



ASIA/CHINA - Consecration of the Parish of Jesus the Good Shepherd: a moment of communion in the heart of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue

Bao Tou (Agenzia Fides) - The consecration of the parish of Jesus the Good Shepherd, in the Diocese of Bao Tou, in the Province of Inner Mongolia in mainland China, was not only a moment of communion for the local faithful, but it has also been an important landmark in ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. According to a report from Faith in He Bei, the main Catholic website on the mainland, Bishop Du Jiang, Bishop of the Diocese of Ba Meng, who was installed on April 8, and Bishop Meng Qing Lu, Bishop of the Diocese of HuHeHaoTe, consecrated on April 18 of last year - both with the approval of the Holy See - presided over the solemn consecration of the Church of Jesus the Good Shepherd on September 1. Forty priests concelebrated the solemn ritual with the two bishops. The Mass was also attended by 3 deacons, 12 religious, and more than 1,500 faithful. In his homily, Bishop Du Jiang said, "we gather at the feet of Our Lord to be his good flock."

The ceremony was also attended by representatives of the Protestant and Buddhist communities. Also, as many Catholics came from other places for the consecration of the church, the Protestants have offered them accommodation and Buddhists offered cooking oil, as a sign of tribute to the Catholic community. According to a Catholic priest, it was a strong sign of respect and harmonious coexistence among the local religious communities. The previous day the two bishops also administered the Sacrament of Confirmation and presided over a prayer vigil on the theme of Communion in the Lord. Over one thousand faithful attended the extraordinary event. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 07/09/2010)