



## **ASIA/CHINA - The Diocese of Lan Zhou welcomes three new priests "under the Cross of Christ"**

Lan Zhou (Agenzia Fides) - The Diocese of Lan Zhou, in the province of Gan Su in mainland China, has welcomed three new priests "under the Cross of Christ", according to the words of the Bishop, His Exc. Mgr. Joseph Han Zhi Hai, famous for his "Letter to my Friends" (2003) in which he launched an appeal for the reconciliation of the Church in China. In fact, on Sunday, September 15, Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows and the following day the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Mgr. Han presided over the solemn ordination of three priests, that prepared themselves at the Major Seminary of Xi An. According to information gathered by Fides Agency, over 1,800 faithful attended the liturgy in the cathedral of the diocese, concelebrated by about forty priests. Mgr. Han exhorted the new workers in the vineyard of the Lord: "Be faithful to the Cross of Christ" because "the Cross has revealed to us His sacrifice for our salvation. You who have been called by Him, have to follow him by carrying your Cross".

Lan Zhou is the capital of Gan Su province, in the northwest of the continent.

In 1696 Pope Innocent XII entrusted the mission of of Gan Su to the Apostolic Vicar of Shan Xi. In 1878 Pope Leo XIII created a new Apostolic Vicariate , grouping the Gan Su province and Xing Jiang, entrusted to the CICM missionaries, with Fr. Fernand Hamer CICM first Apostolic Vicar (1878-1889). In 1946, year of the establishment of the Chinese Hierarchy, the capital Lan Zhou became archdiocese. Since 1987 until today we have seen the rebirth of the local Church thanks to the missionary commitment and the pastoral care of bishops, priests and religious, but especially of the laity. Today the faithful are over 35 thousand, thirty priests , more than 200 religious women of three congregations (Congregation of the Holy Family, Daughters of Our Lady of China, the Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit), forty seminarians, about eighty novices. The Diocese is very active in missionary pastoral through charitable and social works. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 19/09/2013)