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## Catholic Church Updates: June 2010: 14 Updates

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

**ASIA/CHINA**

Churches, convents and homes under water but the faithful remain strong in faith and hope:  
27 June Day of Prayer

Shi Jia Zhuang (Agenzia Fides) – Due to burst dams in southern China because of torrential rains on 13 June in 10 provinces of China, churches, chapels, mission stations and other places of worship as well as homes, are inundated. Priests, religious and lay faithful contacted by Jinde Charities, China's Catholic Charity, have asked for prayers for the suffering people. Several communities have called a day of prayer for flood victims next Sunday 27 June, to pray to the Lord to fill the stricken people with faith, hope, consolation and give them the strength to overcome this difficult moment. Jinde Charities is working with many other Catholic groups to provide assistance with maximum collaboration from the local Church.

According to information sent to Fides by the director and workers of Jinde Charities, floods caused serious damage in the local Catholic community, but the people are resisting with faith and hope, working first to save inundated churches rather than homes.

Fr Xhang Guan Xiong of Gan Zhou, in Jiang Xi Province, said “the burst dam caused panic among the people. But the faithful ran first to the church to save the sacred vessels and sweep out the water”. Fr Cao Xiao Xian, parish priest at Lin Chuan, in Fu Zhou province, the most affected area, visited by China's premier Wen Jia Bao, told Fides: “many village halls used for Mass are under water. However the priests went all the same to visit basic ecclesial communities. In places impossible to reach we have assured the faithful of our prayers and keep in contact by telephone. In some churches, priest's homes and convents flood water is over one metre deep. Contact has been lost with Rev Ai Sheng and his community, we are still searching for them, please pray for him, for his people and for all of us ”.

Don Yu Peng Fei says sadly: “our centuries old church suffered serious damage, and we are heart-broken”. The Catholic community in Nan Ping, Fu Jian province are mourning the death of one of the faithful, 4 others are seriously injured and the harvest has been lost. “The Lord is our only hope and refuge. We continue to pray with confidence that our brothers and sisters in the Lord will as always give us spiritual and material help ”. Rev Yao

Shi Wei of the parish of De Jiang, diocese of Gui Yangha, ordained a priest only 20 days ago, said the 800 year old church is inundated and many chapels have cracks in supporting walls.

In the meantime China's civil affairs minister has raised the state of emergency to grade 2. According to a statement issued by the same Ministry at 4pm local time, 23 June, floods in 10 provinces of southern China had affected 29,395 people, causing 211 dead, 119 missing, 2,408 evacuated and damage for about 5 billion euro. Furthermore, 3 motorways, 3 national roads and 9 provincial roads are closed, and train services from Beijing to the south have been suspended. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 24/06/2010 - righe 42; parole 534)\_

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

## **Farms and churches hit by China flooding**

Published Date: June 24, 2010

By ucanews.com reporter, Nanchang

Farms and churches are among the many victims of the central and southern China floods that have claimed 200 lives and forced over two million evacuations.

Low-lying churches in Jiangxi province have been washed out by rain, which started on June 13 and culminated in a 196 millimeter downpour in 24 hours on Tuesday.

The homes of many Catholics were also ruined by flood water. Father John Li Suguang, vicar general of Nanchang diocese in central China reports that his parishioners in Fuzhou city are working together to deliver daily necessities to the worst affected community members.

Farmers are braced for devastating losses as their crops have been washed away entirely. Father Li estimates that up 800 Catholic smallholders will be affected.

Farms in Guizhou and Guangxi provinces have also been hit. Bishop Joseph Tan Yanquan of Nanning pointed out that this latest disaster follows a protracted drought, which caused over 300,000 hectares of crops to fail in Guangxi.

He said he and Catholic farmers have been regularly praying in Mass that they can sow a second crop in the next half of the year.

Meanwhile, the China Meteorological Administration has warned that more flood rains are on the way.

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

**06/23/2010 18:12**

**CHINA**

Haimen diocese to pray for Church unity in China

by Zhen Yuan

The new bishop, Mgr Shen Bin, 41, was ordained two months ago. Clergy and nuns meet in prayer to mark the end of the Year for Priests, pray for Church unity in China and strengthen the faith. The diocese is preparing to launch its first summer youth camp, which is open to non-Catholics.

