

The Chinese Church's Response to Migration within Mainland China (Part I)

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Every year on December 18, the United Nations observes an "International Migrants Day". In a written statement for the "98th World Day of Migrants and Refugees" on January 15, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI emphasized that the Church has to attach importance to evangelization among the floating population of migrants, "The phenomenon of migration today is also a providential opportunity for the proclamation of the Gospel in the contemporary world." Now, fairly soon after the migrants day, the author wishes to remind everybody to pay close attention to the problems of migration and to increase the vigor and dynamic of the pastoral and missionary work among the migrants.

Preface

Ever since China began to open up in the late 1970s, many Chinese have moved abroad to study, work, do business, live with relatives, and the like. And as China developed rapidly, some overseas friends – including those who live in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan – moved to the Mainland to study, teach, work, etc.

But the greatest migration movement has been within the Mainland itself – either directed by the government or undertaken voluntarily. During the past 30 years of China's open-door policy, with the transformation from planned economy to market economy and the transition from rural to urban areas, from small to big cities, and from remote areas to special administrative regions, this enormous relocation of people has become the country's greatest migration pattern.

Never before has the connection among citizens of the global village been so intense. Many of those taking part in this irreversible migration trend on both international and domestic levels are Christians who need the Church's care and attention. These migration dynamics, of course, also have a tremendous impact on the pastoral service, the evangelization, and the development of the Catholic Church in China.

This article is Part I of a public lecture delivered by John B. Zhang (Faith Institute for Cultural Studies – Jinde Charities, Shijiazhuang) on June 30, 2011 at the China-Zentrum in Sankt Augustin. The contribution has been translated from Chinese into English by Paul Han and proofread by Robert Astorino. The German translation of the lecture has been published in *China heute* 2011, No. 3, pp. 166-177 (Part I) and No. 4, pp. 225-236 (Part II). The English version is slightly expanded by the author with one more case study and a short summary. For the Chinese version of Part I, see Zhang Shijiang 张士江, "Zhongguo jiaohui huiying yimin wenti (shang) 中国教会回应移民问题 (上)," in: *Tianzhujiao yanjiu ziliao huibian* 天主教研究资料汇编 2011, No. 115, pp. 99-137.

This paper focuses on the phenomenon of Catholic migration and aims to offer an analysis of the impact of migration within China on the pastoral and social works of the Church.

Data collection and studies: To enhance the content and layout of *Faith Newspaper*,¹ in the winter of 2010, I requested the editorial department to pay more attention to some obvious social issues, so as to promote timely responses of Church communities and to offer insightful reports for the newspaper readers. After discussion and planning, the editorial department decided to make people who had left their hometowns and moved elsewhere to work one of the special topics. When Ms. Song Mingyan of the editorial department took up this task in December 2010, she began by interviewing various people and collecting data concerning this subject.

In May 2011, Father Anton Weber of the China-Zentrum invited me to deliver a talk in Sankt Augustin. In connection with the main topic of this lecture, we have undertaken several different tasks concerning the migration issues:

- The editorial department of *Faith Newspaper* conducted interviews and collected data concerning the number of migrant workers and how the Church has responded to them. Ms. Song completed the interviews in late May and produced a comprehensive report that was published on pp. 2-4 in the June 1 issue of *Faith Newspaper* (No. 16 [447], June 1, 2011). Her report, "Survey on Catholic Migrant Workers: Don't Let the Flock Become Lost," included an appeal for special attention to this phenomenon.
- The Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (FICS) designed the "Survey Form for Migrant Workers and Home-bound Catholics in a Catholic Village." For its case studies, the survey focused on two such villages (Zhangzhuang Village of Weixian County and Erquanjing Township of Zhangbei County in Hebei Province), as well as two domestic migrant Catholic communities (House for Companions on the Same Journey in Beijing and Yongnian Catholic Base Community in Shanghai) and two foreign language speaking Communities in China (German Speaking Community and Korean Speaking Community). Thus, we not only looked closely at the migration phenomenon, but also studied the experiences with pastoral and social services which the Church provided for Catholic migrants and highlighted some successful models.
- Jinde Charities contacted some Church-run social service centers in China and probed their activities in response to the migration situation.
- While paying attention to Catholic migrants within Mainland China, this paper also takes a special look at the pastoral care and evangelization of both the overseas Chinese and the Church in China as one topic (Part V). After taking part in three international conferences on the 400th death anniversary of Father Matteo Ricci last year (in Taipei, Vienna, and Frankfurt), I began paying increased attention to the relationship between the pastoral care and evangelization of overseas Chinese and the Church in China. Before long, I came to realize that these concerns are not separate but inter-related, and they influence each other.

¹ The original Chinese title of this Catholic newspaper with the widest circulation in China is *Xinde* 信德. It has been published since 1991 in Shijiazhuang (Hebei Province). Its website can be reached under www.chinacatholic.org and www.xinde.org (Editor's remark).

I. The Greatest Government-led Migrations in Chinese History

Since the PRC was established in 1949, government-led migrations have taken place mainly as part of major water and electricity projects, such as construction of water reservoirs and power plants, and a massive infrastructure project called the South-to-North water diversion. These migrations also were designed to fortify the border areas and promote migration out of poor areas and places that are often struck by natural disasters or are otherwise uninhabitable. Among the major migration flows are those involving the Three Gorges region and the South-to-North water diversion, as well as relocations in southern Shaanxi Province, northwestern China, and the Inner Mongolia area.

A. Three Gorges Migration

Begun in 1992–1993, this relocation was once considered the “greatest government-led migration project in contemporary China.”² The Three Gorges reservoir submerged 270 townships in 20 counties and districts, more than 1,500 enterprises, as well as houses in 34 million square-kilometers of Hubei Province and Chongqing City. About 1.3 million people were forced to relocate to other provinces and regions, or at least to higher ground.

About 50,000 of those affected were Catholics from Wanzhou Diocese of Chongqing. Most moved from lower to higher ground, but about 2,000 were relocated to the suburbs of Chongqing and Shanghai. In Yichang Diocese of Hubei Province, about 500 Catholics were shifted to Shanghai City and Jiangsu Province, and became immigrants to those respective areas.

B. Henan Danjiangkou Section of South-to-North Water Diversion Project Migration

The Danjiangkou section lies in the middle of the South-to-North water diversion project. The people relocated, coming from 176 administrative villages in 11 townships of Xichuan County in Henan province, numbered about 162,000 persons. The first batch of 75,800 people was relocated in 2009–2010. The second group of 86,000 was moved within four months of 2011 to 116 places in 20 counties and areas of six cities, such as Zhengzhou, Xinxiang, Xuchang, etc.³

Other statistics show that migrants into and out of Henan are indeed many. Since 1949, water project-related migrations in Henan have taken place 2,300 times and involved 1.968 million people. They include 1,705,000 major water reservoir migrants, 152,000 minor water reservoir migrants, 56,000 migrants into Henan from water reservoir projects

2 In April 1992, the fifth session of the seventh People's Congress passed the “Resolution on Building the Three Gorges Project.” In August 1993, the State Council issued the “Regulations on the Three-Gorges Project Related Migration,” which set up the categories on migrant relocation, management of relocation and submersion areas, migration-related funds management, etc. See Liu Gang 刘刚, “Sanxia yimin xiang huijia” 三峡移民想回家 (The Three Gorges Migrants Want to Go Home), *Zhongguo xinwen wang* 中国新闻网 (accessed on December 25, 2009).

