

The guest speakers Sister Teresa Huang, C.I.C. (Canton) and Sister Rosa Lee, C.I.C. were briefly introduced by Serran Dominic Tang. They spoke on the history and current work of the Chinese Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (C.I.C.): -

A. Present Status in Hong Kong (Sister Rosa Lee)

The Chinese Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (C.I.C.) was a women religious community started in Canton, China in 1932 for Chinese ladies working for Chinese communities. With the change of government in China in 1949, the C.I.C. sisters were persecuted vigorously. Between 1951-1954, six sisters were expelled from China. With the assistance of the Bishop of Hong Kong, the sisters founded St. Antonius Kindergarten and St. Antonius Primary School in Yau Tong in 1959. The St. Antonius girls' College was founded in 1972, but was handed back to the Diocese of Hong Kong in 2017 due to manpower shortage. Their work is mainly in education and teaching catechism in various parishes. There are now only 11 nuns, with average age over 60.

B. History in China (by Sister Teresa Huang from Guangzhou, China)

Due to the political unrest during the Opium War and invasion by foreign powers, a group of 5 "consecrated virgins" was placed under the care of French Nuns (MEP) in 1895. A female community of nuns was started on 8th December 1902. This group was handed over to the Canadian nuns belonging to the Immaculate Conception. These Chinese nuns were separated from the Canadian nuns in 1920 by the Bishop of Canton. The Chinese Sisters of the Immaculate Conception was officially started in 1923 by the Bishop of Canton – set up to accept only Chinese and working only for Chinese communities. The spirituality is the humility of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Their work is in education and teaching catechism to the Chinese people.

With the change of government in China, the last profession of the nuns in China was held on 24th July 1949. After this, the community was disbanded and the nuns were sent home. In 1947, there were more than 60 nuns in the community. In 1958, their superior (Sister Chan) was persecuted and placed in solitary confinement for 6 years. In 1983, their Superior Sister Chan returned to take charge of the nuns. Since 1998, the political atmosphere in China has improved. At present, there are 38 nuns with 8 aspirants in their community in Canton, with an average age of 44.4 years of age (the oldest member is aged 100). Since 2013, the nuns have started to take on the care of the elderly people besides education.