Nantong (AsiaNews) – Some 20 priests and nuns met in Haimen Diocese, Jiangsu province, to mark with a Taizé prayer the end of the Year for Priests and for Church unity in China (pictured).

Bishop Shen Bin, 41, told AsiaNews that this prayer vigil was “the first activity the local clergy and nuns celebrated after my ordination”. The meeting was held in the curia office. Fr Gu Hongjian, originally from the diocese, led the prayer.

“Mgr Shen reminded participants that they are witnesses to the love of Christ every day,” Sister Ji Yangfeng said, and that “they do so by respecting life and helping the faithful deepen their spiritual growth”.

At present, all the priests and all the nuns involved in pastoral work in the diocese are under the age of 50.

Taizé prayers “have become popular among the diocese’s Catholics,” the prelate said. “Silence, meditation and meeting with God through music as well always inspire our young people to reflect and pray.”

The diocese is currently preparing other activities as well. The first diocesan summer camp will begin on 1 August, the bishop said, with hopes that it might also attract non-Catholic youth.

The clergy is also preparing for its quarterly and biannual meetings to consolidate pastoral work and management.

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In his first two months as bishop, Mgr Shen visited local parishes and the Marian shrine of Langshan, which drew thousands of pilgrims in May, the month dedicated to the Virgin, with some coming from afar.

The diocese of Haimen has 30,000 Catholics, 9 priests and 21 nuns. It is relatively young, established in 1926. The last bishop, Mgr Shen's predecessor, was Mgr Yu Chengcai, who died in 2006.

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

**ASIA/CHINA**

### **The Catholic community coordinated by Jinde Charities organises aid for flood victims**

Nan Ning (Agenzia Fides) – The Catholic community of mainland China is once again in front line to provide assistance for victims of recent floods on 13 June in various parts of southern China, which caused 199 deaths and damage for about 5 billion euro, and left thousands of people homeless. According to information collected by Fides, the director of Jinde Charities, China's Catholic Charity agency, immediately contacted Bishop Tan Yan Quan, in the diocese of Nan Ning, Guang Xi Province, the area most affected by the floods, to coordinate rescue work and assistance. The Bishop sent his priests and some diocesan office workers to the most critical areas to assess the situation and the real needs of the people. Jinde Charities workers are now planning operations for each individual community, according to needs. According to official figures issued by China's Civil Affairs Ministry, on 22 June, at 11am local time floods had affected 10 provinces and some 29,135 people in southern China, causing 199 dead, 123 missing persons, 2,376 evacuated from flooded homes and farmland, and damages worth 5 billion euro.

Moreover, Jinde Charities with CSSC Xi An (Catholic Social Service Centre of the Diocese of Xi An), Caritas Internationalis and Caritas in many countries, continue to provide assistance to people in the Autonomous Region of Yu Shu, Qing Hai Province, affected by a violent earthquake on 14 April. Between 17 and 19 June they distributed dietary supplements worth 10,012 euro, for 658 children aged 0 to 5 years, suffering from malnutrition due to the earthquake. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 22/06/2010 - righe 24; parole 274)

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

### **Chinese seminary sees surge in local vocations**

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**Published Date: June 23, 2010**

**By ucanews.com reporter, Hengshui**

A northern Chinese diocese has seen a dramatic rise in the number of people applying to join its minor seminary, a phenomenon its rector attributes to the recently-concluded Year for Priests.

The St. Joseph Minor Seminary in Hengshui diocese has accepted 20 out of 22 local candidates who sat for an entrance examination on June 13.

It took in a total of 27 applicants last year, only half of whom were local applicants and the rest from other dioceses.

The rise in the number of local applications is due to vocation promotion activities during the Year for Priests, says seminary rector Father Joseph Zhang Jianfang.

He said that at least five applicants came from the parish he visited on April 25, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, to promote the priesthood.

