

New Diocesan Seminary Cornerstone of Holy Spirit Seminary Laid by Bishop Bianchi

LAST Sunday in a solemn ceremony and in the presence of representatives of Government, the Consular Corps and of religious and lay organisations His Lordship Bishop Lawrence Bianchi blessed the foundations of the new Holy Spirit Seminary in the parish of Tai Koo Lao and laid its cornerstone.

The construction of the new Holy Spirit Seminary, which will be a three-storey building accommodating one hundred seminarians, is already well advanced and is expected to be completed by Easter this year.

Nearly a thousand guests attended the ceremony on the building site below the parish church of Our Lady of Lourdes overlooking Hong Kong island's western shores between Aberdeen and Telegraph Bay. Seminarians from both the Regional Seminary of Our Lady Queen of China in Aberdeen and the present Diocesan Seminary in Saikung attended the function and their choirs sang hymns during the blessing of the building's foundation.

Gift to Bishop

The Right Reverend Monsignor Anthony Riganti, Vicar-General, opened the ceremony in welcoming the guests and by thanking all who had helped to realise the plans for the new seminary. Msgr. Riganti mentioned that it was due to the generosity of the Foreign Mission Society of Paris, who had offered the building site as a gift to the Bishop, that the construction of the new Holy Spirit Seminary was made possible. "How deeply the Bishop and the Diocese of Hong Kong feel indebted to the Superior-General and the Council of that Institute, would be difficult and perhaps impossible to express in words," said Msgr. Riganti. He expressed thanks also to the Society of St. Peter, the Apostle for Seminaries in Rome who granted a substantial subsidy for the building as well as to many others, including the late Father Spada who contributed towards the erection of the seminary.

Training of Clergy

"Although these premises will be new," said Msgr. Riganti, "there will be nothing new in what will be done under their roof. Here we shall but witness the continuation of the work done by the Fathers of the Pontifical Foreign Mission Institute since the Holy See appointed them to Hong Kong for missionary work, which of course included the training of the local clergy as co-workers at first and with growing responsibilities in future. It is therefore with great pleasure and no little pride that His Lordship the Bishop officiates at this function which is being held at the beginning of the year during which the centenary of the Pontifical Foreign Mission Institute's arrival in Hong Kong will be solemnly commemorated."

Msgr. Riganti then spoke of the many occasions when the problem of the Diocesan Seminary formed the subject of meetings and discussions between the Bishop and his counsellors.

had become inadequate and additions to the existing building were found to be not practical.

Harvest of Apostles

Although through the generosity of the Fathers of the Foreign Mission Society of Paris and the members of the St. Peter's Society in Rome the problem has now largely been solved, there still remains much to be done to finish the work. Msgr. Riganti appealed to all to help in completing and furnishing the new seminary.

The Very Rev. Joseph Garland, S.J., in his address likened the seminarians to the three Wise Men from the East who sought Christ. Like the Magi the seminarians were setting out on a long and tedious journey which cost not only money but much sacrifice, and they were setting off after a star which would bring them to Christ.

The seminary was something which concerned every Catholic, for the future of the Catholic Church was of vital importance to them, and the future of the



The Stone is Laid

"The faithful ask for more priests, for saintly priests, for learned priests, and they are right," concluded Msgr. Riganti. "We all need them very much and pray to God that He may grant us such a signal blessing. But if we wish to gather such harvest of true Apostles, we have to sow it. The Bishop and the clergy have done and will do all that is in their power. Let the faithful also help by sowing the seed of vocations in the souls of their children; let them generously sow their contributions for the completion and upkeep of a modern seminary; and then with God's grace an abundant harvest of saintly and learned priests will be reaped in

Church depended on priests, said Father Garland.

He urged parents, when considering professions for their children, not to overlook the vocation of priesthood.

But if there were to be good priests there must be selection and selection meant that a number of seminarians would not complete their training. This was to be expected and should not be looked upon as a failure.

After a talk in Chinese given by Father Joseph Mak, Vice Rector of the Diocesan Seminary of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Bianchi blessed and laid the foundation stone.

A reception followed the re-

SEMINARIANS WATCH THE BLESSING



Bishop Lawrence Bianchi blessing the foundations of Hong Kong's new Seminary.