



1925-2025

**ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL
TSINAN, CHINA
SHANTUNG.**

若瑟醫院
濟南經一路緯五路



Hospital Sisters of St. Francis

**Part 2 of 2
September 22, 2025**

September 8, 2025

Part 1: The Founding of the China Mission

September 22, 2025

Part 2: The China Mission from 1926-48

American and Chinese Sisters
1948-present

By February 1926, Sisters Wilhelma, Evangelista, Engelberta, Euphrosine, and Octavia were busy with home nursing. On March 15, 1926, St. Joseph's Hospital and Dispensary was completed, and the Sisters took possession. On April 16, 1926, the hospital opened.



St. Joseph's Hospital is considered the first modern hospital established by American Sisters in China. It was a three-story brick building with running water, electric lights, and could accommodate 70 patients. The hospital had a registration and accounting department, lab, pharmacy, x-ray, ward for female patients and male patients, a morgue, surgery, kitchen, laundry, sewing room, and a convent. At first, the people came through curiosity, but they soon learned that the Sisters were there to help them, especially because of leprosy, tuberculosis, eye disease, and frozen feet and hands. While the hospital cared for the spiritual and physical needs of the Chinese people, an equally important objective was the care of missionaries and religious personnel. On one occasion, the hospital had seven vowed religious from seven different communities from five countries as inpatients.





On October 8, 1927, Father Straub arrived with Sisters Albertina, Timothea, Otmara, Clementia, and Bernolda. He reviewed the work throughout the hospital and decided that a chapel would be built.



May 2, 1928: In the city, the red revolution flag was flying. In the west, a bomb exploded in one of the barracks, and many were dead, and the wounded were brought to the hospital. On May 3, there was a celebration in honor of the new general. Posters included the phrase: "Kill the Japanese and the foreigners – they are the enemies." Throughout the evening, there was a parade with guns and cannons.

Six Chinese girls expressed interest in becoming Hospital Sisters: Assunta, Engelberta, Mariann, Macaria, Odorika, and Evangelista. Accompanied by Sister Bernolda, they arrived in Springfield on December 25, 1928, for four years of religious education and nursing education at St. John's Hospital School of Nursing. (Other groups followed in 1930, 1932, 1934, and 1948.)

1934: The Aspirants coming to America:



Emiline, Agnes, Vincentine, Ludgardis, and Josine

The Sisters were not successful in recruiting a doctor, so Father Straub traveled to Germany in 1928 and secured the assistance of Dr. Anna Roggan. Reaching Tsinan in December, Dr. Roggan began her work at St. Joseph's Hospital, but after a month, she developed double pneumonia and died. In March 1930, Dr. Anton Scheer arrived along with Dr. Peter Fan. Other physicians joined over the years.

In May 1928, when the Nationalists moved through Shantung, the American Consul asked the Sisters to withdraw to a safer place. Sister Wilhelma answered that in times of war, nurses do not run from the battlefield. Japanese forces, sent by the Tokyo government to defend Japanese subjects, took possession of the third floor of the hospital where they hoisted their cannons, awaiting the approach of the Chinese forces from the south. For four days, the war zone centered around Tsinan. Bombs flew over the hospital and exploded in the vicinity, but the hospital, filled with wounded soldiers, was spared. When the Chinese armies retreated, the Sisters were able to go out to care for the wounded. They also returned to their schedule of days of retreat and reflection, along with identifying needs throughout the hospital that would be requested to Monsignor Straub.

After that, the city was quiet, but the banks and stores remained closed, money was valueless, and the poor struggled. Moreover, insects and lack of rain destroyed the crops, and millions of people were dying of starvation. The Sisters learned of another poor house, and they asked permission to visit. On her first visit, Sister Clementia treated 125 patients and baptized 20 dying children.

May 17, 1929 – investiture of the first Chinese Sisters in Springfield:
Seated: Sisters Assunta, Engelberta, Mariann, and Macaria; Standing:
Sister Odorika and Evangelista



On August 24, 1929, Mother Afra (pictured below) arrived with Sisters Elisa, Polycarpa, and Celine. Mother Afra and Sister Octavia return to Springfield on September 16.



In the following years, medical equipment was added at St. Joseph's Hospital, including a shock-proof X-ray unit and a bucky table, which were installed by the General Electric Company of Shanghai in 1936. Additionally, several sterilizers were installed in the surgical department.