“Despite our small number of Catholics, we have had relatively many priestly vocations,” said Father Zhang.

Hengshui diocese has about 30,000 Catholics.

The St. Joseph Minor Seminary has trained more than 350 young men since it was established in 1994. Fifty-two of them have become major seminarians and seven have been ordained priests.

Even though not all its students entered the major seminary, most of them have become pillars of their parishes, said Father Zhang.

About 80 Catholic teenagers are presently studying in the seminary. Four of its recent graduates have decided to enter the major seminary.

The institution follows China’s six-year high school curriculum plus Bible, catechism and spirituality classes.

The three-story building in Shenzhou county also includes a multimedia lecture room, a computer room and language, physics and chemistry laboratories.

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Since the diocese does not have a major seminary, 43 of its major seminarians are continuing their studies at regional seminaries around China. Several others are studying in Italy and the Philippines.

Mainland China has 30 minor seminaries with about 630 students, according to the Church-run Hebei Faith Press.

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## **Papal Address on 400th Anniversary of Matteo Ricci's Death**

### **"An Example of Balance Between Doctrinal Clarity and Prudent Pastoral Action"**

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 21, 2010 (Zenit.org).- Here is a Vatican translation of the address Benedict XVI delivered May 29 upon receiving several dioceses of the Marches region on the 400th anniversary of the Italian Jesuit missionary Father Matteo Ricci (1552-1610).

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Your Eminences,  
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,  
Distinguished Authorities,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to meet you to commemorate the fourth centenary of the death of Fr Matteo Ricci, SJ. I offer a fraternal greeting to Bishop Claudio Giuliodori of Macerata-Tolentino-Recanati-Cingoli-Treia, who is leading this numerous pilgrimage.

With him, I greet my Brother Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of the Marches and their respective Dioceses, the Civil, Military and Academic Authorities; the priests, seminarians and students, as well as the Pueri Cantores.

Macerata is proud of such an illustrious citizen, a religious and a priest! I greet the Members of the Society of Jesus to whom Fr Ricci belonged and in particular Fr Adolfo Nicolás, Superior General, the Jesuits' friends and collaborators and the educational institutes connected with them. A thought also goes to all the Chinese.

This great missionary a true protagonist of Gospel proclamation in China in the modern age, following the first evangelization there by Archbishop Giovanni da Montecorvino reached the end of his earthly life in Peking on 11 May 1610.

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The extraordinary privilege he was granted, unthinkable for a foreigner, of being buried in Chinese soil is proof of the high esteem in which he was held, both in the Chinese capital and at the Imperial Court itself.

Today it is also possible to venerate his tomb in Peking, fittingly restored by the Local Authorities. The many initiatives promoted in Europe and in China in honour of Fr Ricci show the keen interest that his work continues to kindle in the Church and in the different cultural contexts.

The history of the Catholic missions includes figures important because of their zeal and courage in bringing Christ to new and distant lands; but Fr Ricci is a unique case of a felicitous synthesis between the proclamation of the Gospel and the dialogue with the culture of the people to whom he brought it; he is an example of balance between doctrinal clarity and prudent pastoral action. Not only his profound knowledge of the language but also his assumption of the lifestyle and customs of the cultured Chinese classes, the result of study and its patient, far-sighted implementation, ensured that Fr Ricci was accepted by the Chinese with respect and esteem, no longer as a foreigner but as the "Master of the Great West".

Among the important figures of Chinese history in the "Millennium Museum", Peking, only two foreigners are recorded: Marco Polo and Fr Matteo Ricci.

This missionary's work presents two dimensions that must not be separated: the Chinese inculturation of the Gospel proclamation and the presentation to China of Western culture and science. The scientific aspects often attracted greater interest but the perspective with which Fr Ricci entered into relations with the Chinese world and culture should not be forgotten. It consisted of a humanism that viewed the person as part of his context, cultivated his moral and spiritual values, retaining everything positive that is found in the Chinese tradition and offering to enrich it with the contribution of Western culture and, above all, with the wisdom and truth of Christ.

Fr Ricci did not go to China to take it the science and culture of the West but rather to bring to it the Gospel, to make God known.