3 Li Zhiqun 李志全, “Nan shui bei diao Henan 8.6 wan yimin jiang zai 3 ge yue nei qianyi” 南水北调河南 8.6 万移民将在 3 个月内迁移 (86 thousand people will be relocated within three months in Henan for the South-to-North water diversion project), *www.china.com* (accessed May 6, 2011).

in other provinces, and 55,000 others forced to move to free land for the middle section of the South-to-North water diversion project.⁴ We still lack data on whether they include Catholics, or if Catholic migrants are in these areas.

C. Mass Migration from South Shaanxi and Northwest Shaanxi

Due to poor living conditions and uninhabitable situations in some parts of Shaanxi Province, and the frequent natural disasters responsible for great losses of people and property, in 2011 the Shaanxi provincial government decided to shift 2.4 million people from South Shaanxi in the period 2011–2020. In the first phase (2011–2015) 380,000 households will be relocated, involving about 1.4 million people. In the second phase (2016–2020) 220,000 households will be moved, involving about 1 million people.⁵

At the same time, some of the mainly mountainous parts of Northwest Shaanxi, which are considered “uninhabitable” and which are prone to frequent natural disasters, need to relocate their residents.

The anti-poverty-related migration project in South Shaanxi and Northwest Shaanxi, accounting for 2.792 million migrants in all, is regarded as China's largest. These migrants will far outnumber the 1.3 million to 1.5 million people forced to relocate for the Three Gorges project.

Hengkou Township of Hanbing District of Ankang City in South Shaanxi will be a model for this project. According to Father Wang Xiaoxun, Hengkou township has more than 200 Catholics; 100 of them who live in the mountainous area will be moved.

However, the Church has no statistics on how many Catholics in Shaanxi Province will eventually be relocated.

According to some sources, economic development since the PRC was established has resulted in 70 million involuntary migrants. Taking into account just migrations linked to reservoir construction, 19.3 million people were moved directly from their hometowns between 1949 and 2008.⁶

II. China's Greatest Voluntary Migration and Population Movement

Population movement and urbanization were both strictly limited in the planned economy era before 1980, due to the huge gap between urban and rural areas and the need for social stability. As the open-door policy took hold, the population movement increased

4 “Nan shui bei diao zhongxian Zhengzhou de shui zui duo, Nanyang 16 dian 2 wan ren yimin” 南水北调中线郑州得水最多, 南阳16点2万人移民 (Zhengzhou gets most of the water in the middle section of the South-to-North water diversion project, Nanyang has 162 thousand people relocated), www.huanqiu.com (accessed on June 19, 2010).

5 “Shaanxi qidong sheji 240 wan ren yimin gongcheng, guimo chao Sanxia yimin” 陕西启动涉及240万人移民工程, 规模超三峡移民 (2.4 million people relocation project launched in Shaanxi, more than that of the three-gorges), jingji.guancha.wang 经济观察网 (accessed on May 10, 2011).

6 “Shaanxi ni shi nian yimin jin 280 wan ren, fupin banqian zijin cheng nandian” 陕西拟十年移民近280万人, 扶贫搬迁资金成难点 (2.8 million people in Shaanxi are to be relocated, funds have become a hindrance), Xinlang-wang 新浪网 (accessed on May 26, 2011).

rapidly. Several hundred millions of Chinese people return home for the annual Lunar New Year celebration so that it has become the world's "largest short-term voluntary mass movement flow," a truly unique human occurrence.

For example, within the 40-day period surrounding Lunar New Year's Day in 2010, about 2.541 billion journeys took place in the nation-wide great mass movement.⁷ This spectacular mass migration phenomenon also signals the massive scope of this nation's migrant population.

A. Ever Increasing Migrant Scale

"Population migration" (*liudong renkou* 流动人口) is no longer considered a sensitive term in China, nor is it restricted to just short-term migration. For the first time in modern Chinese history, the 1990 national population census paid attention to migration. By 2010, the census tallied more than 200 million migrants. This shows the speed and scale of China's expanding migrant population.

Since the PRC was founded, a nation-wide census has been conducted roughly every 10 years: 1953, 1964, 1982, 1990, 2000, and 2010. The first three made no reference to the migrant population issue, because both population and migration were restricted in the planned economy era. However, items on migrant population were included in the last three censuses.

Material on the migrant population was added for the fourth census (1990). "The census content added two more items on the basis of the previous one: one's permanent residence status five years earlier and the reason for moving to the current residence."⁸ For the fifth census (2000), more attention was given to migrants by attaching a "Temporary Resident Form." According to data collected in the sixth census (launched on 1 November, 2010), China now has 1,339,724,852 people, among whom migrants account for more than 260 million.

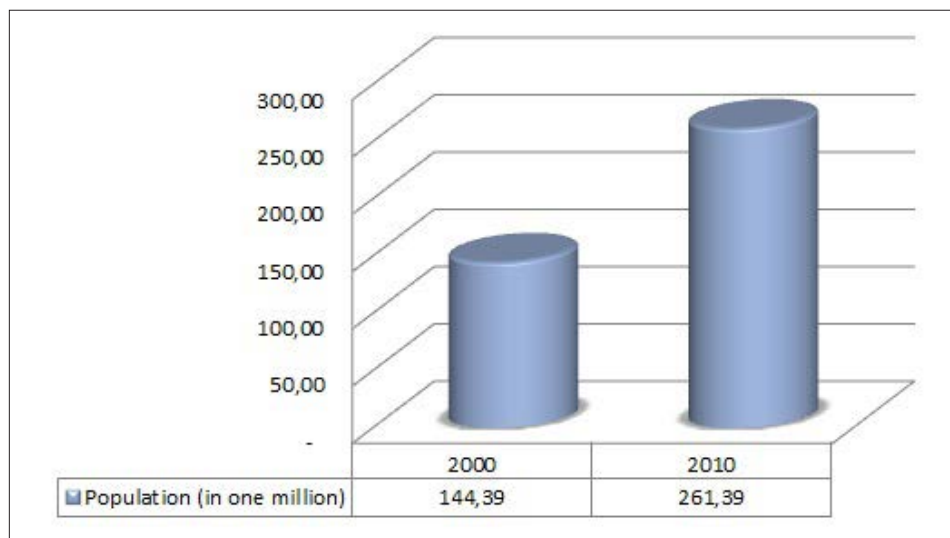
Of all the people counted in the November 2010 census, 261,390,000 persons were living in places other than the township neighborhood of household registration (*hukou* 户口) that they had left more than six months earlier. Compared with the 2000 census, this category of the population grew by 117,000,000 persons – a rise of 81.03 percent. The rapid shift of rural labor to non-agricultural activities and the rapid economic development contributed to the expansion of the migrant population.⁹

7 "Guanzhu chun yun: 25 yi ci renkou daqianyi" 关注春运: 25 亿次人口大迁移 (Focus on the Lunar New Year's transportations: 2.5 billion person-time migration), Beijing dianshitai 北京电视台 (Beijing TV), February 22, 2010.

8 "Renkou pucha ji nian jinxing yi ci, wo guo gong jinxing guo ji ci renkou pucha" 人口普查几年进行一次, 我国共进行过几次人口普查 (How often is the population census carried out? How many censuses have been conducted in our country?), in: Diaocha shuju 普查数据 (Data on the census), Guojia tongjiju wang 国家统计局网 (Website of the National Bureau of Statistics) (accessed on April 19, 2010).

9 Zhonghua renmin gongheguo guojia tongjiju: "Di liu ci quanguo renkou pucha zhuyao shuju fabu" 中华人民共和国国家统计局: 《第六次全国人口普查主要数据发布》 (National Bureau of Statistics of China: Report on the sixth nation-wide population census), Guojia tongjiju wang 国家统计局网 (accessed on April 28, 2011).

