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AsiaNews - www.asianews.it

04/08/2010 17:30

CHINA - VATICAN

Bishop placed under house arrest for refusing to concelebrate Mass with excommunicated bishop by Wang Zhicheng

1 The bishop was officially installed today, but refused to co-celebrate Mass with Ma Yinglin, who was ordained in 2006 without the permission of the Holy See. Forced to attend the ceremony, the bishop was still able to say publicly that he was taking part in the ceremony against his will.

2 Beijing (AsiaNews) - Mgr Matthias Du Jiang, bishop of Bameng, is under house arrest, local sources told AsiaNews. Today he was officially installed in his office. Sources said that he was placed under house arrest because of his refusal to co-celebrate Mass during his installation ceremony with a bishop who was excommunicated in 2006 because he was ordained without Holy See approval.

3 Mgr Du has been bishop of Bameng (Inner Mongolia) for the past six years. He was ordained in secret, with Vatican approval, and without permission by the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA), an agency that is trying to set up a national Catholic Church, separate from Rome.

4 Mgr Du, 47, has not been able to speak in public as bishop until now, nor was he able to wear his Episcopal biretta and pectoral cross in public.

5 Today's ceremony in Sanshenggong Cathedral was designed to show that he was being recognised by the government as well. However, the CCPA demanded that Mgr Joseph Ma Yinglin, unlawfully consecrated on 30 April 2006, be part of the service. A *latae sententiae* excommunication hangs over the latter.

6 Recently, the Vatican Commission on the Catholic Church in China issued a statement, calling on bishops to avoid acts (for example, sacramental celebrations, Episcopal ordinations or meetings) that contradict their communion with the Pope. For this reason, Bishop Du refused to take part in the service in the presence of Ma Yinglin.

7 During the ceremony, he publicly said that he was forced to take part in the Mass with Ma Yinglin. Now, he is under house arrest.

8 For the past few days, security forces have been out in force policing the city. Internet and telephones have also been placed under surveillance.

"Mgr Du's courage is inspiring. Let us hope that other bishops follow his example," a number of Chinese Christians told AsiaNews. However, "There are rumours that more ordinations are on the way and that Ma Yinglin wants to preside over all of them". ♦

UCA News - www.ucanews.com

CHINA - Xu-Ricci institute launched in Shanghai

Published Date: May 14, 2010

SHANGHAI, China (UCAN) — The Fudan University in Shanghai launched its Xu-Ricci Dialogue Institute on May 11, the 400th death anniversary of the pioneering Italian Jesuit missionary to China, Father Matteo Ricci.

The institute, which comes under the university's School of Philosophy, hosted a colloquium that day to commemorate the priest's contribution to East-West dialogue.

The new center is named after Father Ricci and his closest Chinese friend, Paul Xu Guangqi, the first Catholic in Shanghai.

According to French Jesuit Father Benoit Vermander, co-director of the institute, it is the first Chinese academic center to bear these two names.

The institute aims to promote academic research, the teaching of reli-

gious studies, and comparisons between Chinese and Western cultures and philosophies.

About 70 Chinese and foreign scholars in the fields of economics, philosophy and religious studies attended the May 11 colloquium, which saw participants discussing religious dialogue and the challenges faced by the Chinese and global communities. Ricci digital dictionary launched

Many of them also attended the launch of the digital edition of the Grand Ricci, a Chinese-French dictionary, at the Shanghai Museum later in the evening.

The dictionary, billed as the largest Chinese-foreign language dictionary in the world, is published by the Taipei Ricci Institute.

Father Ricci came to mainland China in 1583 and spent 27 years here until

he died in Beijing on May 11, 1610.

The Jesuit, known as Li Madou among the Chinese, is widely regarded as the founder of modern-day Christianity in China and a pioneer of East-West cultural exchange.

He and Xu, a Catholic scholar and imperial official, collaborated closely to translate Western texts into Chinese, and Confucian classics into Latin.

Although Father Ricci did not leave his mark in Shanghai, his Jesuit confrere Father Lazzaro Cattaneo introduced Catholicism here in 1608 at the request of Xu.

