

# CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CHINA UPDATES

## APRIL 2013

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#### **Death of Bishop Jin Luxian of Shanghai**

27<sup>th</sup> April

2013

Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian of Shanghai, a prominent and controversial figure in the Church of China, died on Saturday aged 96 following a long struggle against pancreatic cancer.

His prominence was reflected from the title of his biography *Le Pape Jaune* (the Yellow Pope), written by French journalist Dorian Malovic in 2006.

“The Vatican thinks that I don’t work enough for the Vatican, and the government thinks that I work too much for the Vatican,” the prelate said in an interview with *The Atlantic* in 2007. “It is not easy to satisfy both.”

Following his release from detention and return to Shanghai in 1982, Bishop Jin played a leading role in the Church in China, It started with his leading the rebuilding of China’s biggest diocese – Shanghai – where he resumed leadership of the seminary on his return. He was taken into detention in 1955 when he was rector of the diocesan seminary in the city.

He became a figure of significance in Shanghai and on the national stage. He persuaded the authorities to allow inclusion of prayer for the Pope in the Eucharistic Prayers said during Masses and helped to develop the

liturgy in Chinese. The Church in China lost contact with the reforms of Vatican Council II during decades of political turmoil.

He was named an honorary president of the national Catholic Patriotic Association and the Chinese Bishops' Conference at the National Congress of Catholic Representatives held in late 2010.

Though his health had deteriorated since Christmas, his name was among the nine Catholic representatives of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the top advisory body to the Beijing government.

Bishop Jin was born on June 20, 1916 in Shanghai. His parents died when he was young and, after attending the Jesuits' high school in Shanghai, he entered the seminary there in 1932. From the local seminary, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1938. He was ordained a priest in 1945 and, after two years of pastoral work, he was sent to Rome to pursue theological studies. He obtained a doctorate in theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 1950 and returned to China as the new Communist regime led by Mao Zedong took over the mainland.

From 1951 on, the government arrested and expelled foreign missionaries as the then Father Jin progressively took charge of the Jesuits in Shanghai, later writing that he knew the time would come when the Security Police would take him into custody. He simultaneously became rector of the Shanghai Diocesan Seminary, the Jesuit's vice-superior in Shanghai and was designated as the Jesuit Visitor for China, with delegated powers of the superior-general in Rome.

He was arrested with hundreds of priests, religious and laity, in the "September 8 Incident" in 1955, a major crackdown against the "counterrevolutionary clique" of Bishop (later cardinal) Ignatius Gong Pinmei of Shanghai.

Jin was sentenced to jail and re-education for three decades during which time - owing to his fluency in four European languages - he became a translator of technical manuals and other documents claimed to be of importance to China's industrial development. Though still serving his sentence, he worked for a translation company linked to the Public Security Bureau, a connection that aroused the suspicions of some Catholics.

In 1982, he was released and became the founding rector of the diocesan seminary built near the Basilica of Mary, Help of Christians in Sheshan, outside Shanghai. The seminary has trained more than 400 priests and 16 bishops in eastern China.

Jin and Father Stephen Li Side were together ordained coadjutor bishops without papal approval in 1985, and Jin succeeded as the ordinary of

Shanghai's open community in 1988. The Vatican later recognized Bishop Jin as coadjutor bishop of Shanghai in 2004. When Jin became ordinary in 1988, he invited Bishop Li to be a diocesan consulter.

His death leaves open a succession issue in the open community in one of the most important Chinese dioceses. In 2005, he ordained Auxiliary Joseph Xing Wenzhi as his successor but the Shangdong native faded from visibility in late 2011. According to the 2013 Spring Issue of Tripod, published by the Holy Spirit Study Centre in Hong Kong, Bishop Xing resigned on December 20, 2011. It is not clear whether the Vatican has received or accepted his resignation.

The second auxiliary bishop, Thaddeus Ma Daqin, was restricted from Episcopal ministry soon after his ordination last July as he publicly announced he would quit the Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA), which advocates an independent Church for China. The government-sanctioned bishops' conference subsequently revoked his appointment letter as coadjutor bishop.

Though restricted in his movements by the government, Bishop Ma blogs on his Weibo account - the Chinese equivalent of Twitter - almost every day, sharing his thoughts on the scripture for daily Mass. Church sources said he was taken away from the Sheshan Seminary to a "study class" run by government authorities for two months on April 14 because authorities did not want him to meet pilgrims at the nearby Marian Basilica during Our Lady's month of May.

Bishop Jin was a friend to numerous international political and religious leaders. He was also one of the four Mainland Chinese bishops invited by Pope Benedict XVI to attend the world bishop synod in 2005. None was permitted to leave the country by the government.

