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# **Catholic Church In China Updates: 11 updates**

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## **Senior Chinese official vows closer ties with overseas religious circles**

**English.news.cn 2010-05-12 23:26:25**

BEIJING, May 12 (Xinhua) -- China's most senior political advisor, Jia Qinglin, Wednesday said the government would strengthen exchanges and cooperation with overseas religious circles to promote world peace.

"Sticking to the principle of independence and self-governance, we support the country's religious circles to promote exchanges abroad on the premise of equity and friendship," said Jia in a meeting with leaders of the Asian Conference of Religions and Peace (ACRP), who are here to attend the 2010 ACRP executive meeting.

China's religious circles have conducted friendly exchanges with the ACRP, founded in Singapore in 1976, and the Asian religious circles in recent years, contributing significantly to understanding between the peoples of Asian countries and to the region's peace, development and cooperation, said Jia, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

China's religious circles have always enthusiastically taken part in charity work, and the government highly appreciates their efforts to promote economic and social development, said Jia.

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**Asia news - www.asianews.it**

**05/25/2010 12:09**

**CHINA - VATICAN**

## **Our Lady of Sheshan, persecution and division**

**by Bernardo Cervellera**

Chinese Catholics at home and around the world prayed for the Church in China, according to the intention laid out by Benedict XVI in his letter of June 2007. The shrine is a place of encounter between underground and official Christians, the government continues to prohibit pilgrimages. Unity in truth for the Church in China and in relations between Beijing and the Vatican.

Rome (AsiaNews) - On May 24 last, feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, Chinese Catholics at home and around the world prayed for the Church in China, according to the indications laid out by Benedict XVI in his letter of June 2007, where he called for a World Day of Prayer for the Church in China on May 24, the feast day of Our Lady of Sheshan, the national shrine on the outskirts of Shanghai.

Sheshan has always been a place where underground and official Christians and have come together in devotion to Mary. The idea of the Pope, contained in his Letter and again repeated on the feast of Pentecost, is that "faithful in China pray so that the unity among themselves and with the universal

Church will deepen more and more and that the Catholics of the world - especially those who are of Chinese origin - join them in prayer and charity".

Since then and for the last three years the Day of Prayer has been quite successful in Italy and abroad, where the Episcopal conferences have prepared collections and celebrations. But it also had some success in China, despite the resistance of the government and the Patriotic Association and their attempts to stop the faithful on pilgrimage to Sheshan.

Since the Pope first indicated Sheshan as the place to pray for Church unity in China, during the month of May, the Shanghai government has banned pilgrimages to the sanctuary from neighbouring dioceses. Usually in the past, an estimated 20, 000 faithful would gather on Our Lady's hill on May 24. Instead for the past three years, only a few thousand have gathered there, all of them from Shanghai. Other faithful are forbidden from approaching the sanctuary, by the deployment of police and "volunteers" who stop the faithful on the roads leading to the shrine, at a distance of several kilometres.

But the priests and bishops have not lost heart and have instead turned the day into a diocesan appointment. Many of the testimonies that we have received speak of Masses, Eucharistic Adoration and Benedictions, pilgrimages to local shrines. Everyone, the communities of official and underground believers, prayed for unity and brotherhood between the two branches of the Church. Everyone prayed for the young bishops of the official Church, so they may be reinforced in their witness and in communion with the successor of Peter, everyone also prayed for all the bishops of the underground Church who are still in prison.

From this point of view, the Day has been a really great success because it generates common expectations and concerns in all the faithful.

But it is above all unity between bishops and between them and the pope that needs to be strengthened. The government in Beijing is not implementing the same cruel persecution of the past. Even underground bishops who have disappeared are perhaps in some isolated place, but lack freedom. The real persecution that it is implementing is division. By arresting bishops who call for freedom of religion, Beijing warns official bishops, who are perhaps a bit fearful, that they risk losing what little freedom of worship is granted them.

