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## Rev Peter Li Hongye

<b>BIRTH</b>	6 Jan 1920
<b>DEATH</b>	23 Apr 2011 (aged 91)
<b>BURIAL</b>	Xicunxian Village Cemetery Luoyang, Henan, China
<b>MEMORIAL ID</b>	70590877 ·

Born on January 6, 1920, in a Catholic family since three generations in the village of Xicunxian, Province of Henan China, Monsignor Peter Li Hongye entered the Minor Seminary at 12 years of age and completed his studies in the Major Seminary of Kaifeng. Ordained to the Priesthood on April 22, 1944, he was repeatedly arrested and jailed, already as a priest, as from 1955. In 1956, he was judged as being "obstinate" and sentenced to prison in the remote province of Qinghai, where he remained for 28 years.

Released in 1984, he was the only priest in the Diocese of Luoyang. On September 10, 1987, he was ordained Bishop of Luoyang. On June 25, 1994, he was arrested again and then again in 2001, while preaching a spiritual retreat to the Nuns of the Diocese.

The faithful remember him for his strength to live faithfully his vocation and suffering during the periods spent in prison or under house arrest or under close surveillance. He was esteemed by all for his fearless life, smart intellect, deep faith, prudence and firmness, the devotion to the Holy Father. He was a man of great culture, known for his thorough knowledge of Latin.

In his tireless work he often visited Catholic communities, which gathered almost always in one of the faithful's houses, because the churches of the past had been requisitioned by the Government and put to other uses. These visits cost him great effort, because sometimes public transport was not available: at times, he had to walk many hours to reach the faithful. x

Since 2004, he suffered from heart problems and spent several periods in hospital and was always sick. A man of strong

character, he was a prominent figure in the Church in China for his many years of martyrdom for the testimony of faith. The general political situation, the extreme poverty of so many Catholic communities and the lack of church personnel made Bishop Li's work heroic.

The city of Luoyang, today major industrial center, famous for being one of the four ancient capitals of China, is visited by many foreign tourists. The Apostolic Prefecture of Luoyang, was born on May 14, 1929, with a separated territory from the Apostolic Vicariate of Zhengzhou, it then became the Apostolic Vicariate on January 28, 1935, and became a Diocese on April 11, 1946. The ecclesiastical district now has about 10,000 faithful, thirty priests and 50 nuns.

Bishop Li Hongye died on April 23, 2011, aged 91, shortly after suffering from a heart attack during the Easter Vigil, as he blessed the water before baptisms. The ambulance corps refused to rush him to hospital as they assessed the unconscious old man could not be saved," a Church source said. The Bishop passed away at 10.30 pm., after he received the sacrament of the anointing of the sick.

The Funeral of Bishop Peter Li Hongye was held last April 29, in his native village, halfway between Zhengzhou and Luoyang. Unfortunately, only ten days after his burial, Government workers demolished the Cross and the dome-shaped structure of his tombstone, leaving only the base behind.

A Church source said government officials told people there should be no construction on that piece of land, though the source thinks the real reason was they did not want to see a Cross.

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**Created by:** Eman Bonnici

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