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## **Shanghai's bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian is dead**

27<sup>th</sup> April  
2013

Shanghai's bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian is dead

Shanghai's Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian who played an important role in the history of the Catholic Church in China, especially over the past 30 years, died on April 27 in communion with the Pope

GERARD O' CONNELL  
Rome

Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian of Shanghai died Saturday afternoon, April 27, at the age of 96, after being ill with cancer and hospitalized for some time.

A significant but complex figure in the history of the Catholic Church in China after the Communists came to power in 1949, he was imprisoned along with Shanghai's Bishop (later Cardinal) Gong Pinmei in the 1950s for refusing to follow the Communist Party's line and spent many years in prison, four of them in solitary confinement.

He was released from prison in 1973 but in actual fact only fully regained his freedom in 1982. Subsequently, he decided to cooperate with the Chinese authorities – a decision seriously questioned by many Catholics at that time. In 1985, he accepted to be ordained bishop without the papal mandate, a decision that was not well received by Chinese Catholics or Rome. He also accepted positions in the state-established Patriotic Association.

By doing so Bishop Jin was convinced that he could have the opportunity to do more good for the Church at that new moment in history, even though his decisions sparked divisions within the Catholic community in Shanghai. As history shows, over the past 30 years, Jin made a decisive contribution to rebuilding the Church in Shanghai, re-opening the Sheshan seminary, and playing a significant role too in religious affairs at the national level.

He reconciled with the Holy See some twenty years after his illicit ordination in 1985, and died in the afternoon of April 27 in full communion with the first Jesuit Pope in the history of the Church.

Aloysius Jin Luxian was born in Shanghai, 20 June 1916, to a family that had been Catholic for many generations. "I have been a Catholic even before I was weaned", he once said. He lost both parents while still young: his mother died when he was 10, and his father died four years later. His only sister died when he was 18.

His parents enrolled him in a Jesuit school in Shanghai at a time of great change in society there. He went on to join the Jesuits at the age of 22, and was ordained priest in 1945. A brilliant student, he was sent to study in France, 1947, and had the famous Jesuit scholar, Henri de Lubac, as one of his professors. In 1949, he was sent to Rome to study at the Pontifical Gregorian University, where he gained his doctorate in theology. At the university, he made friends with Albert Decourtray, the future Catholic Primate of France, who would in later years help him in his relations with Rome.

After the Communists came to power in China in 1949 and began expelling foreign missionaries, he asked to return to Shanghai. His Jesuit superiors agreed and he arrived home, January 1951, and was

subsequently appointed head of the Sheshan seminary, on the outskirts of Shanghai. At that time, the Communists set out to crush the Catholic Church in Shanghai and on the night of September 8-9, 1955, he was arrested along with Bishop Gong Pinmei, some 300 priests, religious men and women, and many lay Catholics. Many others were arrested soon after. Jin was held in solitary confinement for 4 years, and sentenced to 18 years in prison. Later, he was accused of “talking too much” while in prison, and giving away information about others in the Church, but that charge has yet to be proved. Though released from prison in 1973, he was actually held by the authorities for many more years to serve as a translator for them. He regained his full freedom in 1982, following the new open policies introduced by Deng Xiaoping.

In those years, under a new religious policy, Beijing made it possible to re-open seminaries in the mainland. Jin was given the task of re-opening the Sheshan seminary. His willingness to take up this post, and his more controversial decision to accept to be ordained bishop without the Pope’s approval in 1985 was a step hotly contested by many Chinese Catholics, as well as by Rome.

He later argued that he saw this as a way to move ahead and rebuild the Church in Shanghai at that new political moment in the history of China. He sought to give a further explanation for his actions in a 2010 interview (published by Ignatius Insight, an American Jesuit publication). “When I got out of prison the Church here was in ruins”, he said. “After I replaced my predecessor [Bishop Aloysius Zhang Jiashu, S.J. – consecrated illicitly], I wrote hundreds of letters to Catholics all over the world asking for money to restore the Catholic community here in Shanghai. Most of my money came from Germany – some came from America and other European countries. I received nothing from the Vatican”, he stated.

“I tried to get the prayer for the Pope restored in the Missale Romanum”, he added. “At that time the government forbade us from two things: we could not implement the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council – this would have been viewed as capitulating to the Vatican – and we were forbidden from reciting the prayer for the Pope during Mass. As far as the government was concerned the Church in China was entirely independent from Rome.”

He made ten trips to Beijing, he said, “to ask the authorities to allow us to pray for the Pope in Mass, but they were against it. So, since we had to use the old Mass I contacted a German friend and asked him to save as many volumes of the Missale Romanum as he could – this was after the Council and everyone was throwing them away. He sent me more than 400 discarded books with the prayer for the Pope in them, which I distributed. I also had new copies printed in Shanghai and sent them out for use elsewhere. I succeeded. This is when the Pope's name was openly mentioned again in the Mass.”