Shanghai gradually became a major center for the Jesuits' missionary activities in eastern China, particularly after foreign powers forced China to open its doors in the mid-19th century. ♦



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UCA News - www.ucanews.com

Mainland Catholics pray for China Church

Published Date: May 24, 2010

Catholics in mainland China prayed on May 24, the day dedicated to prayers for the Church in the country, although many were unable to visit the popular Sheshan Marian shrine in a Shanghai suburb.

The number of pilgrims has not returned to the level before Pope Benedict XVI issued his letter to Chinese Catholics in June 2007 dedicating the feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians

as the special prayer day and mentioning the Sheshan shrine in particular, say local sources.

This was because the government-sanctioned Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church in China have issued notices since then discouraging cross-province pilgrimages during the Marian month of May, the sources say.

This year's notice said that as the World Expo is currently taking place in Shanghai, Catholics who wish to go to Shanghai should follow the arrangements set by their provincial Catholic Patriotic Associations and local dioceses, and then get approval from Shanghai diocese.

"These so-called 'arrangements' actually means forbidding pilgrimages," the sources said. ♦

AsiaNews - www.asianews.it

06/09/2010 13:23

CHINA

Tan Zuoren gets five years in jail for trying to find why Sichuan schools collapsed

Activist is convicted for investigating schools that crumbled like "tofu pudding", killing more than 5,000 children and teenagers in the 2008 earthquake. Victims' parents slam the authorities who threaten and jail anyone trying to find those responsible for those deaths.

Beijing (AsiaNews/Agencies) – The Sichuan provincial high court upheld a five-year sentence for inciting subversion of state power passed down on Tan Zuoren after he investigated the deaths of children crushed in their schools during the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Public protests broke after the sentence was upheld.

The trial began last August and the accused was convicted in February. The earlier ruling was upheld again in a brief hearing today.

Tan's wife, Wang Qinghua, told media that she has not been able to speak to her husband, in custody since April 2009, but was able to see him. He appeared to be in high spirits and good health.

The prosecution did not raise the issue of collapsed schools but cited an article Tan wrote on the 4 June 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. His supporters are certain however that he was convicted for investigating the schools' collapse.

In the 2008 Sichuan quake, more than 7,000 classrooms crumbled, burying 5,335 pupils under tonnes of rubble, this according to official data.

Tan conducted his own investigation into 64 schools flattened by the 7.9 magnitude quake and estimated that more than 5,600 students died or were missing, adding that the number was incomplete.

Complaints over school construction emerged after the tragedy. Not only did schools collapse, but they also lacked emergency exits, even though nearby government offices and other buildings remained intact. Parents asked for an inquiry, which Beijing readily initially agreed to, but has not released any results.

In Hong Kong, about 40 protesters, representing 18 different groups, marched from Western Police Station to the central government's liaison office this morning to demand his release. In their view, Tan Zouren was jailed only for writing certain articles.

In recent months, many parents of pupils who died in the quake have repeatedly complained that the authorities are blocking the investigation into the collapsed schools by threatening and jailing people.

Artist Ai Weiwei, who has also investigated the pupils' death, was detained and beaten by police whilst attempting to attend Tan's trial in August. ♦

AsiaNews - www.asianews.it

05/24/2010 15:09

CHINA - VATICAN

At Sheshan and throughout China we pray for unity and priestly vocations

The World Day of Prayer for the Church in China, decreed by Benedict XVI, official and underground Catholics pray for greater unity between communities and for a solution to the relationship between China and Vatican soon. Moreover they pray for strength for the young, bishops and faithful to evangelize the continent, which is increasingly thirsty for God

Shanghai (AsiaNews) - Today, the feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, Chinese Catholics have prayed for the Church in China, according to invocation contained in Benedict XVI's 2007 letter, to celebrate a World Day of Prayer for the Church in China on May 24, the feast day of Our Lady of Sheshan (Shanghai).



Bishop Joseph Xing Wenzhi
Photo: UCAN

This morning, in Sheshan, Bishop Joseph Xing Wenzhi, auxiliary bishop of Shanghai, led a procession from the church that lies half way up the hill, to the summit, where he celebrated mass. Bishop Xing was joined by 3 000 other Catholics to pray for all priests and Catholics in China, as well as for victims of disasters and for the Expo, which is currently being held in the great metropolis.