Diagram 1: Population of migration in 2000 and 2010



Increase of 117 million persons (81.03 percent)

Table 1: Urban and rural population in 2000 and 2010

	Total Population	Urban Residents	Percentage	Rural Residents	Percentage
2000	1,265,830,000	455,940,000	36.09%	807,390,000	63.91%
2010	1,339,724,852	665,570,000	49.68%	674,150,000	50.32%

B. Gradually Decreasing Rural Population, Ever Increasing Urban Population

As the surplus rural labor force gradually moved into cities, the rural population decreased and the urban population kept growing. Comparing the 2000 and 2010 figures is revealing. In 2000, the country had about 1,265,830,000 people, among whom 455.94 million were urban residents (36.09%) and 807.39 million rural residents (63.91%).¹⁰ But in 2010, China had 665.57 million urban residents (49.68%) and 674.15 million rural residents (50.32%).

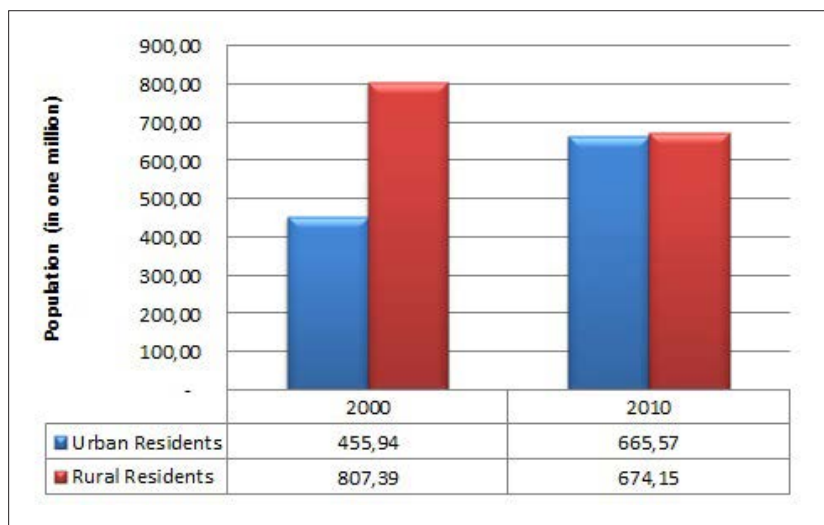
The developing trend can be directly seen in table 1 above and diagram 2 (see next page).

According to data collected in the fifth and sixth censuses, urban residents increased by 210 million (13.46 percent) and rural residents decreased by 130 million from 2000 to 2010.¹¹ Thus, for the first time, urban residents nearly equaled the number of rural residents in the Mainland.

10 See “Di wu ci quanguo renkou pucha gongbao (di 1 hao)” 第五次全国人口普查公报 (第 1 号), (Public report on the fifth nation-wide population census, No. 1), Guojia tongjiju wang 国家统计局 (accessed on April 19, 2010).

11 “Zhongguo neidi zong renkou 13.39 yi – 10 nian zengzhang 7,000 yu wan, cheng xiang renkou jiejin chiping” 中国内地总人口 13.39 亿 — 10 年增长 7000 余万, 城乡人口接近持平 (The total population in China is 1.339 billion – increased more than 70 million in 10 years, the urban and the rural residents are nearly equal), in: *Jinghua shibao* 京华时报, April 29, 2011, AO4.

Diagram 2: Urban and rural population in 2000 and 2010



This changing trend for urban and rural areas of China continues. The gap between urban and rural populations will grow larger in the next decade. The ever increasing number of urban residents and ever expanding migrant population bring new challenges not just to society and families, but also to the pastoral care and evangelization activities of the Church – and these trends are also expected to bring about long-lasting consequences.

III. Pastoral Care for Migrants and People on the Move in China

While *Faith Newspaper* was interviewing people in local parishes about their pastoral care services for migrants and people on the move, FICS also was giving attention to the migration situation in some Catholic villages and examining them as case studies. FICS found that nearly all inhabitants of some traditional fishing villages in Pudong (Shanghai) have completely moved to the urban districts of Shanghai and very few people remain in the villages. Erquanjing Township of Zhangbei County in Zhangjiakou City area, located near the border of Hebei and Inner Mongolia provinces, is also a typical migration case of a Catholic village.

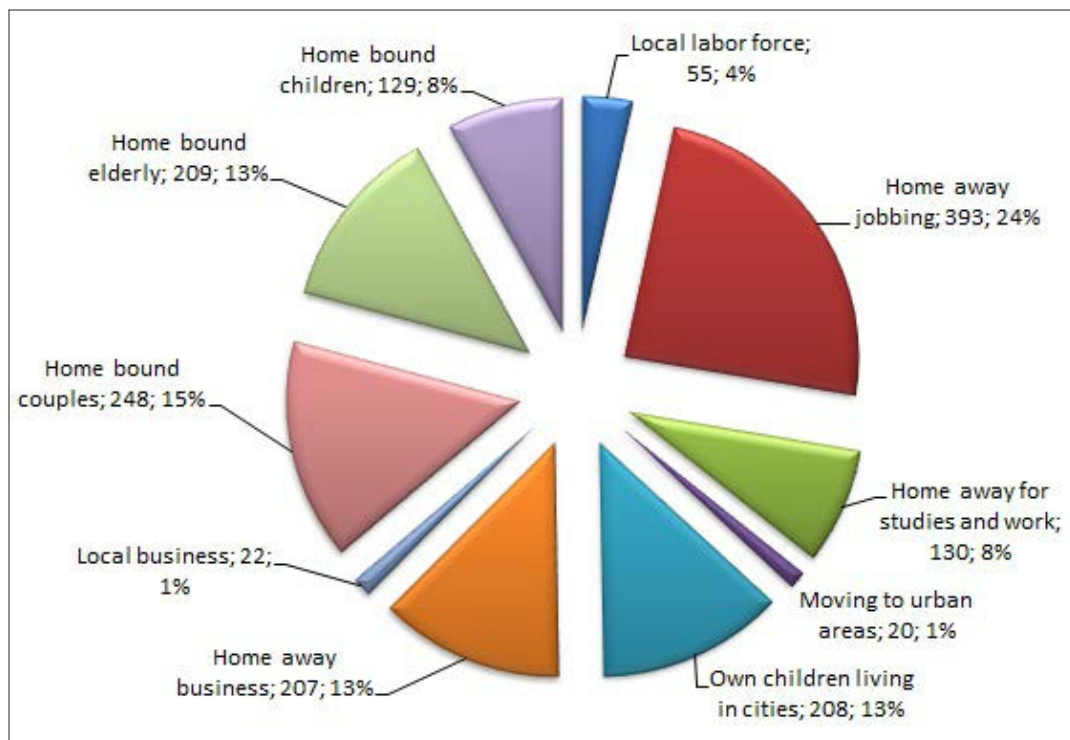
A. The Phenomenon of Catholic Migration

The Church, as one community in Chinese society, also faces the challenges of migration, even though Catholics are only a very small part of the mass migration flow. In May 2011, FICS surveyed the situation of home-away and home-bound people in certain Catholic villages. By the end of May, FICS received detailed data from Zhangzhuang Village of Weixian County in Hebei. This material can be regarded as a typical case for study and analysis.

Case 1: Home-away people outnumber home-bound in a village of Weixian County.

In South Hebei lies Zhangzhuang, a typical Catholic village in Weixian County. As of 31 May, 2011, there were 1,620 people of 329 households in this village. Except for 11 families

Diagram 3: General situation of home-away and home-bound villagers in Zhangzhuang (May 31, 2011)



of the Li, Tian, Guan, Yue and Jiang clans that had migrated to Zhangzhuang for family reasons, all other villagers are surnamed Zhang and belong to the same Zhang clan.

Almost all the villagers (98.77%) have been Catholics since generations. The only exceptions are three brothers and their families, about 20 people in all.