He wrote: "For more than 20 years, every morning and every evening I have prayed with tears to Heaven. I know that the Lord of Heaven takes pity on living creatures and pardons them.... The truth about the Lord of Heaven is already in human hearts. But human beings do not immediately understand it and are not inclined to reflect on such a matter" (Il vero significato del "Signore del Cielo", [the true meaning of the "Lord of Heaven"], Rome 2006, pp. 69-70).

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And it was precisely while he was proclaiming the Gospel that Fr Ricci discovered in those with whom he was conversing the request for a broader exchange, so that the encounter motivated by faith also became an intercultural dialogue; a disinterested dialogue, free from financial or political ambition and lived in friendship. This makes the work of Fr Ricci and his followers one of the loftiest and happiest peaks in the relationship between China and the West.

The "Treaty of Friendship" (1595), one of his first and best known works in Chinese, is eloquent in this regard. In Fr Ricci's thought and teaching science, reason and faith find a natural synthesis: "Anyone who knows Heaven and earth", he wrote in the preface to the third edition of the world map, "can prove that the One who rules Heaven and earth is absolutely good, absolutely great and absolutely one. The ignorant reject Heaven, but knowledge that does not relate back to the Emperor of Heaven as to the first cause is no knowledge at all".

However, admiration for Fr Ricci must not lead us to forget the role and influence of his Chinese conversation partners. The decisions he made did not depend on an abstract strategy of inculturation of the faith but rather on events as a whole, on the meetings and experiences that he continued to have, which is why what he was able to achieve was also thanks to his encounter with the Chinese.

He experienced this encounter in many ways but deepened it through his relationship with a few friends and followers, especially his four famous converts, "pillars of the nascent Chinese Church".

The first and most famous of them was Xu Guangqi, a native of Shanghai, a literary man and a scientist, mathematician, astronomer and agricultural expert who reached the highest ranks in the imperial bureaucracy, an integral man of great faith and Christian life, who was dedicated to serving his country and occupied an important place in the history of Chinese culture.

It was he, for example, who convinced and helped Fr Ricci to translate into Chinese Euclid's Elements, a fundamental work of geometry, and who persuaded the Emperor to entrust the reform of the Chinese calendar to Jesuit astronomers.

Li Zhizao, another of the Chinese scholars who converted to Christianity, likewise helped Fr Ricci in completing the last and most developed editions of the world map that were to give the Chinese a new image of the world.

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He described Fr Ricci in these words: "I believed him to be a unique man because he lives in celibacy, steers clear of intrigue in his office, speaks little, has an orderly conduct and this is his daily practice he cultivates virtue secretly and serves God ceaselessly".

Thus it is right to associate with Fr Matteo Ricci his closest friends who shared with him the experience of faith.

Dear brothers and sisters, may the memory of these men of God dedicated to the Gospel and to the Church, their example of fidelity to Christ, their deep love for the Chinese people, their commitment of intelligence and study and their virtuous lives be an opportunity to pray for the Church in China and for the entire Chinese people, as we do every year, on 24 May, addressing Mary Most Holy, venerated in the famous Shrine of Sheshan in Shanghai; and may they also be an incentive and an encouragement to live the Christian faith intensely, in dialogue with the different cultures but in the certainty that in Christ true humanism is fulfilled, open to God, rich in moral and spiritual values and capable of responding to the deepest desires of the human soul.

Today I too, like Fr Matteo Ricci, express my profound esteem to the noble Chinese people and to their 1,000-old culture, in the conviction that a renewed encounter with Christianity will bear abundant fruits of good, just as it then fostered a peaceful coexistence among peoples. Many thanks.

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

### **Consolidate the faith and nurture pastoral zeal: Theology Seminar for priests in Feng Xiang**

Feng Xiang (Agenzia Fides) – Consolidate the faith and nurture pastoral zeal were the main goals of a Theology Seminar organised for priests in the diocese of Feng Xiang, Shaan Xi province of mainland China, and held at the close of the Year for Priests. According to information sent to Fides, the week of meetings, organised by the diocesan Pastoral Commission, was open to all the priests of the diocese and the speakers were chosen from among priests who completed their studies abroad in recent years.