On October 10, 1936, a Mission Rally was held at the Motherhouse in Springfield. It opened with a concert by the Cathedral Band. During the concert, various groups of students from the Catholic schools of Springfield entered the Motherhouse park. Rev. Scully and Father Phillip Rittenmeier, OFM, a Franciscan missionary in China, spoke. Msgr. M.A. Tarrant presented the mission crosses to: Sister Clementia, Superior, Sisters Damascene, Ernesta, Raphaelis, Bernette, Theophane, Gabrielis, Alphonsine, Claudine, Josine, Wilhelma, and Vincentine – all who had been at St. John's Hospital School of Nursing since 1934.

On October 12, 1936, the missionaries left the Motherhouse and traveled by train to Chicago. They stayed overnight at the Poor Clare Convent along with Mother Magdalene and Sister Theresa. On October 13, they left Chicago on the Southern Pacific train to San Francisco. When they arrived on October 18, they stayed overnight at St. Joseph's Hospital with the Franciscan Sisters of Joliet. On October 19, the missionaries set sail for China on the S.S. Taiyo Maru. Sister Ernesta wrote on October 20 to her sister, Sister Ermunda, "After our baggage was taken care of, we went on the steamer where the man came to take our picture. At 11:30 a.m., Rev. Mother gave us a pretty picture of the Blessed Mother, shook hands with us, and bade us farewell. Paper streamers were thrown down from the deck to the harbor. At noon, the ship left the harbor."

On October 20, 1936, Sister Clementia wrote: "Dear Reverend Mother, we are just wondering how you and Sister Theresa enjoyed your trip home without the group you sent on the ocean? We are often thinking of you and can still picture you at the dock waving the last farewell. It made me feel so happy to hold on to the paper ribbon and ours was one of the last ones to break." On October 25, 1936, Sister Clementia wrote: "We are still moving on and rocking much of the time – many of us are sick. Occasionally, we have visitors in the form of cockroaches, and one morning, a rat attended Mass with us. In Honolulu, several Chinese doctors expressed their surprise that we were traveling on a Japanese boat with Chinese Sisters. They said that Chinese in Honolulu never go on a Japanese boat. The Japanese are the politest people under the sun. During every meal, two or three stewards walk through the dining room making graceful bows to each one of the passengers. If we could only get some Japanese Sisters, no doubt they would be leading examples in bowing at the proper time."

On October 26, Sister Clementia shared some statements of the missionaries:

Sister Damascene: Amid being seasick, she said, "It's pretty tough (referring to the food) and I just love potatoes." As the waiter is bringing in a Japanese dish with chopsticks, she exclaims, "Look what's coming," and out of the dining room she dashes (feeling sick to her stomach). *Sister Ernesta:* "I hate to go downstairs (dining room and cabin), but you know how it is." *Sister Josine:* "I take some extra because there is no other than a Japanese dish always served with chopsticks." *Sister Gabrielis:* "Let me see, what is Shiruwasaki Osajaki?" *Sister Raphaelis:* "I wish we had some sauerkraut." *Sister Theophane:* "I'll stick to my rice and hot water." *Sister Wilhelma:* "I'm seasick." *Sister Bernette:* (Five minutes after the ship left the harbor) "I think it must be time to eat."

On November 10, 1936, the missionaries arrived at St. Joseph's Hospital at 7 p.m. to the sounds of a band of musicians.

May 18, 1937 – The 29 missionaries in China



In the summer of 1937, the Japanese and Chinese began their war in the southern part of China. At the same time, Mother Magdalene traveled on the SS McKinley with Sister Ludwina to China. At Kobe, Japan, the passengers were informed of increasing conflict and had to return to America.

On September 23, 1937, the American Consul advised all the American citizens in Tsinan to leave and go to a nearby city. Since St. Joseph's Hospital was filled with wounded soldiers and civilians, the Sisters did not want to leave. With the approach of the Japanese troops, air raids in

Tsinan were frequent, and bombs fell. Realizing that it would be a matter of days before the Japanese army would seize the city, the Chinese destroyed their banks, radio stations, and factories. On December 26, the Chinese army took all their wounded soldiers from the hospital and left Tsinan. At midnight the next day, the Japanese troops arrived and took possession of the city. Japanese merchants and their families arrived from Japan in great numbers so that by the fall of 1938, there were more than 30,000 Japanese people in Tsinan.