At the same time, Beijing does not seem to prevent new Episcopal ordinations approved by the Vatican (as in the case of Xiamen, Hohhot, Haimen). But it makes sure that excommunicated bishops are included among concelebrating bishops, thus making unity with the underground faithful increasingly difficult, while at the same time making a clear gesture of contempt towards the Pope. Only last March, the China-Vatican Commission released a text which stated that "Chinese bishops have the full dignity and responsibility of leading the Catholic community, they should avoid actions that go against communion with the Pope, such as Episcopal ordinations, concelebrations and public meetings with illegitimate bishops".

We here at AsiaNews believe that working for unity in truth of the Church in China is the most important step, even more so than diplomatic relations between Beijing and the Vatican. Official bishops should be concerned for their brother bishops from the underground community who have disappeared, and underground communities should be more friendly and merciful towards the faithful of the official community.

The thirst for God in China is immense and the population is now nauseated by materialism. Mutual love can give birth to abundant fruit for mission.

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**UCA News - [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)**

## **Mainland Catholics pray for China Church**

**Published Date: May 24, 2010**

**By [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) reporter, Shanghai**

Catholics in mainland China prayed on May 24, the day dedicated to prayers for the the Church in the country, although many were unable to visit the popular Sheshan Marian shrine in a Shanghai suburb.

The number of pilgrims has not returned to the level before Pope Benedict XVI issued his letter to Chinese Catholics in June 2007 dedicating the feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians as the special prayer day and mentioning the Sheshan shrine in particular, say local sources.

This was because the government-sanctioned Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church in China have issued notices since then discouraging cross-province pilgrimages during the Marian month of May, the sources say.

This year's notice said that as the World Expo is currently taking place in Shanghai, Catholics who wish to go to Shanghai should follow the arrangements set by their provincial Catholic Patriotic Associations and local dioceses, and then get approval from Shanghai diocese.

"These so-called 'arrangements' actually means forbidding pilgrimages," the sources said.

A priest in a southeastern province told UCA News his parishioners have wanted to make a pilgrimage to Sheshan for more than three years now.

He and other clergy in various parts of mainland China have decided to hold Masses and other devotions in their parishes on the prayer day.

About 3,000 local Catholics gathered at Sheshan on May 24 to celebrate the shrine's feast day.

Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Xing Wenzhi of Shanghai presided at the prayer session and procession, and at Mass at the shrine's Minor Basilica of St. Mary.

Pilgrims prayed for the Church in China, the World Expo, and victims of disasters.

In Rome, Pope Benedict mentioned the day of prayer at his reflection following the midday Regina Caeli at St. Peter's Square on May 23, Pentecost Sunday.

CH09794/1603 May 24, 2010 33 EM-lines (303 words)

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**Agenzia Fides - [www.fides.org](http://www.fides.org)  
ASIA/CHINA**

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## **Chinese Catholics celebrate Pentecost in communion with Universal Church, on eve of World Day of Prayer for the Church in China**

Beijing (Agenzia Fides) – According to information received by Fides, the Chinese Catholic world celebrated the Solemnity of Pentecost in communion with the Universal Church, marking the World Day of Prayer for the Church in China issued by Pope Benedict XVI celebrated today, May 24, Feast of Mary, Help of Christians.

In the parish of Qing Shan in Inner Mongolia, 17 catechumens received the Sacraments of Christian Initiation during the Mass on Pentecost, in the presence of thousands of faithful. On the occasion, the faithful also celebrated in anticipation the World Day of Prayer for the Church in China, consecrating the Church in China to Our Lady Help of Christians and making a "spiritual pilgrimage" to the Shrine of Our Lady of She Shan, as indicated by the Pope. They also prayed for the earthquake victims of Yu Shu. Similar solemn celebrations were held in many other churches on the mainland.