Over the past 30 years, as China changed from planned economy to market economy, this ordinary Catholic village was also undergoing a major transformation. More and more villagers were moving away from the village, and ever fewer people stayed behind to take care of the households. This phenomenon has been affecting the pastoral care and evangelization of the local Church, as well as the faith life of both home-away and home-bound Catholics.

This survey covers the period from 1977 to the end of May 2011. People who had passed away and women who left the village to marry elsewhere were not counted, but all who had migrated from the village and women who came to the village to live with their husbands were included.

The survey revealed that about 3/5 of the people had left the village and become migrants. The main reasons cited for relocation were: jobbing, studies and work,¹² moving to urban areas, own children living in cities, and doing business. These 958 people account for 59.10% of the whole village population. The other 2/5 of villagers who remained in the village are persons described as: home-bound husband and wife, elderly, children, local labor force, and local business people. These 663 people account for about 40.90% of the surveyed population.

¹² This refers to those studying in colleges and vocational schools. After graduation, they are expected to work in state-run institutes and agencies, or be officially employed by enterprises.

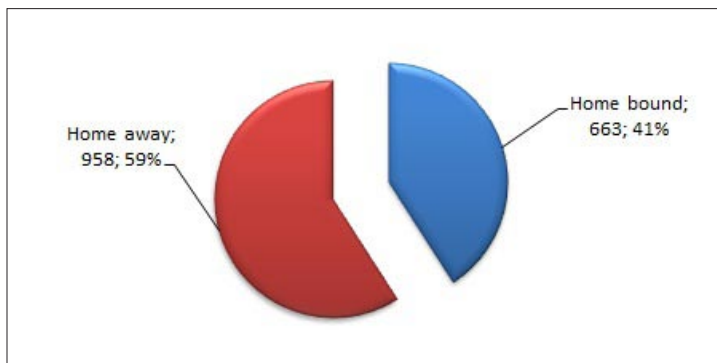
Table 2: The home-away villagers of Zhangzhuang and their reasons for leaving (May 31, 2011)

Total	Jobbing	Studies and Work	Moving to Urban Areas	Own Childen Living in Cities	Doing Business
958	393	130	20	208	207

Table 3: Home-bound villagers in Zhangzhuang (May 31, 2011)

Total	Local business	Couples	Elderly	Children	Local labor force
663	22	248	209	129	55

Diagram 4: Home-away and home-bound in Zhangzhuang village (May 31, 2011)



The survey shows that the villagers who migrated are now mainly in Shijiazhuang and Xingtai in Hebei Province, as well as in Beijing and Tianjin, and in Jinan (Shandong Province) and Xi'an (Shaanxi Province). It also reveals that they have been joining local Church communities. For example, about 400 people in some 70 households are now living and working in Shijiazhuang, the capital of Hebei Province. Together with Catholics from other parishes of Weixian County, they are now actively involved in two big parishes of Shijiazhuang: the Cathedral and Dongjiao parish and four of these migrant Catholics are parish council presidents. This has effectively strengthened the local Church communities. More than 2/3 of the people attending Mass every Sunday in the Cathedral are from Weixian and Nangong of Xingtai Diocese, many of them from Zhangzhuang village.

Meanwhile, the population in Zhangzhuang village itself has dropped by more than half. The faith life and pastoral care of the remaining villagers, mainly the elderly and children, have been greatly affected.

In the past, with the church bell ringing almost every morning, most Catholics in the village would get up early for morning prayers and Eucharistic celebration. Every evening after work, they would come to the church to recite the Rosary and evening prayers. Sometimes, the parish would also organize training activities. During Lent, they would have the Stations of the Cross. Now, however, only 70 elderly people still go to church each morning and about 400 people come for the Eucharist on Sundays. Parish activities have been largely curtailed and lack vitality.

Acknowledging this reality, the parish priest says pastoral work now in Zhangzhuang is very unlike before and it faces many new challenges. For example, it is difficult to organize



The effect on the Church community in Zhangzhuang village of migration for work purposes: now only a few, mostly elderly people are attending Masses on weekdays. Photo: Zhangzhuang parish.

training activities in the parish due to the shortage of enthusiastic youth and energetic middle-aged people.

Data also show that those who migrated from the village for reasons of casual employment/jobbing, doing business elsewhere or joining their children in cities far outnumber those in the village. The trend of migration from the village seems likely to increase. The elderly and children represent a very great percentage of those staying in the village. Given the considerable number of elderly and children remaining in the village, most Catholics still return to visit family members and relatives whenever a festival comes along. These occasions create certain opportunities for the pastoral activities of the parish.

On the other hand, only a few of the many Catholics who moved away from the village can go to church every day. Most can go to church only for Sunday Mass, due to their limited time and the long distance they must travel to the church. The faith life of the second generation of these migrants faces many challenges.



For major feast days Zhangzhuang's Catholics still return to their home village. Photo: Zhangzhuang parish.

Those who migrated as an entire family and were surrounded by a faith-community with people from the same village would live a stable faith-life. But those who migrated alone and have not yet entered into a local faith-community would live in a vacillating faith-life and it would become easy to leave the Church. They should be a focus of special concern.

One Zhangzhuang Catholic named Joseph Zhang, born in 1973, studied medical science from 1989–1992 in Shijiazhuang and then went on to work at a hospital in Zhengding from 1993–1999. Since 2000, he has been running a private clinic near a university. In 1995 he married a Catholic colleague and the next year they had their first daughter Maria, who now attends a vocational school. Their second daughter Theresa was born in 2009. According to Joseph, both he and his wife have always been busy, so they can take Maria to church only on Sundays. They also admit that they have neither the time nor energy to guide their daughter's faith life. As a result, Maria still has not received First Communion. "If she were living in our village parish, she would have received her First Communion long ago," the busy father acknowledged. He is somewhat concerned that he has not given the child timely religious education, and he hopes his hometown church can offer some help. (Note: Some sisters who contacted Joseph said they would help Maria receive her First Communion during the school break this summer.)

Case 2: Zhangbei County Church community that moved from a rural to an urban area.

In 2008, the population of Zhangbei County in Hebei's Zhangjiakou City was 70,000. In 2009, it was 100,000, and by 2010 it was 150,000. Migrants now account for nearly 50% of the population. Some of these migrants are Catholics from Erquanjing Township of Zhangbei County.

Erquanjing Township is the seat of the township government. Among its 2,200 residents, 2,000 are Catholics – 500 belonging to the open community and 1,500 to the underground community. Catholics account for 91% of all township people. In step with the market economy trend, the Hebei Provincial government launched a "three-year transformation" project that led to a rapid drop of parishioners. Most Catholic families moved into Zhangbei County City to take advantage of better life and job opportunities, while some Catholics moved to big cities such as Beijing, Tianjin, Datong, Hohhot, Xilinhote, and Zhangjiakou to take up jobs, do business, and accompany their children going to school.

Traditionally, whenever there was a major feast, especially the four major Church feasts and during the Spring Festival (Lunar New Year) period, Catholics who had moved away would bring their children to their hometown to visit their parents and reunite with friends and relatives. These days, many families do not return to their hometown for several years, even for more than a decade. This is because their entire families have moved away. Since neither relatives nor friends are still there, there is no longer a need for home visits and reunions.