In the summer of 1941, when the United States froze the Japanese assets, armed guards were stationed at the gates of St. Joseph's Hospital. On December 8, Japanese soldiers crowded the entrance to St. Joseph's Hospital, and the Sisters learned that the United States and Japan were at war. Rumors reached the Sisters that Americans were being placed in camps. The Sisters, fearing that their turn would come, trained the Chinese Sisters to manage the hospital.

Memoir of Sister Bernette

"From the outbreak of the war, we were forever packing and unpacking our suitcases, expecting to be interned at any time. The Bishop informed us to pack the following: summer and winter apparel, bedding, cooking utensils, dishes, silverware, toilet articles, a few books and sufficient food for several days. Trunks and beds had to be shipped on March 19.

"On March 21, 1943, all the priests, sisters and brothers to be interned from Tsinan (and we 13 Americans) assembled at St. Joseph's Hospital at 8 a.m. We went to the chapel where Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was offered. Archbishop Jarre gave us his blessing, after which roll call was taken by the enemy nationals and soon we were in rickshaws on our way to the station. At 10:30 a.m., we boarded the train for Wei Hsien Camp, sad to leave our Sisters and the mission, but feeling sure that God knows what is best, and in His own good time, will rectify everything."

"The train arrived at the camp at 4 pm. We piled into buses and at the entrance we were met by a group of Japanese officials who directed us to the athletic field. We formed ranks and again roll call was taken. One of the newly arrived internees was asked to read the rules. Then each of us had to sign this paper at the same time promising to observe the rules. We were then taken to an empty class room which was to be our temporary living quarters.

"We met several Sisters who arrived the day before – they had been in another camp for five months. Some of our beds and bedding arrived so

we arranged them – 35 of us in the room. We lived together for several weeks until better accommodations were offered. Every few days a new group arrived and so we numbered 488 religious among 1800 prisoners (the others were Protestant missionaries, doctors, and businessmen.”

“We were permitted to manage and organize our camp and the Japanese supplied the food, which was good, but sometimes not sufficient. We had a canteen where one could purchase a limited amount of food and other materials.”

“The camp was about 200 miles from the seashore and in a beautiful country place – a former Presbyterian mission compound. It has a large church, schools, hospital, and several houses. Among us, there are lots of educators and scholars. Classes for children and adults were offered.”

“There were three kitchens and dining rooms. Each person had to stand in line three times a day with their dishes for their meals. There were 800 persons served from our kitchen which was #1. Internees were permitted to hold religious services so Mass was celebrated daily. Entertainment was weekly by various groups and baseball and volleyball were the main sports.”

Upon the arrival of the Hospital Sisters at the camp, the Papal Delegate set out to have all the religious taken to convents and monasteries. On August 23, 1943, the religious were taken to Christ the King Convent, Peking, conducted by the Spanish Sisters of the Daughters of Jesus. Here, together with 600 religious men and women, they spent their time in prayer and study, happy to once again be within a cloister. On September 2, the Sisters left the camp and returned to St. Joseph's Hospital but Sister Bernette and three Sisters from other communities were repatriated and told to return to America.

On September 17, 1944, the Novitiate opened in Chowtsun with Sister Gabrielis as Novice Mistress, where the education and formation were shared with the young Sisters.

September 1945



1st row – Professed (left to right): Sisters Theodrine, Clementia, Polycarpa, and Gabrielis
2nd row – Novices (left to right): Sisters Anthony, Pacis, Margaret Mary, Therese, Francis, and Clare
3rd/4th row – Postulants: Veronica, Francetta, Elizabeth, Rose, Catherine and Agnes

In December 1946, Sister Clementia traveled to Springfield to meet with Mother Magdalene about the unrest in China. In February 1947, Mother Magdalene and Sister Clementia learned that the Communists were planning to take Chowtsun and Changtien – thus the Sisters fled the cities as quickly as possible (taking only what they could carry) – and arrived in Tsinan. Sister Clementia returned in May with Sisters Bernette, Audrey, and Virginia, and the Novitiate was moved to Tsinan. During this time, there were no railroads, telephones, telegraphs, and businesses. At short intervals, water and electricity were available. The Sisters learned that missionaries were tortured and murdered.