The theme for reflection was "the priestly life, pastoral and evangelising theology". The Seminar was presided by the diocesan Bishop Li Jing Feng, among the Synod fathers invited

by Pope Benedict XVI to take part in the Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist held in Rome in 2005, although, sad to say, he was unable to make the journey. The elderly Bishop explained with great precision a “Pastoral Manual for Diocesan Priest”, and he led prayers of Adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament and a solemn procession on the feast of the Sacred Heart, celebrating the close of the Year for Priests in communion with the universal Church and in front of an icon of the patron saint of parish priests Saint Jean Marie Vianney.

Senior priests presided daily Masses in turn, speakers illustrated themes connected with the mission of priests and offered in depth reflection on the Vatican II decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis* on the Ministry and Life of Priests. A women religious shared with the priests her experience of a life lived in the “light of prayer”. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 17/06/2010 - righe 23; parole 232)

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

## **Chinese dioceses mark end of Year for Priests**

**Published Date: June 17, 2010**

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

Mass confessions, meals for parents of priests and speech-making contests for seminarians made for much variety at closing ceremonies for the Year for Priests in mainland China.

About 2,000 people joined a day-long June 12 closing event in Wenzhou diocese, Zhejiang province.

In a nod to priests’ patron St John Vianney, organizers of the event set up 10 sun umbrellas as makeshift confessional booths that drew long queues.

Reviewing the year, diocesan chancellor for the Wenzhou “underground community”, Father Paul Jiang Sunian described the 33 days of formation and spiritual activities as “unprecedented”.

The program included a study day on Pope Benedict’s Apostolic Letter for the Year for Priests, a canon law seminar on marriage as well as monthly retreats.

Four young priests also joined an international pilgrimage to France, birthplace of St John Vianney, Father Jiang recalled, while others took part in a pilgrimage to Guiyang diocese in southwestern China.

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The diocese also focused on charitable activities, including the collection of 26 tons of clothes destined for the homeless in Myanmar, Father Jiang added.

Meanwhile, Bishop Peter Feng Xinmao of Hengshui in Hebei province, chose to emphasize the role of the parents of priests, including his own, with a meal in their honor on June 11, feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

At a closing Mass in a rural church and with 35 priests, Bishop Feng reminded the crowd of 1500 to pray for priests and cooperate with them in evangelizing.

Earlier, the Catholic regional seminary in the Hebei provincial capital Shijiazhuang closed the Year with a speech-making context for seminarians and a celebration of the first anniversary of the seminary choir.

The government-recognized Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church in China and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) also emphasized the significance of the Year for Priests.

A circular from the two bodies encouraged local churches to organize retreats for priests and suggested other spiritual and formation activities for both priests and lay people.

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

## **Church failed Foxconn workers, say migrants**

**Published Date: June 11, 2010**

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

Catholic employees at a Foxconn factory in Shenzhen have criticized a lack of Church support for migrant workers following a string of suicides since January.

Some migrant workers from the company have set up their own online mutual support site in the wake of at least 13 suicides or attempted suicides at the firm. They were joined by some Catholics working in other Shenzhen factories.

Catholics at the firm have little contact with local Christians.

"I am unfamiliar with the local environment and know few parishioners as I sometimes have to work Sundays," Chen, a Catholic layman who works for the iPhone-manufacturer, said.

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He said the Church did not pay enough attention to migrant workers and called for a special group to organize weekend activities to strengthen faith and team spirit. He also called for Church visits to help those unable to attend church regularly.

In the absence of the local Church support, Chen and about 30 other Catholics set up the online forum where they can share their joys and worries.

Father Joseph from Shenzhen parish admitted his church needed to mobilize the faithful to care for migrant workers.

“Our action has been slow, probably due to immaturity of our faith formation,” he told ucanews.com. However local Catholics do have a sense of social concern, he said.

Workers should reach out to Catholic families and then to non-believers to gradually form “a positive, healthy and spiritual community,” Father Joseph said.

