

Nineteen Sisters in Fushun in vow taking ceremony

Nineteen Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Religious Community made their vows on March 19, in St. Joseph's Church, Fushun, Liaoning Province in northeastern China. Four young Sisters made their final vows, three made vows for three years and 12 made their vows for one year. Bishop Pius Jin of Shenyang officiated at the ceremony.

The Sacred Heart Sisters have an interesting history. In 1931, on December 17, the Virgin Bibiana brought eight young candidates to Fushun and turned their formation over to the Maryknoll Sisters. The young girls had very little education. While they assisted the Sisters with the parish clinic, the catechumenate, and accompanied them to visit the Catholics in the surrounding villages, they were also required to complete at least six years of primary education. before being considered for the sisterhood. The period of probation lasted nine years. The first six postulants were admitted to the native congregation on September 8, 1939. Through the efforts of Bishop Raymond A. Lane, M.M., the group was canonically erected on March 19, 1940.

At the outbreak of the war with Japan, most of the aspirants were sent home, but some of the other Sisters were eventually able to carry on their work. They were completely disbanded during the Cultural Revolution. In 1980 several Sisters returned to Fushun Church and in 1984, the government gave them authorization to operate again as a religious community. Today there are some 50 members.

The new Sisters convent was also dedicated on the same day.