Population migration has created new challenges for the parish. Erquanjing Township now has only 200 Catholics, including both open and underground communities. Only a few Catholics come to the church on weekdays, no more than 50 people on Sundays and



Township church of Erquanjing: Women and children are left, while men migrate for work purposes. Photo: Erquanjing parish.

no more than 200 on big feast days. Thus, the migration phenomenon has rendered the village church almost empty.¹³

The Catholics who migrated to Zhangbei County City from Erquanjing number nearly 800. Given the comparable economic situation and similar cultural practices, dialects, and traditions between city and surrounding rural areas, the Catholics from the township very easily entered the Church community of Zhangbei and were warmly welcomed by the city's Catholics. The newly arrived Catholics not only brought new blood to the city community, but also enabled its quick expansion. Zhangbei County now has 18,000 Catholics. Not long ago, the city had only several hundred Catholics, but now there are more than 3,000. To meet this developing community's needs, the city parish is raising funds to build a new church that can accommodate 3,000 people.



The new church in Zhangbei under construction. Photo: Zhangbei parish.

13 See Mingyan 明艳, "Waichu wu gong jiaoyou xinyang shenghuo diaocha: mo rang 'qunyang' cheng 'wangyang' 外出务工教友信仰生活调查: 莫让“群羊”成“亡羊” (Survey on Migrant Catholic Workers: Don't Let the Flocks Become the Lost), in: *Xindebao* 信德报, January 16, 2011.

Imitating some big cities where Church squares have been constructed, the Zhangbei County government is providing 13 *mu* of land (almost one hectare) to construct a church square along the main road in the newly developed district in order to create a multi-cultural city. Besides setting aside the land, which is worth 600,000 RMB, another 1 million RMB have been allotted for this project.

According to the latest five-year plan, in 2015 Zhangbei County City's residents are expected to number 300,000, including even more Catholic migrants from rural areas. By then, regardless of how many Catholics actually move in, the local Church community must make a timely response. The tendency for churches in the urban area should be toward small and medium size churches in the residential areas. There is no need for large size because the development trend of Church life will be that of small and medium-sized communities. However, the location of more churches must go through a more difficult scrutiny process, and they will also need more clergy to provide pastoral services.

B. Church Care for Migrant Catholics

If one searches *dagong* 打工 (casual employment/jobbing) on the Faith website, 233 reports on Church pastoral activities for migrant workers will show up on 24 web pages. More than 20 of these reports are on the spiritual and religious help offered to migrant workers by the Catholic Church in China, and more than 10 others concern material help offered to migrant workers by local Church communities. These reports show that the Church in China has not only paid due attention to the issues related to migrant workers, but has taken certain actions as well.

According to telephone interviews that Faith Newspaper conducted in May 2011, the help offered to migrant workers by various local Church communities can be categorized as follows:¹⁴

a. Material help for migrant Catholic workers from other places

In May 2010, the clergy and Catholics of Haibowan parish in Wuhai City, Inner Mongolia, visited a Catholic couple severely burned by boiling water while working in a private factory. Besides giving them a 1,000 RMB donation, the parish priest and members of the Loving-heart Association offered them other care and assistance in their life.

b. Table fellowship with migrant Catholic workers on feast days, providing them spiritual support and sense of belonging

In early 2008, an – since 54 years – unprecedented snowstorm hampered almost all of South China. After learning that 13 migrant Catholic workers from Zhouzhi Diocese of Shaanxi Province could not travel home for the Lunar New Year celebrations, the parish priest of Our Lady of Langshan in Nantong, Jiangsu Province, invited them to his parish for the New Year's Eve gathering. Parishioner Ding Fuqing then invited the migrant Catholics to his daughter's restaurant for a party. Though they could not go home for their family reunions, these Catholics did enjoy reunions with other Catholics.

14 See Mingyan, "Waichu wu gong jiaoyou xinyang shenghuo diaocha."

The same happened when a snow storm hampered Shanghai. The priests, sisters, and Catholics of some parishes warmly invited the stranded Catholic migrant workers to their parishes or to join their families for the New Year's Eve gathering and meal. Catholic families like those of Zhang Jiazuo, Li Shiwan, Mi Chunhong, and Zhu Guodong enthusiastically took part. When offering the delicious food to the migrants, they said they were sincerely doing so "because you are our brothers and sisters!" What a marvelous way to witness the spirit of Christian love!

c. Creating jobs and business opportunities for Catholic migrant workers and entrepreneurs

Ms. Gao Anna, a Catholic in Hebei, once advertised in *Faith Newspaper* to recruit Catholics to work in her restaurant. She frankly told *Faith Newspaper*, "I feel good having Catholic faithful working in my restaurant." According to Ms. Anna Gao, more than a dozen young Catholics are working for her, and their faith life is very active. Every weekend, so long as they wish, she sets time aside for them to go to church for Mass and faith-sharing. She also hopes that by having these young people working together, she can reassure their families that their children are in a safe environment that preserves their faith.

When asked if setting time aside for the young people to go to church affects her business, she replied that she is happy to see her employees actually praying for her and her restaurant.

In Tianjin City, many Catholics from Shandong work in construction, restaurants, and home services, while those from Henan are mainly involved in hospital nursing and cleaning services, and others from northeastern China are concentrating on cosmetology, food, and entertainment. Taking their different employment characteristics into consideration, Tianjin's Xikai parish set up a special group to collect employment opportunity information, acting as a go-between to help migrant Catholics find suitable jobs in Catholic-run factories, shops, and even in Catholic households. This helps the migrants secure their income as well as a safe faith atmosphere.

d. Forming support groups, arranging training and leisure activities for migrant Catholic workers

Base Communities and Fellowship Associations have been set up to help migrant Catholics in various cities meet regularly for mutual support and sharing their common faith life. The parish pastors from their own hometowns can visit them regularly. These Base Communities and Fellowship Associations deepen a sense of belonging in the hearts of the migrant Catholic workers and strengthen their enthusiasm for the faith.

Since 2008, the Cathedral parish in Shijiazhuang has organized a youth community and "loving-service group" for young migrant students and workers. This enables them not only to help the parish grow, but also to serve needy people.

The "Catholic's Family" in Cixi of Zhejiang Province is also a self-organized community for migrant Catholic workers. Many local Catholics regard them as members of their own families in offering care and service. For example, there are separate schools for migrant workers' children and for local children, but the living and education conditions of

the former are much poorer than those of the latter. Local Catholics often help migrant Catholic workers to transfer their children to local children's schools. If their work units or employers do not pay them on time or cut their just wages for whatever reason, local Catholics help the migrant Catholic workers to contact legal services or government labor agencies to resolve such issues. Many times, local Catholics also actively offer help whenever the newly arrived migrant Catholic workers encounter difficulties in looking for apartments or taking care of their children and elderly family members.

e. Services for Migrants Provided by Church-run Social Service Organizations

Social service organizations run by the Chinese Church presently offer very limited services for migrant workers. According to data collected from several social service centers in Beijing, Shanghai, Jilin, Xi'an, Lanzhou, and Hebei, their main services include the following:

- training for young migrant workers and fellowship activities;
- tuition fees, tutoring, and accompanying children who are left behind;
- forming service groups of young migrants to care for others and enrich their own lives;
- providing goods and psycho-social service for migrants in disaster areas.

Social service organizations run by the Chinese Church obviously should pay greater attention and offer more help and service to migrant workers. (Please see more from the website of Jinde Charities.)

C. Self-organized Base Communities and Other Types of Communities

At present, some migrant Catholic workers and university students have set up small communities on their own so as to communicate, cooperate and serve the migrant Catholic communities, including many diocesan and regional youth communities such as Chengdu Catholic Youth Fellowship, the Heart of St. Paul Community in Hangzhou, and many diocesan level youth communities in some cities and universities, etc. The "House of Companions on the Same Journey" in Beijing and "Wenzhou Catholic Association and Yongnian Christian Base Communities" in Shanghai are quite typical examples in China.

Case 3: "House for Companions on the Same Journey" in Beijing.