Foxconn offers better fringe benefits than other factories in Shenzhen but management is strict and lacks concern for its workers, said Chen.

“My work is dull and repetitive,” he told ucanews.com. Although the company in Shenzhen employs 400,000 people, no one really knows more than a few individuals, he said.

Foxconn recently awarded 2,000 yuan (US\$293) a month pay rise for qualified workers but this doesn’t help fill a void in his spiritual life, Chen said.

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

## **Authorities raze city’s only Catholic church**

**Published Date: June 9, 2010**

**By ucanews.com reporter, Ordos**

The only Catholic church in Ordos, Inner Mongolia, was destroyed overnight Monday and the priest and lay leader detained by police.

The demolition is believed to have been carried out pursuant to a court order.

Parishioners today set up camp near the ruins to try to prevent any new construction on the site.

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They had arrived for morning Mass on June 8 to a pile of rubble littered with pieces of the altar and five-meter cross in a pile of rubble.

Church sources told ucanews.com that about 100 people arrived around midnight on June 7 to demolish the Dongsheng Church belonging to the open Catholic community.

Local pastor Father Gao En and lay leader Yang Yizhi were woken by the noise and tried to stop the destruction but were taken away in handcuffs.

They were returned to the parish after being detained for more than 20 hours at the police station, Church sources later told ucanews.com.

The sources said the church had previously received a demolition notice. One or two police cars were still stationed near the site today, the sources said.

Newly ordained Hohhot Bishop Paul Meng Qinglu sent two priests to Ordos to investigate the incident. They are negotiating with local officials for compensation, the sources said.

The 150-square-meter church, which served a community of about 1,000 Catholics, was legally registered in May 2009. However, the local government recently demanded the demolition of the church to make way for a new road.

Church leaders had talked with the government several times without success, sources said.

“How could the government demolish the church secretly in the middle of the night and cause the ‘disappearance’ of our Church leaders while talking about social harmony?” one source asked.

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## **A Catholic church in Tibet**

**English.news.cn 2010-05-31 10:13:53**

LHASA, May 31 (Xinhua) -- Every daybreak on the southeast edge of the Tibetan Plateau, Lucy walks into the only Catholic Church in Tibet, dips her fingers into the holy water and makes the sign of the cross before praying.

Rain, hail or shine, the 62-year-old has attended masses and sermons since she was baptized as a child. The priest who baptized her gave her the Western name.

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But Lucy is at home among Tibetans, who swing prayer wheels and prostrate themselves in front of Buddhas.

Unlike Catholics elsewhere, Lucy reads the Bible in Tibetan and presents hada, long pieces of silk used as greeting gifts among Tibetans, to the Virgin Mary.

The church she visits every day is perched on a hill in the valley west of the Jinsha River. It is in the village of Yanjing, also known as "Yerkalo", and is adorned with gesang flowers in its court, where white hada frame the religious artworks.

Built by French missionary Felix Biet in 1865, the whitewashed structure has two crosses on its outer walls while its interior is adorned with Gothic arches and frescos on the ceiling.

Father Felix was born in 1838 and ordained a priest in January 1864. He arrived in Tibet two months later. He was also ordained a bishop and died in 1901.

After the church was built, clashes between its followers and those of a nearby lamasery were common. The clashes reached a peak in the 1940s when armed lamas took over the church. The church was not returned to Catholic hand until 1951 after many local Catholics had asked the local authorities, the Qamdo People's Liberation Committee, to return it to them.

That handover marked the end of clashes between the local Catholics and Tibetan Buddhists, according to the China Tibet News website.

The church became an elementary and middle school during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). In the late 1980s, the church was renovated at a cost of 102,000 yuan (about 14,934 U.S. dollars), 95,000 yuan of which came from the government.

Tibetan priest Father Laurent says the Upper Yanjing Village has a population of less than 1,000, and that the church, with more than 500 parishioners, has enriched the local culture and coexists with Tibetan monasteries.

"Many villagers bring their babies to be baptized, and the baptism is performed over eight consecutive days. The babies will receive religious names like Paul and Anne. The names will be with them for their whole lives, and when they die, they will be buried," he says.

