

Statistics on Religions and Churches in the People's Republic of China – Update for the Year 2018 Part 1: Catholic Church

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The annual compilation of figures and data regarding the life of the religions in the People's Republic of China will appear in two parts this year. In the present issue we first publish the numbers referring to the Catholic Church in China. Statistical data of the other confessions and religions will appear in the next issues of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China*.

The following figures regarding the Catholic Church in Mainland China in 2018 are based on the data of the Holy Spirit Study Centre (HSSC)¹ of the Diocese of Hong Kong, which specializes in studies of the Catholic Church in Mainland China. Also taken into account are the data of the official Catholic governing bodies, specifically their work report presented in 2016 at the 9th National Assembly of Representatives of the Chinese Catholic Church (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016). Other important sources are the Catholic newspaper *Xinde* 信德 (Faith) (*xdb*) based in Shijiazhuang (Hebei Province) and its website www.chinacatholic.org (*xdo*) and the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (FICS) that works under the same roof, as well as the Chinese Catholic Research Office (中国天主教研究室) of the Patriotic Association and official Bishops' Conference, and various Chinese Catholic websites.

General Data

Faithful

- ca. 10 million total number of Catholics, including both the official part of the Church and Catholics in the underground, according to the estimate of the HSSC.
- over 6 million number of Catholics according to the estimate of the official Catholic governing bodies (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016).
- 6 million number of Catholics according to state estimates (State Council 2018).
- 9 million Catholics (0.7% of the population) according to estimates by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (PFRPL 2011).

¹ We thank the Holy Spirit Study Centre for making available their figures for the Catholic Church in Mainland China (as of the end of 2018) quoted in the following.

Dioceses

- 146 (115 Dioceses and 31 other administrative regions) (according to HSSC based on the Catholic hierarchy, status in 1950)
- 96 according to the numbers given by the official Church (HSSC)
- 98 according to state data (State Council 2018)

Bishops

- 100 (76 in ministry, 24 not in ministry) (HSSC), of whom
 - 64 bishops in the official Church (57 in ministry, 7 not in ministry) (HSSC)
 - 36 bishops in the underground Church (19 in ministry, 17 not in ministry) (HSSC)

Since 8 September (public announcement 22 September) 2018, all Chinese bishops are recognized by the Pope. Around 40 dioceses have no bishop.

Priests

- 2,550 in the official Church (HSSC)
- 1,320 in the underground Church (HSSC)

Seminaries and Seminarians

- 8 major seminaries (seminaries for priests) with a total of 385 seminarians (HSSC)
- 6 underground seminaries with a total of around 100 seminarians (HSSC)

Sisters

- 3,170 in the official Church, in around 87 congregations (HSSC, data from 2015)
- 1,400 in the underground Church, in around 37 congregations (HSSC, data from 2015)

Churches

over 6,000 churches and oratories (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016 and State Council 2018)

Social Commitments

- 259 non-profit charity organizations, including 121 homes for the aged, 8 hospitals, 99 outpatient clinics, 10 orphanages, 13 kindergartens, 8 charitable foundations (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016)

Development of an Online Database of the Official Catholic Church

On the redesigned website of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference (PA-BiCo), the two official Catholic governing bodies, two online databases were established with currently (as of March 31, 2019) the following data:



Map: d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=27749&lang=de

Provinces, Direct-Controlled Municipalities and Autonomous Regions of China – Map and List of Abbreviations

AH Anhui, BJ Beijing, CQ Chongqing, FJ Fujian, GD Guangdong, GS Gansu, GX Guangxi, GZ Guizhou, Hain Hainan, HB Hubei, Heb Hebei, Hen Henan, HL Heilongjiang, HN Hunan, JL Jilin, JS Jiangsu, JX Jiangxi, LN Liaoning, NM Inner Mongolia, NX Ningxia, QH Qinghai, SC Sichuan, SD Shandong, SH Shanghai, SN Shaanxi, SX Shanxi, TJ Tianjin, XJ Xinjiang, XZ Tibet, YN Yunnan, ZJ Zhejiang.

A **“Database of Clergy”** 神职人员数据库 (www.chinacatholic.cn/html/folder/18090250-1.htm). In the data sets per priest, separate fields are provided for: portrait photo; name; baptismal name; diocese to which he belongs; date of priestly ordination; parish in which he is working; the number of his priest’s certificate; notes. Up till now the database has only 28 officially recognized priests of the Jinan Diocese (SD).

A **“Database of Catholic Churches”** 天主教堂数据库 (www.chinacatholic.cn/html/folder/18090257-1.htm). Currently it has entries on 241 churches in different dioceses. In each entry there are photos, details of the church patronage, the diocese, a contact telephone number, times of services, and details of the situation and history of the church. The text design is relatively free.