Fr. Li Fangyuan, rector of the Basilica of Sheshan today confirmed to AsiaNews that he celebrated a mass at 6.30 this morning with prayer for China, hoping to soon see a "way out" for inter-Church relations.

In Xiamen (Fujian), the newly appointed Bishop Cai Bingrui said that

all his priests prayed for the Church in China during mass. "I'm optimistic - he says - for the Church in China, because it is blessed "by the Pope's decision to appoint a special day to pray with this intent". "Besides - he continues - I am deeply devoted to Our Lady of Sheshan. I studied in the Theological Seminary of Sheshan and as seminarians we often went to pray in the basilica, helping the pilgrims during the months of pilgrimage".

In central China, Teresa, a lay Catholic, told AsiaNews that she continues to pray that the bishops of China - many of whom are young and new - can be strong.

In the north west of the country, Fr. Joseph, an underground priest, said this

morning that priests prayed with other Catholics of the underground Church, in some cases is followed by the adoration and benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. Some have tried to go on pilgrimage to Sheshan, despite the large number of security controls and traffic blocks.

On a personal level, Fr. Joseph prayed for unity among the divided Christian communities in China and a normalization of relations between China and the Vatican as soon as possible, as well as the growth of priestly vocations in number and quality.

Fr. Peter of Zhengding (Hebei), another underground priest prayed for

the unity of the Church and for the evangelization of China, but also for the return of his bishop, Mgr. Julius Jia Zhiguo, who disappeared months ago into police custody.

"For me - he confides - the Day of Prayer for the Church in China, ordered by the Holy Father, is a way to give us spiritual support". A seminarian, John, from Hebei adds that the most urgent intention now is for stronger unity of the Church and "greater understanding, not division, between the communities."

Bishop Han Zhihai of Lanzhou (Gansu), has great faith in the Mother who helps and protects the Church in China. He prayed that the Church in China may "have more freedom, more vocations to the priesthood and that soon there will be an improvement in relations between China and the Vatican."

Just yesterday Pentecost Sunday, Bp. Han administered Confirmation to 130 children and adults. Another 400 Catholics in other parishes expect to receive the sacrament in coming days. ♦



Sheshan Basilica
Photo: Wikipedia

AsiaNews - www.asianews.it

05/25/2010 12:09

CHINA - VATICAN

Our Lady of Sheshan, persecution and division

Rome (AsiaNews) - On May 24 last, feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, Chinese Catholics at home and around the world prayed for the Church in China, according to the indications laid out by Benedict XVI in his letter of June 2007, where he called for a World Day of Prayer for the Church in China on May 24, the feast day of Our Lady of Sheshan, the national shrine on the outskirts of Shanghai.

Sheshan has always been a place where underground and official Christians and have come together in devotion to Mary. The idea of the Pope, contained in his Letter and again repeated on the feast of Pentecost, is that "faithful in China pray so that the unity among themselves and with the universal Church will deepen more and more and that the Catholics of the world - especially those who are of Chinese origin - join them in prayer and charity".

Since then and for the last three years the Day of Prayer has been quite successful in Italy and abroad, where the Episcopal conferences have prepared collections and celebrations. But it also had some success in China, despite the resistance of the government and the Patriotic Association and their attempts to stop the faithful on pilgrimage to Sheshan.

Since the Pope first indicated Sheshan as the place to pray for Church unity in China, during the month of May, the Shanghai government has banned pilgrimages to the sanctuary from neighbouring dioceses. Usually in the past, an estimated 20, 000 faithful would gather on Our Lady's hill on May 24. Instead for the past three years, only a few thousand have gathered there, all of them from Shanghai. Other faithful are forbidden from approaching the

sanctuary, by the deployment of police and "volunteers" who stop the faithful on the roads leading to the shrine, at a distance of several kilometres.

But the priests and bishops have not lost heart and have instead turned the day into a diocesan appointment. Many of the testimonies that we have received speak of Masses, Eucharistic Adoration and Benedictions, pilgrimages to local shrines. Everyone, the communities of official and underground believers, prayed for unity and brotherhood between the two branches of the Church. Everyone prayed for the young bishops of the official Church, so they may be reinforced in their witness and in communion with the successor of Peter, everyone also prayed for all the bishops of the underground Church who are still in prison.

