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## China: Secretary of State note on death of Bishop Jin Luxian

2013-04-30 Vatican Radio



(Vatican Radio) Below is Vatican Radio's English translation of the note issued by the Vatican Secretary of State on the death of Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian of the Diocese of Shanghai

On Saturday, April 27, His Excellency Mons. Aloysius Jin Luxian S.I., Coadjutor bishop of Shanghai (continental China), passed away at the age of 96.

The Prelate was born on June 20, 1916 in the Nanshi district in the city of Shanghai. In September 1926 he began his primary school studies at Saint Ignatius College; then, in 1932, he entered Sacred Heart of Jesus seminary, and later attended the Sacred Heart of Mary major seminary. Attracted to the spirituality and life of the Society of Jesus, in 1938 he began his novitiate, and on September 8, 1940 he made his first vows. Having concluded his studies in philosophy and theology at Xianxian (Hebei), he was ordained to the priesthood on May 19, 1945 in the cathedral of Shanghai.

Between 1947 and 1948 he completed his religious formation in Paris. Then, from 1948 to 1950, he attended the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome where he received a degree Theology. He spent his summer vacations in Germany, France, and England in order to learn the respective languages.

With the advent of the People's Republic of China, he was called to return to his native country in 1950 and, following the political events at that time and the expulsion of foreign Jesuits, he was nominated the temporary rector of the regional seminary of Xuhui (Shanghai) in 1951.

Fr Jin Luxian was arrested the night of September 8, 1955 and was subject to a long interrogation, ending with a trial in 1960: he was sentenced to 18 years in prison, plus 9 years for rehabilitation. From 1963 to 1967 he was then detained at Qincheng (Pechino) prison where, by reason of his considerable knowledge of foreign languages, was made part of a group of inmate translators who worked for the State. In 1967 he was transferred to the rehabilitation centre in Fushun and in 1973 to another in Qincheng where he remained until 1975. He was then sent to a labour camp in Henan, and imprisoned again from 1979 to 1982: he was released after 27 years in prison. In 1982 he received permission to reopen the seminary in Sheshan. In 1985 Fr Jin Luxian agreed to be consecrated bishop for the Diocese of Shanghai, but without papal approval. He obtained approval some 15 years later, becoming the coadjutor bishop of Shanghai, after having shown his fidelity to the pope and asking pardon for his illegitimate ordination.

The prelate was a key personality in the history of the Catholic Church in China over the last 50 years. He was a man of great culture. His preparation, his studies in Italy, his proficiency in various European languages and his human compassion allowed him to keep in contact with various personalities and enjoy the respect of many.

Under the leadership of Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian, the diocese of Shanghai developed a great deal. He had a powerful pastoral commitment, modernizing the dioceses in many ways and trying to ensure they remained under the leadership of the pastors, using also to this end the respect which the civil authorities had for him. He was particularly attentive to the preparation of new priests and religions, launching proper formation facilities, such as the Major Seminary, opened in 1985 in Sheshan (Shanghai), and giving back, at the same time, a greatly appreciated service not only to his dioceses, but also to China.

One of his final acts as bishop Jin wrote the pastoral letter on the occasion of the Chinese new year of the Dragon (January 23, 2012) with the title "Xu Guangqi: A Man for All Seasons."

In it the Prelate invited the faithful to follow the example of Paul Xu Guangqi, the first high-ranking Catholic in the empire, friend of Fr. Matteo Ricci, by promoting the cause for his beatification.

There are 150,000 Catholics in the diocese of Shanghai, some one hundred priests, six deacons, 37 parishes, and 140 churches. In its territory is one of the Marian Shrine of Sheshan, a national pilgrimage site. The most important social institutions include the house for the elderly, a house for spiritual retreats, a soup kitchen, and the Typography of Qibao.

In 2012 he published the first volume of his memoirs, Learning and Re-learning 1916-1982, in which he recounts the most significant times in his life. A life in which he sought to keep the love of Christ and the Church alive, in loyalty to his country and culture.



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