But wedding ceremonies do not take place in the church, Father Laurent says, the priest will instead go to the couple's home and pray for them.

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Maria takes charge of cleaning and daily necessities. But her husband Zhaxi Wangdui is a fervent Tibetan Buddhist.

Maria says they are both pious and respect each other's beliefs - "We still share the same culture and lifestyle after all."

When the Tibetan New Year falls, normally in March, Maria joins her husband and the village folk to celebrate.

"After all these years of coexistence, couples who belong to different religions in the village can stick to their own faiths when they marry and their children can choose their own religion once they grow up."

At Christmas, Father Laurent says Catholics from neighboring provinces come while Buddhists from nearby lamaseries are invited over.

"Religious conflicts between the Catholics and Buddhists are a thing of the past," says Father Laurent.

\* Editor: Mo Hong'e

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

**ASIA/CHINA**

### **On Corpus Christi, 206 catechumens baptized in Tian Jin and new church in Fu Shun consecrated**

Beijing (Agenzia Fides) – The Cathedral of the Diocese of Tian Jin celebrated with great joy and intense participation the Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion of 206 catechumens on June 5, Vespers of the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, allowing this large group of people to celebrate the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ as Catholics. According to information received by Fides, many Chinese Catholic communities have solemnly celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi, in communion with the Universal Church, both on the date of Thursday, June 3 and on the following Sunday, June 6, according to local needs.

The parish of Fu Shun in the Diocese of Liao Ning celebrated the solemnity on June 3, with the consecration of new church dedicated to the Body and Blood of Christ. Bishop Paul Pei Jun Min, diocesan bishop, presided at the Consecration Mass, which was concelebrated by about sixty priests. There were female diocesan congregations present as well, along with more than 3,000 faithful. The following Sunday, June 6, Bishop Paul Pei presided at other

celebrations of Corpus Christi in the diocese which included processions and Eucharistic Adoration.

The parish of Cao Zhuang in the Diocese of Han Dan opened the celebration of the feast with a procession that ended with Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. As a community mainly composed of members of the working class, the parish responded to their needs by moving the celebration to Sunday. Along the route of the procession, the faithful heard the reading of Bible passages and the commentaries of the priests. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 07/06/2010)

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

### **Marian Month concludes in mainland communities with Confirmations, perpetual vows, priestly ordinations, and pilgrimages**

Beijing (Agenzia Fides) – Catholic communities on the Chinese mainland have concluded the Marian Month of May in moments of intense spirituality, with the Solemnity of Pentecost and the Feast of the Holy Trinity, with the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, the issuing of the religious vows, several priestly ordinations, a pilgrimage... Here are some of these events that Fides has learned of:

Bishop Paul Pei Jun Min of the Diocese of Liao Ning, conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation to 73 faithful on Sunday, May 30, encouraging them to be "sentinels of Jesus and courageous witnesses of faith in daily life." The Diocesan Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit the Comforter, in the Diocese of Han Dan in the Province of He Bei, held perpetual vows on the feast of Pentecost after a retreat of one week. Over 30 religious participated in the ceremony. All the seminarians and teachers of Sacred Heart Seminary, in the same diocese, made a pilgrimage on foot lasting six hours to the parish of Lao Tao Ying, where there is a thriving Catholic community, to exchange experiences on the theme of vocation and evangelization.

The parish of Xu Jia Hui in the Diocese of Shang Hai went on pilgrimage to the Marian Shrine of She Shan on the Solemnity of Pentecost, May 23, on the eve of the World Day of Prayer for the Church in China declared by Pope Benedict XVI.

The Diocese of Gui Zhou welcomed three new priests at the end of the month Marian Month and upon the close of the Year for Priests. More than 1,500 faithful attended the solemn ordination presided by Bishop Wang Chon Yi and concelebrated by 25 priests.

