



## **ASIA/CHINA - Faith and Evangelization: celebrating the 80th anniversary of the Diocese of Feng Xiang**

Feng Xiang (Agenzia Fides) - Faith and Evangelization are the key words of His Exc. Mgr. Lucas Li Jing Feng's homily, Bishop of the Diocese of Feng Xiang in the province of Shaan Xi, for the Mass celebrated on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the foundation of the diocese on Sunday, November 18. As reported to Fides Agency by Faith of He Bei, the festivities were opened on the Eve, November 17, with the prayer, adoration and procession.

The solemn Eucharist on November 18, presided over by Mgr. Lucas Li, was concelebrated by 43 priests, and was attended by about seventy among seminarians and women religious, with about 800 faithful members.

The Bishop stressed the significance of the celebration by relating it to the Year of Faith and tracing the 80-year history of the diocese, distinguished by their deep devotion and missionary zeal. So Mgr. Li urged everyone to continue the journey in communion with the universal Church, and to live the Year of Faith in the footsteps of heroic missionaries who marked the history of the diocese.

The Apostolic Prefecture of Feng Xiang was erected on November 15, 1932, it became the Apostolic Vicariate on July 9, 1942, and was finally elevated to a diocese in 1946, the year of the establishment of the Chinese Hierarchy. It is known for being the first Prefecture governed by a Franciscan Apostolic Prefecture of Chinese origin. Today, the diocese is divided into seven deaneries and 28 parishes, has 19,876 faithful (according to the 2010 statistics), 38 priests (including 18 religious) and 63 women religious who belong to 3 female congregations (Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Little Sisters of St. Therese). The diocese was founded as a Franciscan mission and still the devotees of the Saint of Assisi continue to animate the life of the diocese. In the diocese there are two Marian shrines and a cemetery for Catholic priests. The diocese also manages several social service agencies such as clinics and orphanages. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 20/11/2012)