

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CELEBRATED CATHEDRAL'S SIXTY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY Bishop Bianchi Celebrates Pontifical High Mass

"Exactly a year ago, at the solemn celebration of the closing of the Marian Year, we placed a golden, jewelled crown on the statue of Our Lady, whom in our hearts better than with our voices we proclaim our Heavenly Queen. Her beautiful statue, crowned on that occasion, is now enthroned over the main altar of our Cathedral as an eloquent symbol of devotion and love that the Catholics of Hong Kong nourish towards the noble Lady whom the whole Church extols as the Immaculate Mother of God", said Bishop Lawrence Bianchi in his sermon during the Pontifical High Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, yesterday.

From early morning the Cathedral was crowded with faithful honouring the Immaculate Mother of God. The celebration closed with Pontifical High Mass at 6 p.m. when representatives of the religious congregations were present, as well as an immense gathering of people.

At the conclusion of the Mass, a solemn candlelight procession took place to the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, in the Cathedral compound. His Lordship Bishop Bianchi, assisted by his Vicars-General, carried the Blessed Sacrament and gave Benediction at the Grotto. The Clergy and Sisters, children from the Catholic schools in the Cathedral parish, and thousands of parishioners, overcrowded the compound.

Anniversary

The day also commemorated the sixty-seventh anniversary of the foundation of the Cathedral. It was dedicated on December 7, 1888, by Bishop Bourdon of Burma, in the absence of the then Vicar - Apostolic, Msgr. Timoleon Raimondi. The cost of the erection was about \$120,000. At the time the Vicariate-Apostolic of Hong Kong had some 6,900 Catholics.

Catholics in Hong Kong can be grateful to the foresight of the Bishop and Fathers of the Pontifical Institute of the Foreign Missions in erecting a magnificent cathedral which even in present days still fulfils the needs of an ever increasing parish.