Speaking about those difficult years in Shanghai and nationally, Bishop Jin said in the 2010 interview, "It is very complicated here, and I have had to be, how do you say, both a serpent and a dove. I am both a serpent and a dove. The government thinks I'm too close to the Vatican, and the Vatican thinks I'm too close to the government. I'm a slippery fish squashed between government control and Vatican demands."

Over the years, Bishop Jin held positions of responsibility in the Chinese Patriotic Association and travelled widely. Many considered him as an ambassador for China's religious policy, but he was undeterred by such criticisms and had his own goals that were not necessarily those of Beijing, including reconciliation with Rome.

The Chinese authorities, for their part, considered him as the official Bishop of Shanghai. The Holy See ranked him as auxiliary bishop, since there is also another equally old Jesuit Bishop in the city and it recognizes him as leader of the city's Catholic community – Mgr. Fan Zhonglian.

Given that both men were already advanced in age in 2005, the Holy See helped them reach agreement on the choice of a new bishop who would succeed them both – Joseph Xing Wenzhi. Beijing gave its assent too, and Bishop Jin ordained him in 2005. For reasons undisclosed, not the least of which was his problems with Beijing, Bishop Xing resigned in 2012.

Again with the Holy See's assistance, the two elderly bishops again agreed on another candidate as their eventual successor - Thaddeus Ma Daqin. Beijing gave its assent too, and the elderly Bishop Jin ordained him in the Cathedral in Shanghai on 7 July 2012. At the end of that ceremony, however, Bishop Ma surprised everybody by announcing that he would no longer hold any position of responsibility in the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association – the body established by Beijing in the late 1950s to control the Catholic Church in China. Bishop Ma's decision was totally unacceptable to the Chinese authorities, they saw it as a serious challenge to their control over the Church; they responded immediately by putting him under effective house arrest at the seminary in Sheshan, and deprived him of freedom of speech and movement. Later they deposed him from his position as bishop in Shanghai.

Two weeks ago, on April 14, as Bishop Jin's condition deteriorated and death seemed imminent, the Chinese authorities took Bishop Ma away from Sheshan seminary to an undisclosed destination. Beijing wants to give Bishop Jin Luxian a solemn funeral, but quite who will preside at that, or when it will take place, has not yet been announced.

A much bigger question is who will succeed Jin as bishop of Shanghai

The Vatican has not yet commented on Bishop Jin's death, but sources

say its official newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, is likely to publish his obituary in the coming days.

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**Archbishop Savio Hon: I pray for Mgr Jin Luxian and I hope to go to his funeral**

27<sup>th</sup> April 2013

VATICAN – CHINA

Archbishop Savio Hon: I pray for Mgr Jin Luxian and I hope to go to his funeral

by Savio Hon\*

The secretary of the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples talks about the bishop of Shanghai, who passed away today. Despite criticism and suspicion, Mgr Jin worked hard for the Church's mission. The time for purification and reconciliation has come. For the Vatican, Mgr Ma Daqin is the successor of the bishop of Shanghai. Even Pope Francis keeps relics of the Church's heroes in China.

Vatican City (AsiaNews) - We are all very saddened by the death of Mgr Aloysius Jin Luxian, who was called to heaven today. As bishop, he had reconciled with the Holy Father and his appointment had been approved. I pray for him and I would really like to go to his funeral.

I met Mgr Jin for the first time in the early '90s, when he invited me to teach at Sheshan seminary. I was close to him; first of all, because he was very friendly, even paternal towards me; secondly, because I really appreciated his qualities as a man, his very openness, involved in educating the faithful, seminarians, nuns and priests. Every day after lunch, he spent always some time with his priests. We must also remember his language skills and his abilities as a translator, which he honed even when he was in prison.

He was a very active pastor. In recent years, he had done a lot for the growth of the Christian community in Shanghai, especially the official one.

We should remember his commitment to the publication of the Bible in Chinese, as well as of works on the liturgy, spirituality, and theology. He also built a centre for education and spiritual retreats, provided and

maintained some basic services for the elderly in Shanghai, restored churches . . . . His diocese has become increasingly important. In light of its financial means, it has not failed to show its solidarity to the other sister dioceses, welcoming for example many priests from other places, helping convents of nuns in other parts of China.

At some point, he began thinking about the diocese's future and his successor. As early as 2005, he had proposed Mgr Joseph Xing Wenzhi as a candidate. With this in mind, he consulted his underground colleague, Bishop Fan Zhongliang, as well as the government, and got both the latter's permission and the Holy See's authorisation. Unfortunately, in 2010 Bishop Xing asked for personal reasons not to be the successor in this diocese.