Meanwhile, the work continued at St. Joseph's Hospital and the Dispensaries. During the busy schedule, religious instruction continued, and Sisters were invested and renewed their vows.

Times grew worse, and on March 14, 1948, the governor of Tsinan asked all foreigners to leave. Archbishop Jarre asked the Sisters to make civilian clothes in case of an emergency. On March 28, 1948, at 6 pm, Sister Clementia received a cable from Mother Magdalene:

"Clementia, arrange safety for Chinese Sisters, you and all other Sisters; come immediately by boat or plane; fare guaranteed; wire time and place of arrival; praying, Magdalene." March 29, another cable from Mother Magdalene: "Clementia, try to get a visitor's visa for all Chinese Sisters, Novices, and Postulants; bring them along boat or plane; fare guaranteed, anxiously awaiting word; Magdalene."

April 6, 1948
Ave Maria!

Dear Sister Clementia:

I am with you these days in which you will need special prayer, graces and strength and in which you will need plenty of physical endurance also. Do not take it too hard. After all, we are only instruments in God's hands and history repeats itself throughout these centuries. Missionaries have founded missions under heroic sacrifices and then when all was ready to be enjoyed God wanted them somewhere else – so whatever he wants! Do keep me posted. Write every few days. We have not sent money for that house, Sister, that you purchased last, because our attorney thought it was very foolish to buy more property when you were going to leave.

Is there anything you could do about Japan at all? Do you think that you could stop there on your way back and study the situation and report to me when you get here?

We are storming heaven with prayers here, Sister, and I feel that our heavenly Father is going to take good care of you. In the meantime, encourage the Sisters to look at it all from a supernatural angle.

With kindest wishes and asking God to love and bless you, today and always, I am
Lovingly in our Jesus Hostia,
Sister Magdalene
Mother

On April 10, Sisters Vitalia, Albertine, Timothea, and Otmara traveled to Springfield via Northwest Airlines.

On April 29, Sisters Clementia, Gabrielis, Therese, Frances, Clara, Margaret Mary, Pacis; and Novices Sisters Paschal, Joseph, Marie, Isidore, Magdalene, Mary Louise, and Johanna; Postulants Rose, Colletta, and Elisabeth left by plane to Tsingtao. The Sisters got their Visas in order, and on May 7, they flew to Shanghai amid very bad weather and were caught in a storm. On May 12, Sister Clementia said goodbye, and the group sailed on the SS General Meigs from Shanghai via Hong Kong, Manila, Honolulu and they are due in San Francisco on June 2. Fortunately, Sister Gabrielis was familiar with this travel on the Pacific since she did it in 1936.

SS General Meigs (Pacific Ocean – June 1948)



Arrival in Springfield on June 5, 1948



Archbishop Jarre asked for three Sisters to stay in Tsinan, and Sisters (left to right) Assunta, Evangelista, and Odorika volunteered.



Sisters Clementia, Agnes, Polycarpa, Bernette, Macaria, Engelberta, Alfonsine, Claudine, Emiline, and Theodorine arrived in Shanghai on June 25. On August 31, Sisters Clementia and Polycarpa traveled to Tokyo, Japan, to explore the possibility of establishing a mission in the Country. (They learned to speak Japanese.) On December 6, 1948, they established St. Mary's Hospital (Himeji), and on December 8, 1948, they established St. Francis Hospital (Nagasaki). Sisters Macaria, Engelberta, Alfonsine, Claudine, Emiline, and Theodorine journeyed to Springfield in January 1949. Sisters Bernette, Agnes, and Elise joined the Sisters in Japan in January.

Upon their arrival in Springfield, Mother Magdalene told the Sisters from China that hopefully they would return to China in three years when things improved. Sadly, that did not happen, and the Sisters had very little or no contact with their family for nearly 30 years. (When President Nixon restored relations with China in the mid-1970s, some of the Chinese Sisters decided to return and visit their families. Some of the Sisters were able to make several of these visits.)

In 1949, Mother Magdalene learned that Tsinan had been severely bombed, but the hospital was not damaged. The three Sisters were safe in Tsinan. They served as nurses and providers for families of the Communists and others. They were cared for by people, the hospital, their families, and the Motherhouse. Over the years, the Motherhouse maintained communication with the Sisters through underground sources (priests) and provided assistance.

