

Christmas in China: without church, without singing, or with the visit of the Public Security (II)

A priest of the unofficial community tells of the Christmas celebration in a house, secretly, without decorations and without pomp. The official community suffers government controls. Part II of a series of testimonies.

Rome (AsiaNews) - that for years have Christmas Mass: that government another of the faces is celebrated in China by "for the Lord and Church". Here we from the unofficial north-west of China, official community in latter, despite having in church, remains Security guards. This one.



In China there are communities had no opportunity to celebrate some unofficial communities thorities have targeted, removing sacred buildings. This is with which Christmas is celebrated faithful who accept this suffer-for fidelity to His present the testimony of a priest community, who resides in the and that of a priest from the the north of the country. The the freedom to celebrate Mass under the control of the Public is Part II of a series. For part

We have neither church nor decorations. Our Sunday Eucharist is usually celebrated in a house of the faithful and even at Christmas it is no exception. You prepare a table, cover it with a white tablecloth, and prepare all you need for mass. About 100 faithful crowd the bedroom and anteroom to participate in the Eucharist. Since the external atmosphere is very tense, for security reasons we pull the window curtains, we keep the tone of our prayers low, so as not to attract the attention of the people passing by. Still for security reasons, during the Mass, the priest and the faithful do not sing any part of the liturgy, but only recite it. To create the Christmas atmosphere, the family that hosts the celebration prepares the crib.

This is our celebration of Christmas. Although a little simple, we are satisfied and grateful, because at least we still have the chance to celebrate it together. In other parishes of our diocese, in recent years priests have been forbidden to celebrate Christmas; several of their places of worship have been closed. Christmas celebrations are not permitted even in remote places. Because of this, in many places, the faithful have been without Christmas mass for years.

We willingly suffer for the Lord and for fidelity to His Church. Two thousand years ago the Savior was not born in similar circumstances? We hope to celebrate Holy Christmas in peace. We hope that our Church can soon enjoy religious freedom. Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Don Giovanni

Before Christmas, the faithful practice Christmas carols, and, according to tradition, preparations are made for the celebration. A few days before Christmas the church is decorated and in a convenient place the nativity scene and the Christmas tree are prepared. On Christmas Eve, after the Vigil Mass, the faithful make a show. After a short break, midnight Mass is celebrated, welcoming the Infant Jesus.

The government sends its officials every year before Christmas, including members of the United Front, the Office for Religious Affairs, the Neighborhood Committee and Public Security, on the one hand, to present good wishes, and on the other, to recommend paying attention to public safety and fire prevention. In the last two years they also recommend not allowing participation by young people (under 18). Thanks to the good relations and the benevolence of the local authorities, they simply say it out loud, but without actually prohibiting it. On Christmas Eve, the Public Security sends some guards to make sure there are no fires, thefts and accidents, until the end of the ceremony.

Don Daniele