Together they thanked the Lord for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, praying for the diocese and the Universal Church. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 01/06/2010)

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## **Vatican Information Service**

### **MATTEO RICCI: A GREAT MISSIONARY IN CHINA**

VATICAN CITY, 29 MAY 2010 (VIS) - At midday today, the Holy Father received participants in a pilgrimage promoted by the diocese of Macerata-Tolentino-Recanati-Cingoli-Treia and other dioceses of the Italian Marche region, marking the fourth centenary of the death of the Jesuit Fr. Matteo Ricci.

In his address the Pope recalled how Fr. Ricci, who was born in Macerata and died in China on 11 May 1610, was "a great missionary and an important figure in the announcement of the Gospel in China in the modern age, following the first evangelisation by Archbishop Giovanni da Montecorvino". He "was granted the extraordinary privilege, unthinkable for a foreigner, of being buried in Chinese soil".

"Fr. Ricci is a unique model of harmoniously blending the announcement of the Gospel with dialogue with the culture of the people to whom it is brought, an example of balance between doctrinal clarity and careful pastoral activity".

The Pope highlighted how "the work of this great missionary presents two aspects which cannot be separated: the Chinese inculturation of the Gospel message, and the introduction of Western culture and science into China. ... Fr. Ricci did not go to China to bring Western science and culture but to bring the Gospel, to make God known".

But "this meeting motivated by faith also became a dialogue between cultures", Pope Benedict explained. "It was a disinterested dialogue, free from economic and political aims, lived in friendship; and this makes the work of Fr. Ricci and his disciples one of the most exalted and felicitous points in relations between China and the West".

"Our admiration for Fr. Ricci must not, however, makes us forget the role and influence of his Chinese counterparts. The decisions he made did not depend on some abstract strategy of inculturation of the faith, but on events as a whole, on the meetings and experiences he accumulated. Thus, his achievements came about thanks also to his meeting with the Chinese, an experience that took many forms but that was particularly intensified through his relations with certain friends and disciples, especially the four famous converts, 'pillars of the nascent Chinese Church', of whom the first and most well known is Xu Guangqi".

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Addressing the seven thousand faithful present in the Paul VI Hall, the Holy Father called for "the memory of these men of God dedicated to the Gospel and to the Church, their example of faithfulness to Christ, their profound love for the Chinese people, their intelligence and dedication to study, their virtuous lives, to be a stimulus for us to pray for the Church in China, and for the entire Chinese people, as we do every year on 24 May, addressing ourselves to the Blessed Virgin venerated in the famous shrine of Sheshan in Shanghai.

May their example, he concluded, "be a stimulus and encouragement to live the Christian faith intensely, in dialogue with various cultures but with the certainty that in Christ lies the true humanism, open to God, rich in moral and spiritual values and able to respond to the most profound desires of the human soul. I too, like Fr. Matteo Ricci, today express my profound esteem for the noble Chinese people and their millennial culture, convinced that a renewed encounter with Christianity will bring abundant fruits of good, just as it then favoured peaceful coexistence among peoples".

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## **China detains two priests in Hebei**

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

Security officials have detained two "underground" Catholic priests in the northwestern part of Hebei province.

Father's Joseph Wang Jianchen and Joseph Li De of Xuanhua were stopped and "taken away" on the morning of May 30 in Hebei City, while traveling to hold Trinity Sunday Mass for parishioners in Huaian County.

Church sources told UCA News the police officers were lying in wait for the priests in three vehicles.

They believe the authorities must have found out about the recent ordination of Father Li which led to the detentions.

Father Li was ordained less than six months ago.

Father Wang, 40, was born to a Catholic family and was ordained a priest in 1989. He has served in Huaian and Wenquan counties since 2000.

The detention of the two priests follows the detention of Fathers Liu Jianzhong, Zhang Cunhui, Zhang Jianlin and Zhong Mingchang, also from Hebei diocese, last year.

All were later released except Father Zhang Jianlin, who was sent home for “reflection” but has to report to the local government every day.

Meanwhile, the sources also said government officials held a meeting with all priests from the “open” community and some underground clergy, May 17-21, regarding the Holy See’s China Commission meeting held at the Vatican in March.

The Chinese officials criticized the commission’s communiqué, saying that it interfered with the internal policy of China, one of the sources said.

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