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ASIA/CHINA - Ordained new Coadjutor Bishop of Yan’an in mainland China

Yan’an (Agenzia Fides) - On Thursday 15 July Mgr John Baptist Yang Xiaoting, age 46 with 19 years of priesthood, was ordained coadjutor Bishop of Yan’an (Yulin), in the province of Shaanxi. He had been officially approved for the Office by the Holy See and his ordination was acknowledged by the Chinese government authorities.
The solemn Mass of Ordination was presided by Bishop Luigi Yu Runshen, the Bishop of Hanzhong, assisted by Bishop Antonio Dang Mingyan of Xi’an and Bishop Giuseppe Han Yingjin, ordained Bishop of Sanyuan on 24 June this year. Also present, Mgr Giuseppe Tong Changping of Weinan, Mgr Nicola Han Jide, O.F.M. Cap., of Pingliang, Mgr Giuseppe Li Jing of Ningsia, and the Bishop emeritus of Sanyuan, Mgr Giuseppe Zong Huaide. The Bishop of Fenyang, Mgr Huo Cheng, age 83, felt faint and had to leave the church whereas due to ill health, Mgr Francesco Tong Hui, 77 year old diocesan Bishop of Yan’an, made only a brief appearance. The above mentioned Bishops are all in communion with the Holy See and are recognised by the Chinese government.
Bishop Yang was born on 9 April 1964 to Catholic parents in the diocese of Zhouzhi. After studying from 1984 - 1989 at Zhouzhi Seminary, he was ordained a priest on 28 August 1991 while continuing his studies at Shaanxi University. From 1993 to 1999 he studied in Rome at the Pontifical Urban University, for a licentiate and doctorate in theology. In 2002 he was awarded a masters degree in religion and sociology at the Catholic University of America in Washington. On returning to China, he worked in a parish where he opened a Centre for Formation and Research. Until now he has been vice rector and dean of studies at the Seminary of Xi’an.
About one hundred priests and some 6,000 faithful, many from the new Bishop's home town Zhouzhi, took part in the Mass of ordination held in the open air in the district of Yulin, some 130 km from Yan’an.
The present day circumscription of Yan’an (Yulin), has an area of 80,000sq km, a rural area in northern Shaanxi, it has a community of 50,000 Catholics, 20 priests, 10 seminarians and 24 women religious of Congregations of the Sisters of Our Lady of China and the Missionaries of Mary. There are 20 churches and 20 other places of worship, three rural dispensaries and a Catholic elementary school.
Bishop Yang, who has already visited most of the parishes in the diocese, said that because people live far from the churches participation in the Sacraments is lower than in other parts of China. The Bishop intends to give priority to fostering unity and formation in the faith for clergy and for the lay faithful and, pastoral duties permitting, to continue teaching at Xi’an Seminary. (Agenzia Fides 19/07/2010)

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