2000: 75th anniversary of the founding of the mission



2006



Other Missions in China

St. Roch's Dispensary (Tsinan)	1927-44
St. Mary's Dispensary (Taianfu)	1933-43
Little St. John's Dispensary (Chowtsun)	1933-47
St. Francis Dispensary (Da-Wen-Kow)	1934-37
St. Mary's of the Angels Hospital (Tsinan)	1935-36
Sacred Heart Dispensary and Orphanage (Changtien)	1936-43
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Dispensary (Sinsiang)	1939-41

Statistics 1926-1950

Year	Patients	Discharged	Died	Dispensary patients	Surgery	Outpatient
1926	145	123	7	21,426		
1927	348	291	19	64,540		
1928	294	245	26	42,539	3	
1929	292	258	13	81,037	45	
1930	485	432	24	96,449	175	560
1931	576	524	23	95,599	312	510
1932	516	460	23	96,523	279	550
1933	577	522	33	106,188	209	381
1934	574	506	30	120,495	135	381
1935	590	541	24	137,764	140	380
1936	394	372	19	133,298	72	358
Jan. 1 - June 30, 1937	204	174	12	75,780	66	229
July 1 - Dec. 31, 1937	284	224	20	136,891	129	651
1938-39	502	426	19	157,229	234	3,021
1939-40	589	533	15	162,542	316	2,686
1940-41	536	491	9	154,710	368	6,453
1941-42	695	614	9	135,026	678	9,780
1942-43	699		12	87,428	754	12,726
1943-44	696		5	53,503		15,363
1944-45	717		8	29,074		18,441
1945-46	771	691	4	47,122	952	21,856
1946-47	728	650	16	94,892	763	27,200
July 1-Dec. 31, 1947	363	279	8	28,091	362	14,606
Jan. 1 - June 30, 1948	386	332	10	35,327	382	14,905
July 1, 1948 -June 30, 1949	705		30	29,815	1,321	29,609
July 1, 1949-June 30, 1950	809		8	20,892	1,102	32,554
TOTAL	13,475	8,688	426	2,244,180	8,797	213,200

Missionaries from Springfield to China

Name	Years in China	Death/Burial
Sister Wilhelma Broeskemp	1925-32	(1932/China)
Sister Octavia Dornemann	1925-29	(1969/Springfield)
Sister Engelberta Beyer	1925 -28	(1928/China)
Sister Evangelista Sanders	1925-27	(1927China)
Sister Euphrosine Fischer	1925-48	(1967/Springfield)
Sister Albertine Luetkemier	1927-48	(1978/Springfield)
Sister Timothea Griesse	1927-48	(1958/Springfield)
Sister Otmara Woermann	1927-48	(1990/Springfield)
Sister Bernolda Paffel	1927-32	(1939/Springfield)
Sister Clementia Dasenbrock	1927-48	(1982/Japan)
Sister Elise Waletzko	1929-49	(1973/Springfield)
Sister Polycarpa Buhl	1929-48	(1986/Japan)
Sister Celine Tobin	1929-32	(1946/Springfield)
Sister Ludgardis Moeri	1931-33	(1933/China)
Sister Agnes Beckman	1931-49	(1994/Springfield)
Sister Vitalia Stepanek	1933-48	(1968/Springfield)
Sister Lucia Puzik	1933-48	(1987/Springfield)
Sister Longina Baron	1933-41	(1987/Springfield)
Sister Zita Salissen	1933-45	(1967/Springfield)
Sister Bernette McLaughlin	1936-43/47-49	(1991/Japan)
Sister Damacene Mehl	1936-48	(1972/Springfield)
Sister Ernesta Schomaker	1936-48	(1989/Springfield)
Sister Raphaelis Pieper	1936-41	(1945/Springfield)
Sister Fridoline Hoffmann	1939-48	(1983/Japan)
Sister Audrey Tarkowski	1947-48	(2006/Springfield)
Sister Virginia Weindel	1947-48	(2006/Springfield)

The Chinese Sisters

Sister Agnes Liu
Born: 4/22/1928
Entered: 10/4/1947
First Vows: 6/13/1951
Left: 7/21/1967

Sister Engelberta Hu
Born: 1/27/1907
Entered: 12/25/1928
First Vows: 5/17/31
Died: 4/18/2008

