



EUROPE/FRANCE - Missionary Childhood marks 90 years since the arrival of the relics of the Chinese martyr Saint Paul Chen at the Cathedral of Notre Dame

Paris (Agenzia Fides) – Recently in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood or Holy Childhood celebrated the 90th anniversary of the arrival in the Cathedral of the relics of Saint Paul Chen, a young Chinese seminarian martyr who was a member of Holy Childhood in China. His earthly remains reached Notre Dame on 10 June 1920 and were placed in the chapel dedicated to the Child Jesus, entrusted to the Holy Childhood Mission Society. On the occasion of the anniversary on June 10 Bishop Jérôme Beau, Auxiliary Bishop of Paris, presided a special Mass and in his homily emphasised the essential role of children in the Church, they open their hearts to the needs of less fortunate children and to the missionary life. The anniversary was an opportunity to give new impulse to efforts of solidarity made by Missionary Childhood children towards their peers in China. From Rome Baptistine Ralamboarison represented the International Secretariat of the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood at the celebration

Paul Tchen (Chen Changpin) was born on 11 April 1838 at Sintchen, in the Chinese province of Kouy-tcheou (Guizhou), to non Christian parents who were very poor. Paul received instruction thanks to support from the Missionary Childhood Society. He was admitted to the minor seminary in 1853, and baptised and confirmed on Christmas day the same year, making his first Holy Communion in 1854. A gentle, kindly boy, he refused his father's call to return to the family, since he felt quite sure about his vocation. In 1860 he entered the major seminary of Tsin-gay. On 12 June 1861 soldiers broke into the college, they arrested Paul and others charged with being Christians. Despite suffering and treats none of them renounced the faith. Paul and his companions were killed on 29 July 1861, and seminary was destroyed. Beatified by Pope Pius X in 1908, the earthly remains of Paul were taken Paris to the Cathedral of Notre Dame and placed in the Chapel of Holy Childhood on 10 June 1920. Seminarian Paul was among of 120 Chinese martyrs canonised by the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, on 1 October 2000. (S.L.) (Agenzia Fides 17/6/2010)