According to reports from the Kong Ko Bao (the Chinese version of the diocesan bulletin), in Hong Kong, local Bishop John Tong presided at the Solemn Mass for Pentecost with over 2,500 newly baptized. He prayed in particular that "the Holy Spirit would descend upon them, giving them vitality so that they can deepen in their relationship with God, with others, and with the Church, so that together we can witness to the Gospel." (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 24/05/2010)

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### **Vatican Information Service**

#### **POPE PRAISES GUARANTEES OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN MONGOLIA**

VATICAN CITY, 20 MAY 2010 (VIS) - Luvsantseren Orgil, the new ambassador of Mongolia to the Holy See, today presented his Letters of Credence to the Holy Father. "As your nation celebrates the twentieth anniversary of its passage to democracy", the Pope told him, "I express my confidence that the great progress made in these years will continue to bear fruit in the consolidation of a social order which promotes the common good of your citizens, while furthering their legitimate aspirations for the future".

Speaking English, the Pope expressed his "solidarity and concern" for people "who suffered as a result of the harsh winter and the effects of last year's torrential rains and flooding. ... Environmental issues, particularly those related to climate change, are global issues and need to be addressed on a global level", he said.

"The establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the Holy See, which took place after the great social and political changes of two decades ago, are a sign of your nation's commitment to an enriching interchange within the wider international community", said the Holy Father. "Religion and culture, as interrelated expressions of the deepest spiritual aspirations of our common humanity, naturally serve as incentives for dialogue and co-operation between peoples in the service of peace and genuine development".

Pope Benedict likewise expressed his appreciation "for the constant support of the government in ensuring religious liberty. The establishment of a commission, charged with the fair application of law and with protecting the rights of conscience and free exercise of religion, stands as a recognition of the importance of religious groups within the social fabric and their potential for promoting a future of harmony and prosperity".

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"The Church's primary mission is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In fidelity to the liberating message of the Gospel, she seeks also to contribute to the advancement of the entire community. It is this that inspires the efforts of the Catholic community to co-operate with the Government and with people of good will by working to overcome all kinds of social problems.

"The Church", the Pope added, "is also concerned to play her proper part in the work of intellectual and human formation, above all by educating the young in the values of respect, solidarity and concern for the less fortunate. In this way, she strives to serve her Lord by showing charitable concern for the needy and for the good of the whole human family", he concluded.

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**UCA News - [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)**

## **Catholics urged to pray for mainland bishops**

**Published Date: May 19, 2010**

**By [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) reporter**

HONG KONG (UCAN) — Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kian has urged Hong Kong Catholics to pray that bishops in mainland China would heed the Pope's instructions laid out in his 2007 letter to Chinese Catholics.

The retired bishop of Hong Kong was speaking to about 70 Catholics at a May 18 gathering to observe the annual prayer day for the China Church. The event was organized by Hong Kong diocese's Justice and Peace Commission.

Salesian Cardinal Zen said the biggest problem the Church faces in China, that of state agencies placing themselves above the bishops and dictating the life of Church communities, remains unsolved three years after the letter was published.

He asked those present to pray for mainland bishops to act in line with the Pope's letter on the matter.

"So far all new bishops in recent episcopal ordinations have had papal mandates, but illicit bishops are still concelebrating in those Masses," the cardinal said.

Though the Holy See has not denounced this, "Catholics know which bishops are good."

During the event, participants also listened to recorded sharings from mainland Catholics.

These spoke of the hardships faced by mainland bishops, the loneliness experienced by parish priests and the insufficiency of spiritual formation in the mainland.

Cardinal Zen told UCA News he would invite about 100 Salesian bishops and cardinals who will be meeting in Turin, Italy, from May 21-25, to pray for the China Church.

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The 2007 papal letter declared May 24, the feast of Mary Help of Christians, as “a day of prayer for the Church in China.”

Or Yan-yan, the Justice and Peace Commission’s project officer, said last year the organization petitioned the central government’s liaison office in Hong Kong for more religious freedom on the mainland and the release of detained bishops and priests.

Since 2008, some local parishes have also organized novenas and prayers on or before May 24 to mark the special day.

HK09750.1602 May 19, 2010 35 EM-lines (318 words)

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## **Religious vows and retreats taking place in several female religious communities on mainland**

Beijing (Agenzia Fides) – According to information received by Fides, several congregations of women religious on the mainland are intensely living the Marian month of May, in communion with the Chinese faithful, who have a great devotion to Mary. There are many congregations that have chosen this time of year for religious professions and retreats.