Sister Alfonsine Ting
Born: 2/20/1907
Entered: 6/25/1932
First Vows: 5/3/1935
Died: 2/4/1981

Sister Evangelista Liu
Born: 11/14/1902
Entered: 12/25/1928
First Vows: 5/17/1931
Died: 2/7/1987 in China

Sister Assunta Lio
Born: 8/7/1910
Entered: 12/25/1928
First Vows: 5/17/1931
Died: 9/13/1969 in China

Sister Francis Kuo
Born: 1/12/1920
Entered: 3/25/1944
First Vows: 9/17/1946
Died: 10/24/2017

Sister Clare Li
Born: 4/20/1923
Entered: 3/25/1944
First Vows: 9/14/1946
Left: 6/23/1958

Sister Gabrielis Hu
Born: 11/11/11
Entered: 7/31/1930
First Vows: 5/18/1933
Died: 2/11/2017

Sister Claudine Hu
Born: 12/18/1915
Entered: 6/25/1932
First Vows: 10/4/1935
Died: 4/1/1987

Sister Innocence Hu
Born: 3/22/1906
Entered: 7/31/1930
First Vows: 5/18/1933
Left: 5/6/1939

Sister Cletis Tsao
Born: 1/16/1907
Entered: 7/31/1930
First Vows: 5/18/1933
Died: 2/24/1941 in China

Sister Johanna Chao
Born: 12/24/1927
Entered: 9/8/1946
First Vows: 6/13/1951
Died: 11/11/2005

Sister Emeline Wei
Born: 4/6/1915
Entered: 12/3/1934
First Vows: 10/4/1937
Died: 3/23/1992

Sister Joseph Wu
Born: 12/12/1920
Entered: 10/8/1945
First Vows: 10/4/1948
Died: 6/4/2019

Sister Josine Chang
Born: 7/2/1912
Entered: 6/25/1932
First Vows: 10/4/1935
Left: 1/25/1945

Sister Marie Chang
Born: 1/21/1924
Entered: 10/8/1945
First Vows: 10/4/1948
Died: 8/21/2018

Sister Lucy Liu
Born: 10/15/1919
Entered: 9/17/1945
First Vows: 10/4/1948
Died: 6/20/2006

Sister Martha Chao
Born: 6/1/1923
Entered: 10/4/1947
First Vows: 10/4/1950
Died: 4/24/1981

Sister Ludgardis Tsung
Born: 10/11/1913
Entered: 12/3/1934
First Vows: 10/4/1937
Died: 12/20/1953

Sister Mary Louise Chang
Born: 7/1/1927
Entered: 9/8/1946
First Vows: 6/13/1950
Died: 8/16/1999

Sister Macaria Chao
Born: 3/26/1902
Entered: 12/25/1928
First Vows: 5/17/1931
Died: 2/27/1971

Sister Michael Lu
Born: 12/28/1921
Entered: 6/23/1948
First Vows: 6/13/1951
Died: 7/25/2008

Sister Magdalene Wang
Born: 5/2/1921
Entered: 10/8/1945
First Vows: 10/4/1948
Died: 5/25/2007

Sister Odorika Lin
Born: 2/21/1909
Entered: 12/25/1928
First Vows: 5/17/1931
Died: 3/12/1987 in China

Sister Margaret Mary Chen
Born: 5/10/1921
Entered: 9/8/1944
First Vows: 9/24/1947
Died: 9/19/2004

Sister Pacis Bao
Born: 4/8/1921
Entered: 9/8/1944
First Vows: 9/24/1947

Sister Mariann Lu
Born: 12/16/1909
Entered: 12/25/1928
First Vows: 5/17/1931
Left: 7/24/1946

Sister Paschal Cheng
Born: 8/7/1919
Entered: 10/8/1945
First Vows: 10/4/1948
Died: 11/14/2014

Sister Peter Damian Chang
Born: 6/29/1923
Entered: 10/4/1947
First Vows: 10/4/1950
Died: 1/6/2011

Sister Sylvana Hu
Born: 11/26/1915
Entered: 12/3/1934
First Vows: 6/13/1938
Died: 8/30/1940

Sister Theodrine Hsue
Born: 4/4/1913
Entered: 12/3/1934
First Vows: 10/4/1937
Died: 2/6/1980

