

A short introduction by Father Rob Carbonneau, C.P., Ph.D. Passionist historian

At the University of Scranton, Benjamin Jones, class of 2023, was a student in my History: 245 course - Modern China, during the fall semester of 2022.

All students were assigned three issues of *Sign Magazine*, a Passionist publication. Within each issue is the series “With the Passionists in China.”

Each student was asked to compose a short bibliographic review of the respective articles pertaining to China based upon two questions. What perspective was gained on daily missionary life and Chinese society? Also, if the article had a photo, in what way did the student believe it humanized China? Students were asked to consider these questions in a way that would assist a person to read and engage with the article.

In doing so, the hope is that this effort introduces an appreciation of the larger implications as how the Passionists, the Sisters of Charity from Convent Station, New Jersey, the Sisters of Saint Joseph from Baden, Pennsylvania and political and social actors of China crossed paths with each other. Spelling used in this bibliographic review were those used at the time when the Sign magazine published the articles

Upon reading this bibliographic review, what did you find interesting about the Passionists and Catholic missionaries’ experiences and relationships in 1930s China?

Please cite this article below as: Benjamin Jones. Bibliographic Review: With the Passionists in China. *Sign* Volume 11 October 1931. Passionist Historical Archives website link: [add the link from the browser]

## **OCTOBER 1931**

*Article One:* Alfred Cagney, C.P., “Desolation in Hankow,” Vol. 11 *Sign* (October 1931): 183-187. On the missionaries: describes the intense flooding of the Yangtze River that impacted the missionaries in Hankow and thousands of Chinese peasants. Describes moving objects to second floor, the corruption made apparent by dykes that broke despite taxes for their upkeep, surviving the ensuing days with no idea when the water would recede, destruction to a railway embankment. Refugee crisis, wildlife, debris, life while dealing with deep water. Photo: on the Chinese people: shows refugees building a makeshift shelter in a tree, surrounded by water, two levels and a makeshift roof, highlighting scramble for essentials that this family and others made to be able to survive during and after the flood.

*Article Two:* Timothy McDermott, C.P., “Riding the Flood,” Vol. 11 *Sign* (October 1931): 188-191. On the missionaries: traveling by boat from Shanghai to Hankow, describing discomforts and mishaps onboard, worries and trepidation over learning a new language, experiencing Chinese utensils and food for the first time, lodgings, change in plans, impending dangers of starvation and desperation amongst peasants due to unprecedented flooding. Photo: on the Chinese people: a missionary holding a bowl and standing next to three extremely starved Chinese peasant men, two sitting down, tight skin and bones are very visible. Seem on verge of death. Shows desperation, widespread, in need of help from missionaries.

*Article Three:* Francis Flaherty, C.P., “A First Religious Profession, The Start of what, we think, will prove the Beginning of a Native Sisterhood in the Passionist Mission District in Hunan, China,” Vol. 11 *Sign* (October 1931): 191. On the missionaries: announcement of the first native Chinese woman becoming a Sister of Charity. Mary Therese, formerly Mary Twan. Description of her invaluable service to the other sisters and the celebration that followed two masses that spoke of the importance of the occasion, as well as firecrackers. Photo: on the Chinese people: a picture of Mary Therese in her habit of the Sisters of Charity. Two crosses, one a necklace and the other a rosary, and holding a book. Wearing glasses, she looks professional, intelligent, and devote, but how does she look to “pagan” Chinese?