In particular, the “Database of Clergy” probably reflects the intention of the authorities to be able to identify more easily the priests holding an official priest’s certificate who are recognized by the official Catholic governing bodies and reported to the record of the government authorities – and thus also the unregistered priests in the “underground” or in the grey areas between official and underground.

Baptisms

For the second time the FICS compiled statistics of baptism for the entire year. The survey was made in collaboration with the 104 (*sic!*) dioceses and with the support of the Chinese Catholic Research Office. 48,365 new baptisms were recorded in the Catholic dioceses of Mainland China for the year 2018. The number was almost as high as in the year 2017 (48,556 newly baptized). The restrictive measures, such as bans on religious courses, especially for minors, which the party-state religious policy applied in many places, including to Catholic communities, from the beginning of 2018, have apparently not yet had an effect on the number of baptisms. In the Province of Henan, however, which was particularly affected, the number of baptisms fell from 3,032 in 2017 to 2,461 in 2018. This time FICS did not publish the numbers of baptisms in detail for each diocese but only by province (see Table 1).

Table 1: Baptisms in the Catholic Church of Mainland China in 2018

Province / Metropolis / Autonomous Region	Number	Province / Metropolis / Autonomous Region	Number	Province / Metropolis / Autonomous Region	Number
Anhui	286	Henan	2,461	Shandong	2,914
Beijing	885	Hubei	604	Shanghai	1,208
Chongqing	1,412	Hunan	287	Shanxi	4,124
Fujian	1,085	Inner Mongolia	1,090	Sichuan	3,707
Gansu	282	Jiangsu	1,568	Tianjin	530
Guangdong	2,651	Jiangxi	579	Tibet Autonomous Region	8
Guangxi	653	Jilin	950	Xinjiang	57
Guizhou	418	Liaoning	1,570	Yunnan	427
Hainan	35	Ningxia	176	Zhejiang	2,190
Hebei	12,834	Qinghai	43	Total	48,365
Heilongjiang	530	Shaanxi	2,801		

Source: www.chinacatholic.org/News/show/id/44996.html.



Faith education in the family is becoming ever more important. The picture shows a training course in the Diocese of Tangshan. Photo: *xdo*.



Catechumens during Easter Vigil 2018 in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Wanzhou, Chongqing. Photo: *xdo*.

FICS called the year's survey for 2018 "incomplete" – presumably baptisms in the underground parishes were at most only partially recorded. Moreover, possibly not all individual baptisms were entered into the Church books. If we assume that in the underground as many people again were baptized, we would reach the almost 100,000 baptisms per year that the official Catholic governing bodies reported for years as the number of yearly baptisms for all of Mainland China. According to the reckoning of Anthony Lam of HSSC, however, this number is still not sufficient to offset the natural decrease in population.²



At Easter 2018, 52 people were baptized in the Cathedral of Xi'an. The picture shows Bishop Dang Mingyan administering the Sacrament of Baptism. Photo: *xdo*.

² See Lin Ruiqi 林瑞琪 [A. Lam], "Zhongguo jiaoyou renshu biandong yu shengzhao weiji" 中國教友人數變動與聖召危機 (Changes in the Number of Chinese Catholics and Vocation Crisis), in: *Ding* 鼎 / *Tripod*, Winter 2015, No. 179, pp. 37-45, here pp. 39-40.

FICS wrote that the commitment to evangelization at grassroots level is undiminished. However, social developments have brought about changes in the membership structure of urban and rural parishes, affecting both the number of baptisms and their registration (*xdb* Jan. 29, 2019).

With regard to regional distribution, the Province of Hebei, with its comparatively high proportion of Catholics, has with 12,834 baptisms more than one fourth (26.5%) of all newly baptized in the year 2018.

Priestly Ordinations



Priestly ordination in Handan Diocese on January 25, 2018. It was the first ordination Bishop Sun Jigen could carry out publicly as consecrator following his recognition by the government in November 2017. Photos: *xdo*.