Sister Theophane Chi
Born: 9/23/1915
Entered: 7/31/1930
First Vows: 5/18/1933
Left: 4/10/1946

Sister Therese Fang
Born: 11/27/1920
Entered: 3/25/1944
First Vows: 9/17/1946
Died: 5/28/2023

Sister Vincentine Wang
Born: 9/14/1913
Entered: 6/25/1932
First Vows: 5/3/1935
Died: 3/28/1943 in China

Sister Wilhelma Chi
Born: 8/14/1909
Entered: 6/25/1932
First Vows: 10/4/1935
Left: 9/25/1938

Jinan Second People's Hospital



No. 148, Jingyi Road, Jinan City, Shandong Province, China 25000

www.sdjneye.com

When the Sisters left Tsinan in 1948, the hospital was taken over by the Chinese government. In August 1953, it was renamed "Jinan Municipal Second Hospital." At that time, it had 91 employees and 80 beds.

The hospital has been renowned in North China since the 1950s. It also introduced China's first laser ophthalmology and the ruby laser therapy device. In July 1972, the Revolutionary Committee of Jinan Second Municipal Hospital was renamed Jinan Second People's Hospital. In September 1985, construction on the building was completed. In June 1988, Jinan Eye Research Institute was established.

In 1992, the Jinan Eye Hospital was established, becoming the only eye hospital named by the Jinan Municipal People's Government.

In June 2002, the hospital hosted the first Jinan International Symposium on New Technologies in Ophthalmology (International Symposium on Advances in Vitreoretinal Surgery), and this 15th symposium has been held to date. In December 2020, the hospital's ophthalmology specialty was rated as a provincial key clinical specialty.



After nearly a century of excellence, the hospital, a public tertiary ophthalmology hospital, has become a leading ophthalmology hospital in China. The hospital has a clinical medicine education and teaching base and has been responsible for teaching optometry at Shandong First Medical University. The hospital integrates eye treatment, research, and education on its campus. Services are provided for: Fundus, Corneal, Orbital, and Lacrimal disease, Cataracts, Eye trauma, Glaucoma, Ophthalmology, Optometry, and Surgery.

In 2024, the hospital had an annual outpatient volume of 250,000 and an annual surgical volume exceeding 15,000 cases. It boasts high-level clinical and scientific research talents, comprising 120 colleagues and physicians, many of whom are educated abroad. It has undertaken a large number of advanced academic research projects, published 43 articles, and won more than 70 scientific research achievement awards, including 5 second-class Shandong Provincial Science and Technology Progress Awards.



It has established friendly cooperative relations with the Catholic Joseph Hospital in Taiwan and actively carried out talent exchange and technical cooperation. It has established long-term cooperative relations with more than 10 well-known ophthalmology diagnosis and research institutions in the United States, Germany, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Japan, and other countries.

It has established medical alliances with medical institutions in many cities and counties across the province, including Qingdao, Liaocheng, Tai'an, and Dongying. It has jointly carried out grassroots ophthalmologist training programs and blindness prevention actions with the International Orbis Eye Hospital and the Hong Kong Lions Club. It has undertaken many provincial and municipal disabled persons' federation sight restoration projects, bringing hope to people suffering from eye diseases.

Lobby



Introduction to the foundation stone Jinan St. Joseph's Hospital

The prior hospital of Jinan Second People's Hospital – Jinan Joseph's Hospital was founded in 1928. The Foundation Stone of the Joseph's Hospital was found in 1994 while the expansion of Jinan Second People's Hospital. The primary establishment information of Jinan St. Joseph's Hospital is recorded on the foundation stone. It attested a massive history and culture of Jinan Second People's Hospital.

Joseph is the name of the father of Catholicism. The name means diligent and non-extravagant without pay attention to the gain or loss. Since the American sister Wilhemla became the principal of the hospital, there are over 10 foreign religieuses and doctors served in St. Joseph's Hospital afar from overseas. Wilhelma and other foreign medical personnels even contributed their precious life.

They surpassed the border of the country, the concept style, religion and without racialism. He did not has one penny of salary benefited the local people, shown human beings mercy, affection and beauty. Their spirit experienced the human beings' treasure – conscience, love and godliness (honesty). We memorize the steady pioneer sacrificed their youth and life for the health career of human beings resorting this stone.