From this point of view, the Day has been a really great success because it generates common expectations and concerns in all the faithful.

But it is above all unity between bishops and between them and the pope that needs to be strengthened. The government in Beijing is not implementing the same cruel persecution of the past. Even underground bishops who have disappeared are perhaps in some isolated place, but lack freedom. The real persecution that it is implementing is division. By arresting bishops who call for freedom of religion, Beijing warns official bishops, who are perhaps a bit fearful, that they risk losing what little freedom of worship is granted them.

At the same time, Beijing does not seem to prevent new Episcopal ordinations approved by the Vatican (as in the case of Xiamen, Hohhot, Haimen). But it makes sure that excom-

municated bishops are included among concelebrating bishops, thus making unity with the underground faithful increasingly difficult, while at the same time making a clear gesture of contempt towards the Pope. Only last March, the China-Vatican Commission released a text which stated that "Chinese bishops have the full dignity and responsibility of leading the Catholic community, they should avoid actions that go against communion with the Pope, such as Episcopal ordinations, concelebrations and public meetings with illegitimate bishops".

We here at AsiaNews believe that working for unity in truth of the Church in China is the most important step, even more so than diplomatic relations between Beijing and the Vatican. Official bishops should be concerned for their brother bishops from the underground community who have disappeared, and underground communities should be more friendly and merciful towards the faithful of the official community.

The thirst for God in China is immense and the population is now nauseated by materialism. Mutual love can give birth to abundant fruit for mission. ♦



China Infodoc Service [china.infodoc@online.be]

Thursday, 13 May 2010

CP: China Appeals to Religious Groups for Post-Quake Help

China Appeals to Religious Groups for Post-Quake Help

The officially atheist Chinese government on Monday requested religious groups and people of faith help with the rebuilding efforts in a northwest province devastated by a massive earthquake.

Michelle A. Vu - Christian Post Reporter Tue, May. 11, 2010 Posted: 10:20 AM EDT

The officially atheist Chinese government on Monday requested religious groups and people of faith to help with the rebuilding efforts in a northwest province devastated by a massive earthquake.

In an open letter posted on its official website, China's State Administration for Religious Affairs asked the religious community to donate towards reconstruction in the Tibetan area of

Yushu in Qinghai Province, which was ravaged by a 7.1-magnitude earthquake on April 14.

According to the letter, the religious community has already donated more than 86.9 million yuan, \$12.7 million, for the quake-hit area. The religious affairs department hopes religious leaders and individual believers can make further donations.

The letter also expressed appreciation for the prayers and immediate relief efforts carried out by religious organizations.

At least 2,220 people were killed, more than 12,000 were injured, and over 100,000 people were left homeless by the Yushu quake.

Chinese officials said last week that they expect the reconstruction work in Yushu to be completed within three years, according to Xinhua, the state

news agency. Most of the funds for the rebuilding effort will come from the central government, but some will come from private donations, said Vice Prime Minister Hui Liangyu on Thursday.

Since April, Christian relief groups have worked to distribute immediate need items, such as food, shelter and clothes to the victims. World Vision, Caritas Internationalis, ACT Alliance, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Catholic Relief Services are a few of the international Christian relief ministries that have responded to the earthquake in Qinghai province.

in religious freedom, human rights groups still regularly report persecution of house church Christians, among other non-registered religious groups. Rights groups say China has a long way to go in its respect for religious freedom. ♦

South China Morning Post
10,000 grieving parents still waiting for answers

LEADER

May 13, 2010

It hardly seems only two years since Sichuan was convulsed by an earthquake so powerful that this column observed the next day that "a great disaster has befallen China". How great was soon to become apparent as the death toll grew towards the eventual official tally of 87,000.

So eventful is China's emergence, however, that defining events like an inspiring national response to catastrophe and the triumph of the Beijing Olympics are soon overtaken. Now the world is awed by the country's unstoppable economic progress amid recession and debt crises in the West.

