



Reuters/CNS

Visitors walk past an image of Mary and Jesus on a large screen at a computer show in Beijing May 19. China has government-approved Catholic and Protestant churches, but underground churches, such as those loyal to the Vatican, suffer repression by the government.

## China tightens policy

HONG KONG (CNS) — Chinese authorities may tighten religious policy and target the underground Catholic Church after the nationwide crackdown on Falun Gong, a syncretic sect, said religious leaders and observers of the church in China.

Government-approved church leaders in places where Falun Gong adherents protested before the July 22 crackdown told UCA News, an Asian church news agency based in Thailand, that the church has not been affected, although the sect has approached some Catholics.

Leaders from the underground church, however, said they believed that Chinese authorities' control could become tighter, especially in the desire to ensure social stability around the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of

China Oct. 1.

On July 22 Beijing announced a ban on Falun Gong, a mix of Buddhism, meditation and "qigong" that has burgeoned rapidly in and outside China since 1992. Qigong is a traditional system of exercise that blends physical movement, breathing and concentration and claims to benefit physical and mental health.

Beijing accused Falun Gong founder Li Hongzhi, who moved from China to the United States in 1998, of deceiving the masses with superstition, causing some to commit murder and suicide. It outlawed all Falun Gong activities and publications, which it said have seriously damaged social stability.

Although not registered in China, the  
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## SPACE

### *Are answers above?*

The country cheered July 23 as Eileen Collins, a native of St. Patrick's Parish in Elmira, became NASA's first female space-shuttle commander.

But the Columbia launch that day had additional significance for Tom Casey, an amateur astronomer from Fairport's Church of the Resurrection.

"It does hold a considerable amount of meaning for me personally," Casey observed. An engineer with Eastman Kodak Co., Casey worked for the past decade on development of the Chandra X-ray Observatory, which was carried into space by Collins' mission. Kodak teams assembled the eight cylindrical mirrors — the "eyes" of Chandra's telescope — according to a precise, mathematical formula Casey wrote. The result is the most powerful X-ray telescope in history.

"I still take a great deal of pride in that," Casey said, adding that this is an exciting time for him and his family.

That excitement is not limited to pride of accomplishment. Casey also sees religious overtones in Chandra's potential to explain our universe.

"I always felt a lot of people use science to discredit our (religious) beliefs," he said. "I have quite the opposite view. I take a great deal of inspiration from understanding the universe."

In fact, Casey said the words "Let there be light" from the Genesis creation story make him think of big-bang theories, which assert that the universe began with a sudden expansion — and a resulting light.

"I think that's beautiful," he said.

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