On New Year's Day 2008, heeding the advice of a St. Joseph's Congregation nun in Beijing, some young migrant Catholic workers in Beijing organized the "House for Companions on the Same Journey." It is under the umbrella of the Beijing Diocese and supervised by St. Joseph's Congregation. Its members are mainly young migrant Catholics from outside Beijing who have gone there to work or study, but it welcomes anyone to join this community for the future of people on the same journey.¹⁵

15 "Tonglu ren zhi jia zhangcheng" 同路人之家章程 (Regulation of the "House for Companions on the Same Journey"), Paragraph 5.

Once the House was set up, the young people designed a logo for the House, developed its organizational structure and articulated 39 regulations for its operations. They also set forth its vision as follows:

Through various community activities, the House is dedicated to: promoting communion among its members and enhancing their understanding of faith, helping them to solve the practical difficulties they encounter in daily life, and to live out their spiritual and religious lives. Thus, the House aims to transform its social character into a family environment and enable its members to enjoy a real and stable family atmosphere.¹⁶

Structurally, the House has an advisor, a monitor and groups divided into residential zones. Before every community activity, a priest or sister is invited in to give advice or share reflections with the members. The Beijing Diocese, Beijing Seminary, St. Joseph's Congregation and various parishes have all offered their help in this way, and several activities have been organized at Beijing's South Cathedral and North Church as well as at the seminary.

At the start, the main activities were: practicing sacred music, Bible study under the guidance of a sister or priest, group sharing, and playing games that reflect the Sunday liturgical readings. Later on, pilgrimages were also introduced and activities were developed to celebrate a feast or festival, such as New Year, Christmas, and the Mid-Autumn Festival. On September 13, 2008, Bishop Li Shan of Beijing Diocese visited the House members engaged in activities at the seminary and gave them "moon cakes," a special treat for the Mid-Autumn Festival. He also helped them make dumplings and joined them in praying and sharing. The House organized activities for Christmas in 2008 and New Year celebrations in 2009. On May 16, 2009, the members visited Jingxian parish in Hengshui Diocese, Hebei Province, and organized a sharing session there.

According to Tony Gao, an IT engineer who helped launch the House, the House organized activities once or twice a month after it was established. Only about 20 people were involved at first, but this gradually increased to 50–60, and nearly 100 were engaged at one point. The participants are young migrant Catholic workers from all walks of work and life in Beijing. Tony Gao himself is an example. He went to Beijing for studies in 2003, and took up an IT job four years later. Mary Wang, a young woman from Shijiazhuang's Xinji County in Hebei who also was there from the start, now works in finance in Beijing. The House regulations were drafted by Francis Guo, a media professional from Beijing. Paul Du, who is a designer of animation, designed the logo. Mary Ye, a young woman who has been in charge of activity planning, now is working for the website.

Unfortunately, the House has not organized any activities since mid-2009 mainly because it could not secure proper venues for its activities, or else House leaders were unavailable (away on business trips), or inadequate care and support were forthcoming from the local Church.

The community organized by Catholics themselves has been a good development, one that can help Catholics offer care and support for each other. The local Church should give

¹⁶ "Tonglu ren zhi jia zhangcheng," Paragraph 6.

more care and assistance to such initiatives. At present, the leaders of “House on the Same Journey” are receiving training in spirituality and leadership skills. After a brief break, the House can hopefully renew its vigor and enthusiasm, and also train its next generation of qualified leaders.

Case 4. Wenzhou Catholic Association and Yongnian Christian Base Community in Shanghai.

a. The Fellowship Association of Wenzhou Catholics in Shanghai

“The Fellowship Association of Wenzhou Catholics in Shanghai” (also known as: “Pasture of the Flock”) is a quite well established group of Catholic migrants from outside. At the beginning of 2011, in his New Year pastoral letter “Keeping up with the Times”, the Bishop of Shanghai, Jin Luxian mentioned that this group of mainly Wenzhou Catholics numbers approximately 1,500 members. According to most recent statistics, there are about 2,000 Catholics from Wenzhou in Shanghai. When fervent Catholics from Wenzhou arrived in this unfamiliar territory, they spontaneously got in touch with each other and organized themselves, in order to strengthen their friendship by holding group activities and thus boost their spiritual lives, too. A similar, very lively community of the faithful exists in the St. Peter’s Church in Shanghai’s Chongqing South Road.

- Established 2005.
- Members: people from Wenzhou (90%) as well as some people from other areas doing business, working, living, or studying in Shanghai.
- Affiliations: The members belong to the Diocese of Shanghai where they have moved to, on Sundays they go to the churches in their vicinity to attend Mass and other activities and serve the local Church.
- Priest: Rev. Tian Yuanxiang of the Diocese of Shanghai.
- Number of members: on ordinary Sundays: 30 to 40, on high feasts and main gatherings: from 500 to 600.
- Time: at weekends: 30 Minutes practicing church songs, members accompany the songs with instruments, 90 minutes of Bible study and Bible sharing.
- Location: St. Peter’s Church on Chongqing South Road, Song Jiang.
- Activities: at weekends: Bible studies, singing, sports, charitable activities, pilgrimages, retreats, common celebrations, and meals.

Biannually the Association organizes pilgrimages and retreats, with 60 to 70 people attending each of these activities. Almost all the faithful have participated in one of the pilgrimages either to Sheshan in Songjiang, Shanghai, or to Zhoushan or Ningbo in Zhejiang, or to Qingyang or Taicang in Jiangsu, or to the Rosary House in Fuzhou. One group of Catholics went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and other places. Retreats are usually held for two days as a preparation for Easter and Christmas. Twice they celebrated Easter in the seminary of Sheshan, once walking 10 km distance to Sheshan on Holy Saturday to celebrate Easter there. Some parents brought their children along to visit the seminary and to make contact with the seminarians, to pray with them, and play basketball with them. The purpose was to get the children acquainted with seminary life at a very early stage and thus possibly sow the seeds of vocations.

Since people are usually quite busy before Christmas, the Association conducts evening Christmas celebrations after Christmas. On the Dragon boat festival and the Mid-Autumn festival activities are held with sharing, exchanging gifts, giving testimony or eating together and sharing the costs. Besides mutually sharing the faith, they also swap experiences concerning business administration and trading issues, thereby letting everyone benefit from these sharings and all somehow help each other. The community is also trying to do some charity work and care for sick people by helping them to get into hospital when necessary, pray with them and comfort them, offer financial assistance and even donate blood or blood platelets. They also visit the elderly people in the Diocese of Shanghai's old folks' home.

In the afternoons of weekends, some of the faithful will play ball together or do some physical exercise. In the evenings children will accompany their parents to the St. Peter's Church for Bible sharing and Sunday school. Seminarians on parish regency and experts from other groups are responsible for taking care of the children and youth.

Although most members of the Association come from the Cangnan and Pinyang districts in Wenzhou, the Association also attracts Catholics from other areas, not only from Wenzhou, but also from Shanxi, Shandong, Jiangsu, Hebei, Taiwan and Shanghai, especially to attend their Bible studies and other activities.

According to the recollection of one founding member of this group, Mathew Xue Jifu, he always felt as if there was something missing when he simply went home after every Sunday Mass during the first period after he came from Wenzhou to Shanghai for business purposes in 2004. Prior to that, regardless whether it was in his hometown in Cangnan, Longgang, or in Wenzhou City, the young faithful would stay at church for half a day on Sundays after Mass, sharing and chatting, studying the Bible, cleaning the church, practicing church songs, visiting the sick and those who would not come to church. During these busy activities, people would find the chance to communicate, to establish friendships and develop a feeling of belonging to the Church. Many migrants coming to a new place find it difficult to get used to the habit of everyone going home immediately after attending holy Mass.