Table 2: Priestly Ordinations in the Catholic Church of Mainland China in 2018

Province / Metropolis	Diocese	Number of ordained	Date of ordination	Ordaining bishop*	Names of those ordained
Beijing	Beijing	4	Sept. 21	Li Shan	Jia Weichong 贾卫充, Li Weijing 李卫敬, Li Yongjing 李永敬, Song Jinbo 宋金波
Gansu	Lanzhou	2	Oct. 7	Han Zhihai	Gu Dehong 顾德宏, Zhang Shanxiu 张善修
	Pingliang	1	Aug. 22	Han Jide	Wu Binbin 吴斌斌
Guangdong	Guangzhou	2	Oct. 18	Gan Junqiu	Zhang Jingwei 张经纬, Zhang Ye 张野
Guizhou	Guiyang	4	May 1	Xiao Zejiang	Chen Chaoyang 陈朝阳, Huang Quan'en 黄全恩, Li Shaofei 李少飞, Zou Yunlong 邹云龙
Hainan	Hainan	1	May 1	Su Yongda (Shanjiang)	Yu Shurang 余树让
Hebei	Handan	4	Jan. 25	Sun Jigen	Chen Yun 陈云, Miao Qian 苗谦, Wu Leiqliang 武雷强, Xu Leizhao 徐雷召
	Jingxian	3	April 25	Feng Xinmao	Li Donglin 李东林, Lü Qiuyue 吕秋月, Zhang Pan 张盼
	Xingtai (Shunde)	5	April 23	Sun Jigen (Handan)	Li Qingbin 李庆斌, Pang Jiapeng 庞佳朋, Ren Xueqiang 任雪强, Song Shijiao 宗世蛟[<i>var. 蛟</i>], Xin Mengzhao 辛蒙召
	Zhaoxian	2	Dec. 5	Feng Xinmao (Jingxian)	Chi Yinan 池义男, Ji Huiguo 籍会国
Heilongjiang	[Harbin]	5	Oct. 18	Not specified	Chen Wang 陈旺, Gao Lei 高磊, Hu Zhiguo 胡志国, Wang Guohai 王国海, Zheng Changtao 郑长涛
Henan	Anyang	4	April 25	Zhang Yinlin	Feng Yingchun 冯迎春, Li Guoqing 李国庆, Li Jinlong 李金龙, Zhao Shenghui 赵胜辉
	Xinxiang	1	April 25	Zhang Yinlin (Anyang)	Liu Yusheng 刘玉胜
	Zhumadian	2	April 25	Zhang Yinlin (Anyang)	Dong Weiguang 董伟光, Han Baoshan 韩保[<i>var. 宝</i>]山
Hubei	Wuhan	1	May 24	Shen Bin (Haimen)	Wang Yaoting 王耀庭
	Xiangfan	1	Dec. 8	He Zeqing (Wanzhou)	Guan Shoukong 官守孔
	Yichang	1	Dec. 8	He Zeqing (Wanzhou)	Hu Yanbo 胡焱博
Hunan	Changsha	1	June 9	Qu Ailin	Liu Huasheng 刘华盛
Jiangsu	Nanjing	5	April 21	Lu Xinpeng	Ren Libing 任利兵, Xu Gangyi 徐刚毅, Yi Keji 弋科技, You Minwei 尤敏伟, Zhou Dongming 周冬明
Jilin	Jilin	3	Aug. 21	Pei Junmin (Liaoning)	Chai Zhixuan 柴智轩, Jin Defan 金德范, Zhu Shichuang 朱世闯
Shaanxi	Hanzhong	1	April 7	Xu Runshen	Zhou Lei 周磊
	Xi'an	1	June 16	Dang Mingyan	Duan Zhulong 段主龙
	Yulin (Yan'an)	1	Aug. 25	Yang Xiaoting	Wang Hu 王虎
	Zhouzhi	1	Oct. 27	Wu Qinjing	Wang Feng 王峰
Shandong	Liaocheng	2	April 11	Zhao Fengchang	Fu Yanxu 付言旭, Wang Zhongxin 王中新
	Qingdao	2	Dec. 12	Yang Yongqiang (Zhoucun)	Yu Wenlu 于文路, Zhang Jian 张坚
	Yidu	2	Aug. 3	Yang Yongqiang (Zhoucun)	Li Jin 李金, Lü Fuyong 吕付勇
Shanxi	Fenyang	1	July 3	Huo Cheng	Zhang Hong 张红
	Jinzhong (Yuci)	3	May 31	Wu Junwei (Yuncheng)	Sun Huangqiang 孙黄强, Sun Shixing 孙世兴, Zhang Jun 张俊
	Taiyuan	5	May 12	Meng Ningyou	Jiao Xiaoqiang 贾晓强, Meng Dongdong 孟东东, Meng Hongbo 孟宏博, Wu Jingjun 武景珺, Yan Dapeng 阎大鹏
Sichuan	Chongqing	1	April 25	He Zeqing (Wanzhou)	Kang Siwei 康思韡
Yunnan	Dali	1	Nov. 30	Ma Yinglin (Kunming)	Zeng Tongnong 曾同弄 (alias Dong Nuosen 董糯森) (Jingpo)
	Kunming	2	Nov. 30	Ma Yinglin	Pan Mingjing 潘名经, He Wu 何武 (both Yi)
Total		75			

* The diocese is named here only if the ordaining bishop is not the competent local ordinary of the diocese where the ordinations took place but was invited from another diocese to administer the ordination.