Bishop Jin then picked another candidate. He consulted the community, got a green light from the government, and obtained the pontifical mandate for Mgr Thaddeus Ma Daqin. When the Holy See gave its permission, and since there were still two bishops, Mgr Ma was appointed auxiliary bishop. Since the two bishops were very old, it was clear that the intention was to make him the successor. The government went along with this, and in the end recognised him as "bishop coadjutor of Shanghai."

Following the so-called 'bishops' conference', he lost the appointment. However, the Holy See responded by reiterating the principle that no bishops' conference, anywhere in the world, has the power to revoke a pontifical mandate, the more so since the conference in question was not recognised by the Vatican. Hence, Mgr Ma Daqin is the bishop of Shanghai, a situation that was eventually worked out with the government.

Looking back at the history of the diocese in the last 60 years, which was a time of hardships for men and women religious as well as priests, we can say that Mgr Jin tried to do what was good for the Church, but even by his fellow Jesuits often misunderstood his intentions.

Yet, he had the courage to ask for forgiveness and seek reconciliation with the Holy Father. In his pastoral letter to the diocese of Shanghai, he often stressed the importance of love, forgiveness, and internal purification in the Church.

Even Pope Francis, which has a statue of Our Lady of Sheshan (a shrine near Shanghai), has a very vivid and personal memory of his fellow Jesuits in China. I learnt that when he was still in Buenos Aires, he had some of the ashes of a missionary priest, who was cremated after death, in order to remember and share this period of suffering and mission.

Pope Francis was elected on 13 March. A few hours later, Xi Jinping was elected president of China. Both face similar problems. Xi Jinping has to

tackle corruption. The pope, when he was bishop of Buenos Aires, wrote a book titled in Spanish, *Corrupción y pecado*, (Corruption and sin) that was recently translated in Italian as *Guarire dalla corruzione* (Recovering from corruption), in which he says that to eliminate corruption, we must start by changing our hearts. For this reason, it is important to help everyone "recover" from corruption. By contrast, if we "fight" corruption, evil is blamed only on others.

Even Mgr Jin's pastoral letter spoke of politics as a high form of love; for this reason, it requires constant purification.

I can say that, from what he did, Mgr Jin is someone I will never forget. Over time, our friendship blossomed. I prayed for him, for his health, and we wrote to each other on his 96th birthday.

The last time we saw each other was in 2010, when he invited me to an international forum on Matteo Ricci. He also invited me the following year to celebrate the beginning of the cause of beatification of Xu Guangqi, a high official in Shanghai who befriended Matteo Ricci.

Mgr Jin wrote a letter about Xu Guangqi too, showing that his Christian faith had made him a true servant of the public good, unspoiled by corruption. Unfortunately, the following year, 2011, the diocese was forced to postpone the process of beatification.

\* Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples

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## **Shanghai's 'open' community holds funeral Mass for Bishop Jin**

29<sup>th</sup> April 2013

The "open" community of Shanghai diocese held a funeral Mass for Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian this morning, the third day after his death from a long battle with cancer.

A government-organized memorial service is scheduled at the Longhua Funeral Parlor in Xuhui district on Thursday morning, after which his body will be cremated.

Auxiliary Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin did not appear at the funeral Mass, which was held at St Ignatius Cathedral in Shanghai and was attended by more than 1,000.

“He was taken to study sessions alone at the Shanghai Institute of Socialism two weeks ago, probably to avoid him presiding over the funeral Mass,” a Church source said.

Some local Catholics expressed their disappointment and outrage.

“It’s regrettable that as the successor, Bishop Ma could not lead his fellow clergy to bid farewell to the deceased prelate. We are speechless, angry and saddened by the disrespectful suppressor,” a layman tweeted on Weibo, the Chinese equivalent of Twitter.

However, a diocesan priest who preferred anonymity remained hopeful of Bishop Ma’s ultimate return to service.

“As the authorities now arrange for Bishop Ma to study, it is just a matter of time that he will return to take charge of diocesan affairs,” he told [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) after the Mass.

Father Ignatius Wu Jianlin, the main celebrant at the funeral Mass, was appointed by Bishop Jin as the convener of the newly established Diocesan Coordination Committee in late January.

About 80 diocesan priests of Shanghai concelebrated the Mass. They were told about the funeral just yesterday, according to Church sources.

No bishops were in the liturgy while a few priests from other dioceses did not go up onto the altar.

Though it is a Shanghai custom to hold funerals for the dead within three days, the news of today’s funeral still surprised many people.

Some Church sources said they thought such a sudden arrangement for the prominent Church leader was to avoid government interference and the presence of illegitimate bishops.

However, the anonymous priest said, “It was nothing hasty as the diocese has prepared for Bishop Jin’s funeral after his condition turned critical several times in recent months.”

He added: “The diocese is also busy as the Month of Mary customarily begins tomorrow,” noting that there would be thousands of Catholics visiting the Sheshan Marian Shrine in the Shanghai suburb.