The anniversary is a reminder that the earthquake rescue, relief and ongoing rehabilitation efforts also represent a triumph. A global audience followed the salvage and rescue operation,

thanks to unprecedented media access. The official openness generated goodwill towards China ahead of the Olympics three months later

Regrettably, that openness has not continued. Positive news about reconstruction and resettlement - and there is an abundance of it - is wel-

come, but questions about poor school construction or corruption are not. Material rehabilitation certainly is important, but that alone cannot heal the loss of loved ones and suffering. Survivors must be allowed to find emotional closure.

In the stricken areas, parents of children crushed as their schools collapsed while buildings around them remained standing, are still mired in grief and despair. Only the truth about why it happened will enable

them to move on. But those who try to raise their concerns with officials or the media risk harassment. Officials flatly refuse to investigate claims of structural weaknesses at "tofu" (shoddily built) school buildings, attributable to rampant official corruption.

Sadly, as a result, a day of solemn remembrance yesterday has now been added to China's calendar of politically sensitive anniversaries, alongside that of the June 4 crackdown in Tiananmen Square. Security was tightened significantly as May 12 approached.

The nation needs to help bring closure to more than 10,000 grieving parents. ♦

China Infodoc Service [china.infodoc@online.be]

Wednesday, 2 June 2010

South China Morning Post

Dissident Liu transferred to Liaoning prison

Verna Yu and Associated Press in Beijing - Jun 01, 2010

Liu Xiaobo, one of the mainland's most prominent dissidents, has been transferred from a Beijing detention centre to a prison in the country's northeast to serve out an 11-year sentence for inciting the subversion of state power, according to his lawyer and his wife.

Liu was sent to Jinzhou Prison in Liaoning province last Wednesday, his lawyer Shang Baojun said.

China routinely uses vaguely worded subversion charges to jail people it considers troublemakers. Liu's sentence is the harshest for inciting subversion since the crime was introduced in 1997.

His wife, Liu Xia, said she had received the news on Sunday evening. She had appealed to the authorities earlier to allow him to serve his sentence in Beijing.

"I had prepared for the worst; this

means I'll have to do a lot of running around [to see him]," she said. "I think they're trying to torment us."

Liu Xia said she would visit her husband tomorrow. Prison officials told her she could bring him underwear, money and books — as long as they were legally published in China.

The official explanation for Liu's transfer to Jinzhou Prison was that his household registration, or hukou, was in Liaoning.

Liu's hukou had been in Beijing, but it was revoked because of his role in the Tiananmen pro-democracy movement in 1989.

"I still feel happy when I think of the fact that I can meet him in a few days' time," Liu Xia said.

She has not been allowed to see her husband since he lost his appeal three months ago.

Nicholas Bequelin, a senior researcher in the Asia division of Human Rights Watch, said the transfer to a distant prison would result in additional hardship for his wife and leave him at greater risk of ill-treatment and health issues.

"If the Beijing authorities think that relegating him hundreds of kilometres from the capital will reduce the attention paid to his case, they are mistaken. Liu could be sent to the end of the world, but world attention would still follow him," he said.

"He has become a universal symbol of the struggle for truth and human rights in the face of oppression."

A former university professor, Liu is among China's most prominent political activists. He was detained in 2008 after calling for stronger civil rights and an end to the political dominance of the Communist Party. ♦

UCA News - www.ucanews.com

Authorities raze city's only Catholic church

Published Date: June 9, 2010

By ucanews.com reporter, Ordos

The only Catholic church in Ordos, Inner Mongolia, was destroyed overnight Monday and the priest and lay leader detained by police.

The demolition is believed to have been carried out pursuant to a court order.

Parishioners today set up camp near the ruins to try to prevent any new construction on the site.

They had arrived for morning Mass on June 8 to a pile of rubble littered with pieces of the altar and five-meter cross in a pile of rubble.

Church sources told ucanews.com

that about 100 people arrived around midnight on June 7 to demolish the Dongsheng Church belonging to the open Catholic community.

Local pastor Father Gao En and lay leader Yang Yizhi were woken by the noise and tried to stop the destruction but were taken away in handcuffs.

They were returned to the parish after being detained for more than 20 hours at the police station, Church sources later told ucanews.com.

The sources said the church had previously received a demolition notice. One or two police cars were still stationed near the site today, the

sources said.

Newly ordained Hohhot Bishop Paul Meng Qinglu sent two priests to Ordos to investigate the incident. They are negotiating with local officials for compensation, the sources said.