Sources (2018): chinacatholic.cn May 8, 25; Oct. 23; chinacatholic.org April 12, 14, 22, 23; June 2, 15, 17; Aug. 4, 22, 23, 27; Sept. 26; Oct. 2, 20, 28; Nov. 30; Dec. 9, 14; gzcatholic.com Oct. 21; gztzj.cn May 3; tianzhujiao.space (*Tianzhujiao zaixian*) Jan. 25; tycatholic.cn May 12; xianxiancc.org July 4; Dec. 7; yesushanmu.com April 27; http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_500cf6040102x6m8.html (accessed Feb. 1, 2019).



In the church of Lanniqing in Yunnan, Bishop Ma Yinglin of Kunming ordained two men of the Jingpo nationality and one of the Yi nationality to the priesthood. It was the first ordination carried out by Bishop Ma since his legitimization by Pope Francis in September 2018. Photo: *xdo*.

75 deacons were ordained priests in Mainland China in 2018 (see Table 2). That means the number of newly ordained in 2018 was less than the unusually high number of 97 priestly ordinations in 2017. It is, however, within the range of previous years: In the year 2016 there were 61 ordinations, in 2015 there were 59, in 2014 there were 78, in 2013 there were 66 and in 2012 the number was 78. The number is taken from different sources and is certainly incomplete; that means there would probably be ordinations from the underground Church in addition.

As the table shows, 26 of the 75 new priests in 2018 were not ordained by the competent local ordinary but by another bishop who was invited from another diocese – they were more than one third of all priests who were ordained in Mainland China in 2018. This number sheds a spotlight on the fact that many dioceses in China either have no bishop or have a bishop who cannot ordain (publicly) because he is under house arrest or is active in the “Underground.”

Bishops

Deceased Bishops in Mainland China in 2018

Li Mingshu 李明述, Joseph (1924–2018), Qingdao (SD)

Episcopal Ordinations in Mainland China in 2018

As far as is known, no bishops were consecrated in 2018.

Subsequent Papal Recognition and Installation of Bishops Consecrated Without Papal Appointment

The following 8 bishops, consecrated without papal appointment, were readmitted to full ecclesial communion by Pope Francis on September 8, 2018 (announced on September 22, 2018) – one of them posthumously – and appointed as diocesan bishops on 12 December 2018:

Guo Jincai 郭金才, Joseph, Bishop of Chengde (Heb) (Episcopal consecration 2010)

Huang Bingzhang 黄炳章, Joseph, Bishop of Shantou (GD) (Episcopal consecration 2011)

Lei Shiyin 雷世银, Paul, Bishop of Leshan (SC) (Episcopal consecration 2011)

Liu Xinhong 刘新红, Joseph, Bishop in Anhui (AH) (Episcopal consecration 2006)

Ma Yinglin 马英林, Joseph, Bishop of Kunming (YN) (Episcopal consecration 2006)

Yue Fusheng 岳福生, Joseph, Bishop in Heilongjiang (HL) (Episcopal consecration 2012)

Zhan Silu 詹思禄, Vincent, Bishop of Funing/Mindong (FJ) (Episcopal consecration 2000)

Tu Shihua 涂世华 OFM, Anthony (1919–2017, Episcopal consecration 1959), Bishop emeritus of Puqi (HB)

Anhui and Heilongjiang are not dioceses according to the hierarchy established in China by the Vatican but are regarded as dioceses by the Chinese authorities.

This means there are currently no bishops in Mainland China who are not recognized by the Pope. The episcopal ordinations in the PR China without papal mandate since 1958 were illegal but valid in Church law.

Official installations of secretly consecrated bishops did not take place in 2018. More than 30 bishops appointed by the Pope are still not recognized by the government.

List of Sources and Abbreviations

FICS: Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (Xinde wenhua xuehui/yanjiusuo 信德文化学会/研究所, Shijiazhuang).

HSSC: Holy Spirit Study Centre (Shengshen yanjiu zhongxin 聖神研究中心, Hong Kong).

- Ma-PA-BiCo 2016 [Ma Yinglin, Vice President of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (PA) and President of the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference (BiCo)]: "Zhongguo tianzujiao dijiuci quanguo daibiao huiyi – gongzuo baogao" 中国天主教第九次全国代表会议—工作报告 (9th National Assembly of Representatives of the Chinese Catholic Church – Work Report), Dec. 27, 2016, www.chinacatholic.cn/html/report/17020718-1.htm.
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- State Council 2018: The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, White Paper "China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief," www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/32832/Document/1626734/1626734.htm, published on April 3, 2018.
- xdb*: *Xinde* 信德 (Faith) (Shijiazhuang), print version.
- xdo*: *Xinde* 信德 (Faith) (Shijiazhuang), Online version at www.chinacatholic.org.