On the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, May 13, two Sisters of the diocesan congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Diocese of Nan Chong, in the Province of Si Chuan took perpetual vows. More than 600 faithful attended the solemn liturgy concelebrated by 11 priests. 25 representatives of other religious congregations were present from Chong Qing, Wan Zhou, Gui Zhou Hai Men, etc.. Earlier in this Marian month, five nuns of the Congregation of the Heart of Our Lady of China took their temporary vows in the Marian shrine of Hu Xian, located on a mountain top in the Province of Shaan Xi. Three novices and two postulants of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Diocese of Qing Dao recently celebrated the rite of entry into the novitiate and postulancy. The ceremony brought special joy in the diocese, as the congregation is finally seeing new vocations after 20 years. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 15/05/2010)

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**UCA News - [www.  
ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)**

## **CHINA - Hopes for Ricci’s helper to become a saint too**

Published Date: May 10, 2010

SHANGHAI, China (UCAN) — Catholics are hoping that Paul Xu Guangqi, the first Catholic in Shanghai, may also be proclaimed a saint along with Father Matteo Ricci.

Italian Jesuit Father Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and Catholic Chinese imperial official Paul Xu Guangqi (1562-1633) collaborated closely in Beijing to translate Western texts on mathematics, hydraulics, astronomy, trigonometry and geography into Chinese.

They also translated Confucian classics into Latin so as to introduce the dominant Chinese philosophy to Europe.

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Father Ricci arrived in Beijing in 1601 and the Chinese emperor allowed him to stay in the capital until his death on May 11, 1610. His native Macerata diocese in Italy re-launched the process of his beatification in January.

Some Shanghai Catholics told UCA News that they hoped Xu could also enjoy the same honor, as their diocese would begin a similar process soon.

Jesuit Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian of Shanghai, 94, is known as a “fan of Xu Guangqi,” Church sources said.

They pointed out that the bishop has included “Guangqi” in the names of many diocesan organizations including the publishing house, social service center, formation center, a school and a home for the elderly.

Xu, a Shanghai-born bureaucrat, agricultural scientist, astronomer and mathematician of the Ming dynasty, first met Father Ricci in 1600 and was impressed by his knowledge and holiness.

Xu was baptized three years later and took on the name of Paul. He then invited another Jesuit priest to spread the Gospel in his birthplace. His family became the first Catholic family in Shanghai.

Xu died in Beijing in 1633 and was buried in today’s Xujiahui district in downtown Shanghai, where his family used to live. In 1847, Jesuit missionaries built their missionary headquarters on a large piece of land in Xujiahui.

Ricci exhibition in Shanghai

Father Ricci and Xu translated Euclid’s Elements, the mathematical and geometric treatise by the Greek mathematician, and their work is on display at the Shanghai Museum from April 3-May 23.

Shanghai is the second stop of the touring exhibition titled Matteo Ricci: An Encounter of Civilizations in Ming China, which would coincide with the Shanghai World Expo, which runs from May to October.

The exhibition has attracted crowds of visitors, including local priests, nuns and laypeople. They described it as “worth seeing” and “very fruitful.”

Maria, a laywoman told UCA News that she was moved at seeing many books, musical instruments, religious statues, priests’ garb of the 16-17th centuries, as well as Father Ricci’s first catechism book in Chinese, a world map he drew, and an ancient costume worn by Confucian scholars at the exhibition.

“As Catholics, we have to understand [that Father Ricci] contributed not only to the local Church, but also to the development of science and culture of China,” said Maria, who said she had read Father Ricci’s biography.

The exhibition is organized by Italy’s Marche Region, which covers Macerata, to mark the death anniversary of Father Ricci and the 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Italy. The 113 exhibits come from museums in mainland China and Italy.

