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» **04/27/2013 12:29**

CHINA - VATICAN

Msgr. Aloysius Jin Luxian, official bishop of Shanghai, has died by Wang Zhicheng



Shanghai (AsiaNews) - Msgr. Aloysius Jin Luxian, official bishop of Shanghai died today at 2.46 pm local time. The prelate, one of the most important personalities of the Chinese Church, was 97 years old and had been ill for a long time. In recent months he had been hospitalized and no one was allowed to visit him.

A highly controversial personality, often accused of being "too patriotic" and friendly with the regime, Msgr. Jin, who was a Jesuit, contributed to the development of the Church in a decisive way. Several years ago he was reconciled with the Pope and the Holy See considered him the "auxiliary" bishop of Shanghai. The ordinary bishop was Msgr. Joseph Fan Zhongliang, who is also very old and sick.

The diocese of Shanghai has not yet set a date for the funeral. According to *AsiaNews* sources the government has been long preparing for such a ceremony, especially from the point of view of who should preside. For the Holy See, in fact, the liturgy by right should be celebrated by Msgr. Thaddeus Ma Daqin, ordained on July 7. But after having decided to leave the Patriotic Association, Bishop Ma was put in solitary confinement in Sheshan seminary. According to unconfirmed reports in recent days Msgr. Ma has been removed from the diocese, perhaps to impede his participation in Msgr. Jin's funeral.

Bishop Jin was born June 20, 1916 in Shanghai into a family that had been Catholic for generations. He soon became an orphan (loosing his mother at 10 and his father at 14) and attended Catholic schools, first with the nuns and then the Jesuits. At age 22, in 1938, he entered the Society of Jesus, his new family.

His early adulthood was a time of great upheaval in the country; fall of the empire, the birth of the Republic and a pervasive social instability due to internal power struggles within China and colonial influences of the great Western powers. This also affected the Church, which sought to modernize and integrate into Chinese society and which, in 1946, began to ordain bishops of Chinese nationality.

The victory of Mao Zedong in 1949, billed as the "rise" of China on the world stage, had drastic consequences for foreign missionaries and the Catholic Church headed by the Pope, branded as the "stray dogs of American capitalism." Young Jin, like other believers, was divided between loyalty to the Church and love for his homeland.

Editor's choices

VATICAN

[Growth in number of Catholics worldwide, number of priests and seminarians also increase](#)



data from the Statistical Yearbook of the Church. The faithful of Rome have passed, from 1196 in 2010 to 1214 million in 2011, up 1.5%. Asia remains a religiously vibrant continent: number of faithful and priests rise, as do the number of professed religious who are not priests, seminarians, and in contrast to the world's data, the number of nuns.

ASIA - PIME

[PIME mission, in the footsteps of Benedict XVI and Pope Francis](#)

by Bernardo Cervellera



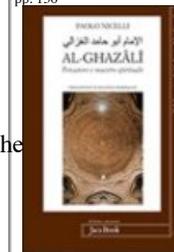
PIME Annual General

Meeting will discuss the mission ad gentes and "new evangelization"; missionary revival for the older Churches (Italy, USA, Latin America), and the communications media. But above all, the awakening of faith, according to the teaching of Benedict XVI and Pope Francis' call to "go out to the geographical and

Al-Ghazali -

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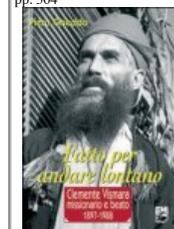


The

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Jin Luxian returned to China and Shanghai in 1951, under Bishop Ignatius Kung Pin-mei, also educated by the Jesuits. In previous years he had been formed in France and Italy, in Rome.

In 1955 he - along with Msgr. Gong and hundreds of other priests and laity - he was arrested and held in solitary confinement for five years. In 1960 he was sentenced to 18 years in prison, Msgr. Gong was sentenced to life imprisonment.

#### Geographic areas



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Rumors claiming that Jin "talked too much" with the police and was open to collaborating with the regime date to this period, although no one ever provided any proof.

In '1972 he was released, but on probation, working as a translator, thanks to his knowledge of languages. He was fully released in 1982, with the modernization of Deng Xiaoping. Although the party supported the elimination of religions, Deng opened churches and seminaries, while controlling all activities of the faithful.

Jin was chosen to open the Sheshan seminary and 1985 is chosen as the auxiliary bishop of Shanghai, without papal mandate. Msgr. Aloysius Zhang Jiashu, another Jesuit, was forced to be ordained patriotic bishop of the diocese while the ordinary, Msgr. Gong, remained in prison.

Bishop Jin became the Bishop of Shanghai in 1988 and immediately began working for the renewal of the Church: restoration of buildings, contacts with foreign countries, strengthening formation for seminarians, publications in Chinese. At that time, many professors of the seminary of Sheshan were invited from outside. Among them Joseph Zen, who later became Cardinal of Hong Kong, and Savio Hon, a Salesian, current secretary of the Vatican Congregation of Propaganda Fide.

Thanks to his relations with the leaders of the Party, Msgr. Jin even succeeding in gaining permission to name the pope in the Canon of the Mass and to use the liturgical books in Chinese (according to Vatican II) that the government forbade as a sign of "obedience" to the pope in Rome.

But he was still a "patriotic" bishop. Meanwhile, after 33 years in prison, thanks to the pressure of several international personalities, Msgr. Gong, the ordinary bishop loyal to Rome, was released in July 1985. He was placed under house arrest until 1987, when he was sent to the U.S. for treatment.

In 1979 he was proclaimed Cardinal *in pectore* by John Paul II, who only communicated his decision to the world (and to Gong himself) in 1991. Card. Gong died in 2000, exiled in the United States.

In 2005, Msgr. Jin reconciled with the Pope and the Holy See established that Msgr. Fan was the ordinary bishop and Msgr. Jin the auxiliary. Being both very elderly, the Vatican called on both of them to think of a successor, and their decision rested on Msgr. Joseph Xing Wenzhi. This ordination was also one of the first in which Vatican and the government seem to have cooperated.

In 2012 Msgr. Xing resigned, the reasons for this move are still not clear. The Church of Shanghai proceeded to choose a new auxiliary bishop in the person of Thaddeus Ma Daqin, ordained with papal mandate and accepted by the government as coadjutor bishop (with right of succession). But his refusal to remain within the Patriotic Association has brought new problems for the Church: Msgr. Ma was immediately isolated, the seminary was closed, all Church activities halted.

Msgr. Jin has had to struggle for a lifetime with the issue of religious freedom. His death only further highlights the urgency of this issue both for Shanghai and the entire Church in China.

existential outskirts".

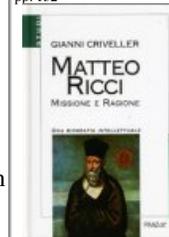
#### VATICAN

[Pope against "slave labour", for solidarity, in the month of May](#)



today's general audience, which falls on the feast day of Saint Joseph the Worker, also International Workers' Day, Francis calls on the world to take "decisive action" against human trafficking as well as work that denies dignity and represses man. He calls on people, especially young people, "to keep your hope alive" because "there is a light at the end of the tunnel." He also calls on families to recite the Rosary during the month of May.

by Gianni Criveller  
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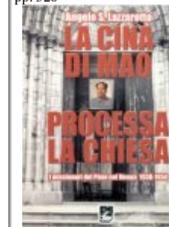
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