the security officers felt they had lost face and punished the priests as revenge.

Mindong diocese has more than 70,000 Catholics. Most of them belong to the underground Church community led by 86-year-old Bishop Vincent Huang Shoucheng and nearly 60 priests.

CH09079.1592

CCTV - China Central Television

Matteo Ricci exhibition marks anniv.

2010-03-04 09:45 BJT

<http://english.cctv.com/program/cultureexpress/20100304/101647.shtml>

Actually the cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world started long ago. Catholic missionary, Matteo Ricci, introduced western culture, art and science to China during the Ming Dynasty nearly 500 years ago.

A priest and intellectual, Ricci helped created the first cultural bridge between China and the West. 2010 marks the 400th anniversary of his death. An exhibition at Beijing's Capital Museum is showcases his life journey and the communications between China and the West.

A selection of 200 works from leading Italian and Chinese museums are on display at the exhibition. Among the works are paintings by some of the most influential Italian artists of the Renaissance period, including Raphael, Titan and Lorento Lotto. Painter and art critic, Shui Tianzhong, interprets the importance of the paintings.

Shui Tianzhong, Researcher, China Art Academy, said, "Ricci presented many gifts to the emperor, and including portraits of God and the Virgin Mary. Those paintings surprised the ministers and the royal family. From that Chinese started to know western religions, especially Catholicism. It was also the prelude of the art exchange between China and the West."

Ricci's astronomy and geography tools he brought to China are also on display at the museum. The exhibits evoke aspects of Chinese civilization during Ricci's time, including handicrafts, paintings, the language, literature and the three great religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

Ricci was the first person to win the trust of the Chinese, and evoke their curiosity about the western world. The exhibition will run in Beijing until March the 20th, before heading to Shanghai and Nanjing.

Ricci is model for dialogue, mission in globalized world, speakers say

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

ROME (CNS) -- Italian Father Matteo Ricci, the 16th-century Jesuit known for his positive relations with the Chinese, is a model for dialogue and evangelization in the 21st-century globalized society, said speakers at a conference in Rome.

Father Ricci's experience and writings remind people "that there are basic similarities in all human beings, in human nature: hope, suffering, questioning the meaning of life. We all share those whether we are Westerners or Chinese," said Jesuit Father Augustine Tsang Hing-to.

Father Tsang was born in mainland China to a Catholic family, "but I escaped by swimming to Hong Kong -- four hours to Hong Kong, at night -- and then went to the States."

The priest, who now teaches at Fu Jen Catholic University of Taiwan, spoke to Catholic News Service March 1 before speaking the next day at a conference marking the 400th anniversary of Father Ricci's death.

Father Ricci, who was born in 1552 and arrived in China at the age of 30, delved into studies of the Chinese language, culture and Confucianism. His respect for the Chinese gradually paved the way for his dialogue with China's government and cultural leaders.

At the same time, "he was very frank and strict, explicit and direct on the goodness of the Christian faith," Father Tsang said, and "he did not hesitate to point out the defects of Taoism and Buddhism."

While Father Ricci found great fault with what he understood about Taoism and Buddhism, he believed that Confucianism in its purest form was a philosophy open to Christianity. After his death, missionaries developed the so-called "Chinese rites" -- Confucian-based social rituals involving ancestor veneration and offerings to the emperor -- which allowed Chinese converts to preserve elements of their heritage while being Catholic.

Centuries of controversy ensued and although the rites developed after Father Ricci's death, he was so strongly identified with that disputed form of inculturation that his sainthood cause was not opened until the 1980s.

Father Tsang said it was unfortunate that the controversy led some to question Father Ricci's holiness.

It is true, he said, that Father Ricci "was very friendly with the Chinese, respecting the Chinese culture, but in terms of the faith, he was very unabashedly Catholic."

In his speech at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University March 2, Father Tsang said Father Ricci was not so "narrow-minded as to regard non-Christian cultures or religions as nothing good; indeed, he saw quite a lot of compatibility between early Confucianism and Christianity," and recognized that Confucian teachings could be seen as preparing the Chinese to receive the Gospel.

Father Ricci's respect for the Chinese and his commitment to sharing the Gospel with them offer the still-relevant lesson that Christians cannot claim God is at work only among Christians, but at the same time they cannot claim that all religions are equally valid paths to salvation, Father Tsang said.

Father Tsang said the Chinese today need the Gospel just as much as they did in Father Ricci's age.

The country is enjoying economic prosperity, but "there are grave, hidden problems," including the repression of human rights, a growing divide between rich and poor, widespread use of abortion and "alarming pollution."

Father Ricci "did not befriend the Chinese and stop there. He intended to bring them the much greater blessing -- the knowledge of Jesus Christ," he said.

Italian Bishop Claudio Giuliadori of Macerata, where Father Ricci was born, said the Jesuit is still a model for dialogue and evangelization because "he entered into the Chinese culture without losing himself and in a way that allowed him to introduce themes from the Gospel into the culture."

His relationship with the Chinese "took place in the context of dialogue, with respect, but without forgetting that his mission was to bring the Gospel," the bishop said.

Roberto Sani, rector of the University of Macerata, said Father Ricci's example could help people today deal with hopes and fears about their increasing contacts with people of other cultures and religions.

Just as the global expeditions of the 1500s gave Europeans a sense of an expanding world filled with previously unknown cultures, globalization today is challenging people to recognize their common humanity and share their knowledge and beliefs, Sani said.

"Ricci is a model for young people today. He was strong in his faith and culture, but able to establish a real dialogue with the Chinese," he said. "He is a model of a Christianity that does not close itself within four walls, but goes out into the world."

END

Agenzia Fides - www.fides.org

ASIA/CHINA

Catholic Chinese community living Lent intensely: reflecting on Pope's Message and promoting spiritual events for all ages

Beijing (Agenzia Fides) - The Message of Pope Benedict XVI for Lent 2010, entitled "The justice of God has been manifested through faith in Jesus Christ," is the central reference point for the Chinese Catholic communities in living an intense Lent, in communion with the Universal Church. According to information received by Fides, during the formation course held February 22 to 25 in the Ecclesial Base Communities in the village of Zong Wang, in the city of Ning Guo, Province of An Hui, faithful were able to study and ponder the Message of the Pope along with other Catholic communities. As this town is located in the remotest and poorest area, for years the Catholics here have had difficulties in receiving the sacraments regularly and have had to cross the mountains and even take several buses to attend Mass on Sundays. Today, thanks to the priest and nuns, even the faithful were able to read the Pope's recently published Message. In addition, since January 2010 there has also been a monthly celebration of Holy Mass, to ensure "a spiritually happy Lent."

More than 60 faithful of the Cathedral of the Diocese of Jing Xian took part in the retreat held February 22 to 26. During these days, life-long members of the Church met with the newly baptized, to share their experiences of faith, to read Sacred Scripture, for prayer, and for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. According to the priests and religious organizing the initiative, "the retreat is necessary both for living Lent and for preparing for Easter. Also, it is good for spreading missionary awareness among the faithful, to live good Christian lives and keep the fire burning."

The Cultural Center "Bonfire," run by the Salesian Family, founded in 1965 in Hong Kong, published a series of materials to help children live Lent and prepare for a "Happy Easter," with several games like "chess in search of the Risen Lord," Good Samaritan comic strips... According to the Director of the Bonfire Center, these materials help children to learn about the Passion of Jesus, and also pray and reflect on the events surrounding Easter. (NZ)
(Agenzia Fides 02/03/2010)
