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### Introduction

*The Sino-Japanese which began in 1931 as a minor clash between Japanese and Chinese troops near Peking finally led to a war that became part of World War II. The Japanese occupied the capital city of Peking, the industrial city of Shanghai and a large portion of China. After the United States, Russia and the allied countries sent help to China, there was a stalemate that was only broken with the defeat of Japan in 1945. One of terrible results of the war was the assassination of Msgr. François Xavier Schraven and his companions. (Rolando S. Delagoza, CM).*

### *Martyrs of the Congregation of the Mission*

1. **Msgr. François Xavier Schraven, CM**, *Member of the Northern Province of China, born on 13 October 1873 in Lotten (Netherlands) and died on 9 September 1937 near Tcheng-tin-fu and his companions:*
2. **Fr. Lucien Charny, CM**, *born on 29 November 1882 in Melun (France).*
3. **Fr. Thomas Ceska, CM**, *born on 17 May 1872 in Brdovac, Zagreb (Croatia).*
4. **Fr. Eugène Bertrand, CM**, *born on 9 August 1905 in Aurillac (France).*
5. **Fr. Gérard Wouters, CM**, *born on 5 July 1909 in Breda (Netherlands).*
6. **Fr. Antoine Geerts, CM**, *born on 28 July 1875 in Oudensbosh (Netherlands).*
7. **Brother Vladislav Prinz, CM**, *born on 22 June 1909 in Szlacheckie (Poland).*

During the Sino-Japanese War our parish of Tchengtzing, which possessed an immense terrain of 60 hectares enclosed by walls, had welcomed thousands of Chinese women and girls who had come there seeking refuge from the soldiers of the Japanese army whom they greatly feared. Msgr. Schraven and his companions were massacred by the Japanese advance-guard composed of mercenaries who had been given the "dirty work." The reason for the massacre is not known, because normally Europeans were not worried about the Japanese; but our confreres died as victims of their duty, having remained there along with the people they were in charge of and the refugees they had welcomed.

8. **Fr. Umberto VERDINI, CM**, *Member of the Province of the Southern Province of China, born in Piacenza (Italy) on 22 October 1884 and died in Yu-kiang in July 1942.*

Immediately after his ordination Fr. Verdini went off to China where he worked for 33 years in northern Kiang-si, especially in the Yao-chow mission.

The American confreres and Daughters of Charity had brought into the mountains a great number of orphans and girls fleeing from the Japanese soldiers who were very aggressive towards Americans. Fr. Verdini had remained in his Yu-kiang residence with the female orphans thinking that being an Italian he had nothing to fear from the Japanese. But in the month of July 1942 the Japanese soldiers were

intent on abusing the girls. Fr. Verdini intervened in order to protect them and was killed on the spot, as were the young girls.