In order to find this warmth and feeling of belonging to the home of the Church, some business people and workers from Wenzhou who knew each other well started to get in touch with each other, came together for meetings and sharings. This Catholic businessman said that although the Wenzhou business association and the Wenzhou Hometown Association in Shanghai invited him to join their respective groups, he rather preferred to stay in the church and communicate with his sisters and brothers in Christ and so he started with the fellowship activities of the Wenzhou Faithful.

One other founding member of the Association, Dominic Huang Ren thinks that the difference between people from Wenzhou and other people lies in the following facts:

1. Difference in dialect: the Wenzhou dialect has, like all dialects, its uniqueness.
2. The way of living the faith is different: already during the 1960s and 1970s the elderly priests in the Church of Wenzhou-Cangnan trained a group of missionary catechists and this laid a very good foundation for the development and growth of the Catholic Church there. Therefore, during the ten years of turmoil in the Church of Wenzhou,

- the catechists bravely led their faithful in learning the catechism and praying all along, and their faith life did not come to a halt. After the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Church in Wenzhou and its various groups revived very quickly. One after another, the Bible study group, the group of altar boys, the charitable groups, choirs, rosary groups, and all kind of small groups of base communities were re-established and became the main force for the recovery and development of the local Church.
3. The way of doing business is different: The people of Wenzhou are called the “Jews of China,” holding the business tightly in their hands, thus making it easy for people from Wenzhou to contact each other and to organize themselves.
 4. Being the first generation to migrate and coming to an unfamiliar environment, being a stranger to the local area, and not having started to integrate themselves into the new surroundings, having a group consisting of people from their own home area to rely on is very important. The meetings help to combat homesickness, it feels good to have cordial encounters with fellow countrymen, and it makes the distance to home somehow shorter. That makes the existence of the Wenzhou Catholic Association so valuable and important.

This founding member of the Association came to Shanghai to do business in 2002. Already in his old home in Wenzhou he used to be a very fervent Catholic. He emphasized: “We are all human beings, we all face apathy and laziness, especially being a migrant. In the vast ocean of an exploding Chinese economy we might become indifferent if we do not get mutual caring, encouragement, and the opportunity to attend meaningful activities. However, having this Association, this kind of community, helps us all to walk together in this home away from home and urges us to become even more faithful, more fervent. For example, some Catholics who originally did not go to church very often come regularly now after attending the various activities of our community. Others come regularly to the Bible study groups after joining our charity teams first, for example doing errands for needy people, etc. This shows the real fruits of all the promotion and efforts of everyone in this Association.”

The priest in charge of the Wenzhou Catholics' Association in Shanghai, Fr. Tian Yuanxiang, recalls: “At the beginning of its foundation, the Wenzhou Catholics' Association in Shanghai did not have a priest to lead them. In 2006 I was transferred to work with the Guangqi Press. At that time the Guangqi Press had its offices right at the St. Peter's Church in Chongqing South Road. Since the second half of 2006, I have accepted their invitation to help with the Bible study groups and with preparing various activities. Before every activity the core of the group wanted to discuss everything with the priest.” Fr. Tian pointed out: “By promoting communication and interaction between the local Church and the faithful, the group recreated the basic nature of the catholicity of the Church. Through all these activities, everybody raised his or her awareness of what it means to be a Christian and thus enhanced the missionary spirit to spread the gospel. Of course, the nature of this group of Catholics coming from outside is that of a group or association, not that of a parish. Therefore I always encourage the people to go to the parishes in their vicinity, attend the Masses there, and take part in their activities.”

The Bishop of Shanghai, Jin Luxian, supports the efforts of Fr. Tian to take care of these migrants. The old Bishop sees the migration issue as very important, therefore he requires the priests in the Shanghai Diocese not only to take good care of the “old” Shanghai Catholics in their parishes, but also to show concern for the faithful among the people on the move and the migrant workers in Shanghai. “Let them experience that the Catholic Church is truly one big family, that Christians are truly sisters and brothers.” That’s how the Bishop expressed his concern in the New Year’s pastoral letter 2011.

The parish priest of the St. Paul’s parish in Shanghai, Fr. Gong Tiande, welcomes and supports the weekend Bible study and all the other activities of the Wenzhou Catholics’ Association in his parish very much. Fr. Gong even hopes that this group of migrant Catholics will enrich and continue the pastoral and missionary work of his parish.

Thanks to the support of the priests in Shanghai and the hometown Wenzhou and because of the great effort of the faithful, this Fellowship Association of Catholics in Shanghai is developing very well. In order to take care of the faithful living in different districts of Shanghai, as of October 22, 2011 an independent location was set up in Songjiang and another one will soon be set up in Pudong.

On February 6, 2011 (4th of the first month of the lunar calendar) the “Association of the Cangnan Deanery of Wenzhou Catholics living away from home” was founded in Longgang. Leading members of the Shanghai, Hangzhou, Yiwu, and Chengdu associations of Wenzhou (Cangnan) Catholics as well as persons in charge of other groups took part.

Fr. Chen Shiyu of the Cangnan deanery of Wenzhou emphasized: “The Wenzhou Catholics’ Association of Shanghai, a very mature association, has urged the home Church to establish an association for Wenzhou Catholics who live away from Wenzhou: the “Association of Catholics of the deanery Cangnan in Wenzhou living away from home”. The various associations of Catholics from Wenzhou living away from home do not have formal connections or relations to each other. Therefore the most important reason for establishing this association is to create a network to help the Catholics from Wenzhou living away from home to unite in order to keep their enthusiasm for the faith, their piety alive, and not to become luke warm in their spiritual life, just because they are far away from home. I hope that those faithful thus organized will contribute to the pastoral and evangelization efforts in the local parishes of their guest area.”

At present, this newly established association has not yet set up a clearly organized system regulated by written statutes, and is even cautiously deliberating and searching for its status. But since the founding members and most attendees are successful business people, as well as mature faithful, and they surely have experience in business administration, the association is nevertheless operating very well under their guidance. For example, the team is implementing a system of cooperation by sharing the work. Presently there are five teams: the catechetical team, the charity team, the team of women’s affairs, a logistics team, and a team of commercial advisors, with an active team leader or group leader in each group.

Looking at the perspective of the long-term developments of domestic or international Catholic Communities, establishing a democratic system of an alternating leadership and

a standardization of the regulation system of such communities seems to be useful for a steady development of these newly developing communities.

b. Yongnian Christian Base Community in Shanghai.

To care for Catholic faithful who moved elsewhere for business, jobbing/casual employment, work, and permanent residence, the hometown clergy often visited them and provided encouragement and guidance to help them set up Christian Base Communities (CBC) in their respective cities. The CBC have effectively made connections among the migrant Catholic faithful and organized them for various activities. With the care and support of their hometown Church community and their newly-found one, the CBC have strengthened friendship and a sense of belonging among fellow Chinese Catholics from the same place, and also promoted the pastoral care and evangelization of both communities. The several CBCs formed in various big cities by Yongnian Parish of Handan Diocese in Hebei Province have been playing a vital role in making connections and strengthening faith life among the Catholic faithful. They can be considered a success.

Yongnian is a big traditional Catholic county, with more than 30,000 Catholics. More than 10 years ago, some priests from abroad brought the CBC idea to Yongnian. Since then, the CBC have been growing and spreading in Yongnian Church communities.

When the open-door policy started, many Yongnian people began to produce fasteners. To sell these products, some Catholics moved to big cities and became the first-generation of migrant Catholics. Though they had left their hometown, their hometown Church did not forget them, nor did the Catholic migrants forget their hometown Church. Fathers Sun Jigeng and Wang Luming [from Yongnian], respectively parish priest and associate parish priest, visited the migrant Catholics regularly every year and took care of them. The priests also encouraged them to continue to form CBCs in various cities so that the Catholic migrants could be united and stay together.¹⁷

The Yongnian CBC in Shanghai, which was established much earlier, has developed a certain maturity and become quite influential.