**AsiaNews - [www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it)**

**05/08/2010 12:32**

**CHINA - VATCAN**

## **New bishop in Xiamen, approved by the Vatican. Present a bishop of Taiwan**

**by Zhen Yuan**

Msgr. Cheng, bishop emeritus of Taipei attends. Also present illegitimate Bishop Zhan Silu . The Diocese of Xiamen has long cultivated relationships with the Church in Taiwan. AsiaNews interview with the new bishop, Mgr. Cai.

Xiamen (AsiaNews) - With the approval of the Holy See, Mgr. Cai Bingrui was ordained bishop of Xiamen (Fujian) this morning, in the presence of a bishop of Taiwan and five bishops from China, including an illegitimate bishop.

Today, China also celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of China. This is the third Vatican-approved and Chinese government-recognized Episcopal ordination within a month, after Hohhot and Haimen dioceses.

The celebration was presided over by Mgr. Fang Xinyao Linyi (Shandong). Other bishops present included: Mgr. Zhan Silu of Mindong, Xiao Zejiang of Guizhou, Xu Honggen of Suzhou, Li Mingshu of Qingdao and Mgr. Joseph Cheng Tsai-fa, Bishop Emeritus of Taipei (Taiwan).

All of them, with the exception of Mgr. Zhan, are legitimate and in communion with the Holy See. Archbishop Cheng, 77, is a native of Xiamen, who fled to Hong Kong in 1950 and later went to Taiwan, and then became bishop emeritus in 2007.

More than 60 priests of Xiamen and neighbouring dioceses attended the celebration, along with more than 1,600 faithful. After Mass, there was a reception, followed by a seminar.

Before his ordination, Mgr. Cai told AsiaNews that his diocese has received several groups of Catholics from Taiwan, and he hoped to continue the dialogue and exchange with the Church on the other side of the Strait of Taiwan.

He said that the priorities of the diocese are primarily the formation of priests and nuns, especially from the viewpoint of spirituality. He also wants to build a structure for organizing the diocese to facilitate evangelization and pastoral work.

Bishop Cai was ordained priest in 1992. His diocese has 30,000 Catholics, served by 11 priests and 16 nuns. Currently, a deacon is in the Philippines for his studies.

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**UCA News - [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)**

**CHINA - Shanghai diocese puts Ricci in focus for year**

**Published Date: May 12, 2010**

SHANGHAI, China (UCAN) — Shanghai diocese launched its “Year of Matteo Ricci” on May 11, the 400th death anniversary of the pioneering Italian Jesuit missionary to China.

The special “year,” which ends on Dec. 11, aims to boost evangelization work among priests, nuns and laypeople, said Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian of Shanghai at the ceremony.

The event was held in Sheshan Seminary on the outskirts of the city.

The Matteo Ricci year is “not only a commemoration, but also has practical significance” for Catholics on how they can continue the priest’s work of adapting the faith to Chinese culture, said the prelate.

Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Xing Wenzhi of Shanghai said Father Ricci followed Chinese customs, understood Chinese culture well and treasured his friendship with Chinese intellectuals.

He “deserves to be the model for our diocese in spreading the Gospel in these fast-changing times,” he said.

Massimo Roscigno, the Italian consul general in Shanghai who attended the event, said people should follow Father Ricci’s example of forging “friendship between China and Italy.”

He pointed out that if the priest had not had help from his best Chinese friend Paul Xu Guangqi, he could not have completed his writings in Chinese or translated Chinese classics into Latin.

Bishop Xing told UCA News that the diocese would ask all priests to promote Father Ricci’s spiritual values.

Activities during the seven-month program include a seminar, a hymn and prayer gathering, and a priestly ordination to close the special “year.”

The May 11 ceremony was held after the conclusion of the diocesan pilgrimage held at Shanghai’s Sheshan Marian Shrine the same day. About 1,000 Catholics gathered at the hilltop Minor Basilica of St. Mary to pray for strength to follow in the footsteps of Father Ricci.

After the Mass, they were given leaflets promoting the sainthood causes of Father Ricci and Xu.

CH09689.1599 May 12, 2010 30 EM-lines (305 words)