The 150-square-meter church, which served a community of about 1,000 Catholics, was legally registered in May 2009. However, the local government recently demanded the demolition of the church to make way for a new road.

Church leaders had talked with the government several times without success, sources said. ♦

China Infodoc Service [china.infodoc@online.be]

Thursday, 3 June 2010

AsiaNews - www.asianews.it

06/02/2010 10:35

CHINA

Tiananmen Mothers demand end to government silence over massacre

Open Letter of the families of those killed in the massacre of June 4, 1989. The Party does not respond and waits for them to "die" to get rid of the problem. With the anniversary approaching, families are being placed under control and isolation, their phone lines, internet and mail are blocked.

Beijing (AsiaNews / Agencies) - The families of those killed in the Tiananmen Square massacre (June 4, 1989), are demanding that Beijing break the silence and open a dialogue with them about the government led violence.

Just as every year, as the anniversary approaches, a group of 128 members of the association Tiananmen Mothers, released an open letter in which they criticized the leadership for not wanting to listen to their requests for frank and open dialogue about what occurred on the night between 3 and 4 June 1989. "The communist authorities - said the letter - should listen to our voice, but there is no response ... Can it be that you really want to wear us all down or wait for our deaths so that the problem will naturally disappear?"

From April to June '89, up to a million young people, students, workers, peasants, gathered in Tiananmen Square demanding democracy and an end to corruption. The night between 3 and 4 June the Chinese military intervened with tanks and guns to "clear the square", occupied for months. Hundreds and perhaps thousands of young people were killed or crushed, others were shot in the streets surrounding the square. For the Communist Party, the movement was a counterrevolutionary rebellion", despite being a non-violent movement.

With the passing of years, faced with the criticism of the Tiananmen Mothers, demanding the revision of judgments made of their children from "counterrevolutionaries" to "patriots", the government has imposed its interpretation of the "lesser evil": the suppression of the '1989 Movement was necessary to enable the current economic wellbeing of China.

The letter however states: "We have gradually come to understand from the blood, tears, and suffering that June 4 is not only the misfortune of any single family, but rather it is the misfortune of the entire nation."

The group also calls for the end of persecution against its members. Now, for longer and longer periods during the year, families are followed by police, isolated and controlled at home, their phones and Internet connections cut off, and mail requisitioned. ♦

Agenzia Fides - www.fides.org

ASIA/HONG KONG - Wednesday, 16 June 2010 1:46AM

Inaugurated in Hong Kong, a new Society will diffuse the thought of

Fr. Matteo Ricci

Hong Kong (Agenzia Fides) - Recently the Hong Kong Ricci Heritage Society was inaugurated by the Jesuits in Hong Kong with priests and faithful of the diocese, to mark the 4 hundredth anniversary of the death of the great Italian Jesuit missionary Fr. Matteo Ricci. According to the diocesan bulletin Kong Ko Bao, during the inauguration ceremony held at Matteo Ricci College, Jesuit regional Superior Fr. A. Deignan, explained the purpose of the new society: "make known the life and work of Matteo Ricci and his contribution towards cultural exchange between the Far East and the West".

Dr Stephan Rothlin, secretary general

of the Centre International Business Ethics (CIBE) in Beijing, spoke of how Fr. Ricci's work influenced the existing relationship between the continent and the Territory of Hong Kong.

Fr. Deignan recalled how "from Taiwan, Macao and Paris, the Jesuit fathers opened several institutes named after Matteo Ricci.

The University of San Francisco, in the United States, has a Matteo Ricci Institute of Cultural Historical Research between China and the West. However the goal of this new Hong Kong Ricci Heritage Society is

mainly to promote greater knowledge about the life of Fr Ricci". The Regional Superior pointed out that many present and former students of the San Francisco Institute have no general knowledge of the life of Fr. Matteo Ricci. To respond to this lack of knowledge the Hong Kong Ricci Heritage Society will organise regular courses, exhibitions and meetings on the great missionary. "Learning from him, we need to study China's culture and philosophy in order to bring the two civilisations, Chinese and European, closer together" Fr Deignan concluded. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 12/06/2010-righe 24; parole 265). ♦