When Chinese people migrated abroad or to big cities in the past, communities like a "hometown association," "business association," "fellowship association," or the like would be organized. One of the first migrant Catholics from Yongnian is Mr. Li Shibin. After he had made certain progress in doing business, he hoped to establish a "fellowship association of Yongnian Catholics" so as to better organize and connect the Catholic faithful. After consulting Father Sun Jigen, his parish priest at home, he helped start the Yongnian CBC in Shanghai on December 9, 2005. All members are Catholics who migrated from Yongnian to Shanghai. Through democratic election, the community leaders were chosen and regulations were set up. The main regulation elements are: Bible study, evangeliza-

¹⁷ The number of CBCs from Yongnian varies from place to place. The number of members and establishment dates are: Shanghai: 100 (December 9, 2005), Yangquan: 60 (December 13, 2006), Changsha: 100 (January 9, 2007), Taiyan: 60 (November 26, 2007), Lüliang area: 40 (November 22, 2007), Datong: 50 (November 28, 2007), Fushun 50 (June 16, 2008), Shenyang: 100 (June 18, 2008), Tianjin: 150 (April 19, 2008), Yinchuan: 50 (April 24, 2009).

tion, faith practice, mutual help, and service to society. The CBC thus became the spiritual home for Yongnian Catholics in Shanghai.¹⁸

Once the CBC was established, small gatherings were held weekly and big gatherings once a month. All members now get together for an annual assembly. The chairperson, vice-chairperson, consultants, and board members hold regular planning meetings and study sessions. Their activities include Eucharistic celebrations, Bible study, catechism classes, and learning sacred songs. There also are youth summer catechism classes, pilgrimages, and charitable activities.

The CBC encountered big challenges at first. Fortunately, at its lowest point, the CBC got steady care and support from both communities of the hometown Church as well as of Shanghai Church. For example, there was a period when the activities became few and participants were just six. Even so, Father Li Xiaowei of Jinjiaxiang parish continued to provide an air-conditioned conference room for their gatherings. But these Catholics felt too embarrassed to use those facilities and instead stayed outside for meetings and Bible study. And at the same time, Fathers Sun Jigen and Wang Luming of Yongnian parish kept visiting them and sent experienced teachers to Shanghai to provide training courses for the CBC members.¹⁹

For the development of a CBC mainly composed of migrants from outside, the acceptance and support of the local Church community is essential. Father Gong Tiande of Zhangjialou parish and Father Li Xiaowei of Jinjiaxiang parish have been giving steady support and help to this new-born community. Since Father Li was transferred to Jinjiaxiang from Zhangjialou, he invited the CBC to have gatherings and carry out their activities in Jinjiaxiang. While the migrant Catholics were receiving the fine help they needed, they in turn also brought vigor and vitality to the local parish.

On March 17, 2007, the CBC went to visit the old folks at Zhangjiang Home for the Elderly in the new district of Pudong. On May 5, Father Li Xiaowei took all CBC members on a pilgrimage to Sheshan. On August 2, he took the summer catechism class students and some CBC members, about 100 people in all, on pilgrimage to Suzhou and Kunshan. On August 4, the CBC carried out charitable donation activities in Zhangjialou parish. In 2008, the Yongnian CBC organized the Youth Summer Catechism Class (July 10–27) together with Jinjiaxiang parish. At Jinjiaxiang parish on December 11, 2010, with gratitude and joy the representatives of Yongnian CBC from Yongnian, Changsha, and Changzhi joined with the Yongnian CBC in Shanghai and the local Catholics to celebrate the “Fifth anniversary ceremony of Yongnian CBC’s establishment in Shanghai.”²⁰ In addition, for three consecutive years, the Yongnian CBC in Shanghai has organized blood donation campaigns at Jinjiaxiang parish.

18 “Ling juli jiechu Yongnian jiaoyou Shanghai jijituan” 零距离接触永年教友上海基基团 (In close contact with the Yongnian CBC in Shanghai), in: *Xindebao* 信德报, August 10, 2007. The Regulation may be found on www.xinde.org.

19 “Ling juli jiechu Yongnian jiaoyou Shanghai jijituan.”

20 “Shanghai: (Yongnian) jijituan juxing 5 zhounian qingdian” 上海: (永年) 基基团举行 5 周年庆典 (Shanghai: The CBC of Yongnian in Shanghai Celebrates its Fifth Anniversary), www.xinde.org (accessed on December 17, 2010).

As it developed during the past six years, the Yongnian CBC in Shanghai has provided rich experiences in service to migrant Catholics through local Church communities in China. No matter if it is the Yongnian CBC in Shanghai or CBC elsewhere or other types of communities in other places, their establishment, development and success in overcoming hardships and challenges all result from the participation and cooperation of the communities themselves, as well as the help of the hometown and local Church communities in Shanghai. Their experiences can be summed up as follows:

1. Dedicated and unselfish lay faithful take the initiative and take turns to lead.
2. The migrant Catholics gain a certain economic strength and develop a stable work foundation.
3. The number (size) of CBC is not too big, but their activities are attractive and benefit the members' faith life and that of their children.
4. CBC benefit from the understanding, care, and support provided by their hometown Church communities and those of the cities to which they had moved.

Short summary

Facing the fact of international migration, as early as 1912 the Church established a pontifical office to deal with migrant affairs; in 1914 a national day of migrants in Italy was instituted; in 2004 an international day of migrants was held; in 1951 the International Catholic Migrant Commission was founded; in 1970 the "Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People" was established.²¹ During the last 100 years, facing the problems of migration, all reigning popes have almost annually issued statements regarding questions concerning migrants and refugees. For example, the present Pope Benedict XVI saw migration as "a sign of the times" (2006 Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, "Migration: a sign of the times"). He suggested a "right of every human person, in its dual aspect of the possibility to leave one's country and the possibility to enter another country to look for better conditions of life ..." (citing John Paul VI, 2001), therefore society has an obligation to care for the religious life of migrants. "Immigrants, moreover, have the duty to integrate into the host country, respecting its laws and its national identity" (2011 Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees).

The United Nations also sees the importance of the issue of migrants. On December 5, 1951, the United Nations convened an "International Conference on Migration" for the first time and subsequently established an "International Organization for Migration" with its headquarters in Geneva. On December 18, 1990, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families". In 2000, the United Nations decided to proclaim December 18 as the "International Migrants Day".²²

21 See John Paul II's Message for the 87th World Day of Migrants and Refugees and Benedict XVI's encyclical "Caritas in veritate." Comment in Chinese in Agenzia Fides of July 11, 2009, <http://www.fides.org/aree/news/newsdet.php?idnews=4325&lan=chi>

22 See the homepage of the United Nations <http://www.un.org/>; and the Online Version of People's Daily <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/guoji/209/1998/index.html>. (At present China has not yet established an official connection with the International Organization for Migrants, but since 2001 it has been an observer of this organization.)

In the face of the current irreversible tide of migration in China and the phenomenon of an increasing number of people on the move, the efforts of some local Churches to pay attention to the migrant workers, to show concern and care, and to take action, deserves approval and has to be further promoted. Actually, while the elite of faithful migrants who bravely wander the world and break new ground make great contributions to the local society and Church, they have at the same time to gradually integrate themselves into the local society. Sooner or later they have to become “local citizens” and “local Church members” of the places they have moved to, bring new blood to the communities of faithful, and become a new source of life for the local Church.

The Holy See has been a member country of the “International Organization for Migrants” of the United Nations since 2011.)