Statue

She, the holy and beneficent embodiment,
Cultivated behavior for happy life.
She, the caring angel
Sincerely contributed to health care career unfailingly,
Beautiful and devotional St. Joseph's Religious (women),
Conveying the evangelical love, prolonging the miracle of life,
Holding the candle of religion, sparking the light of life.

The Hospital Sisters of St. Francis in China (1925-1987)
by Sister Frances Elizabeth Schmitz, OSF
(an excerpt)

The Chinese Sisters who came to the States in 1949 made a great sacrifice. Some had made their novitiate in the States and were older in the Congregation. Others were newly professed, novices or postulants, who left their families and homeland with no promise of return. For 30 years, they would be cut off from direct communication with China. These Sisters provide another story of the Community's history. They became US citizens by special legislation because they could not safely return to China. They continued their religious and professional formation and served in many roles, enriching the Congregation's culture. The suffering and heroic lives of the Sisters gradually became known through individuals who had contact with them.

In 1952, Sister Evangelista, who oversaw the hospital, wrote to the Provincial Superior:

“For a long time we did not write. I know you certainly worry a lot about us. I told a few missionaries before they went back to their country to write you and tell you about us down here, but I do not know if they did or not. St. Joseph protected us from many bad happenings. Now everything is over. Dear Sister Superior, you could never dream how much suffering we had in these four years. Everybody said the most peaceful place in the city was St. Joseph's Hospital. Dear Sister Superior, do not worry about our religion. We have all the holy services and we are more holy than before. After the burial of the bishop, the City Safety Committee had some trouble with me. They came to our hospital and sought for trouble. They said I was the one who spread the news and let the Catholic people come to see the bishop. Therefore, they would scold me for a few times a day. I am sending a picture of us. Please burn it after you see it. Please pray for us and please send our greetings to the Sisters.”

After this letter, no direct communication from the Sisters was received. The Catholics in China became a silent church.

In 1979, the leaders of the Cultural Revolution were accused of having persecuted religious workers. The Chinese Sisters in America were cautious in re-establishing contact with their families – especially when making a home visit. Their families had suffered because of their relationship with the US and Rome.

In 1979, Sister Evangelista was given money for her old age by the government, and she was living with her brother. She was forced to retire from the hospital at the age of 69. She purchased new clothes for the first time in 20 years.

Also in 1979, it was learned that Sister Assunta had been under severe revolutionary trials during the Cultural Revolution. She was forced out of the hospital to return to her home. Her family, out of fear, could not accept her, nor could they help her. Sister Assunta ended her life on September 13, 1969.

In July 1980, four Chinese Sisters made their first home visit, and they were nervous. They learned that some of their families were forced to wear a criminal cap because their family member was a Sister. Their property was confiscated. One of the Sisters' priest brother was persecuted and starved to death. They heard with sorrow the stories of jail, beatings and other sufferings of their family. This visit was a great joy for Sisters Evangelista and Odorika who refused to talk about the Church and religion because they were told not to. Sister Evangelista had been identified as a criminal and was made to wear a criminal hat as she continued to work at the hospital.

On May 25, 1981, Sister Johanna traveled from Taiwan to Tsinan to see Sisters Evangelista and Odorika as they were celebrating their golden jubilee. Sister Johanna brought some blue material which Sister Paulette, Provincial Superior, had brought to Taiwan for the Sisters in China. Sisters Evangelista and Odorika made dresses for their Jubilee and were grateful to be remembered.



Conclusion

As we approach October 11, 2025 (the 100th anniversary of the first five Sisters arriving in Tsinan, China), let us give thanks to God for this mission and for the Sisters who served in China – remembering their sacrifices and their work to be and to bring Christ's healing presence.

Prayer to Our Lady of China



Hail, Holy Mary, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Mother of all nations and all people. You are the special heavenly Mother of the Chinese people. Teach us your way of total obedience to God's will.

Help us to live our lives true to our faith. Fill our hearts with burning love for God and each other. Stir up in our youth an unconditional giving of self to the service of God. We call on your powerful intercession for peace, reconciliation and unity among believers and the conversion of the unbelievers in China and throughout the world, for God's mercy is our only hope. Our Lady of China, Mother of Jesus, hear our petitions and pray for us. Amen.

Brian C. Blasco
Director of Communications and Archivist
Assistant Coordinator of Community Life