

From The Editor

As previously promised, we continue in this issue of TRIPOD with the topic of Atheism and Non-belief. To lead us off we have an article written especially for TRIPOD by Paul Cardinal Poupard, President of the Secretariat for Non-believers. A Sincere Dialogue Creates Fraternity is a lucid and authoritative presentation, not without far reaching consequences for the Church, of the basic policy of the Secretariat and how the president sees its responsibility in carrying out the mandate of Vatican II calling for a dialogue with the world. Among other things, the Cardinal defines a sincere dialogue as taking place in an atmosphere "where attitudes of courteous esteem, understanding, goodness, sympathy and respect for the dignity and freedom of the other" are present. It is an invitation to address "the common task, in a spirit of service, of building communion and cooperation between peoples and cultures."

What follows are two major papers on atheism and non-belief, one from the East and one from the West. Dr. Gabriel Ly, the Administrator of Fujen University, Taiwan, and one of its leading philosophers, traces the history of atheistic thought through traditional and modern Chinese culture. In Atheism and China, Dr. Ly makes the point that the mainstream of traditional Chinese culture has always been inimical to theoretical atheism, and that modern Chinese atheism is a Western hybrid, transplanted by Chinese intellectuals who had rejected their own traditional philosophy, culture and value systems in favour of partially digested, popular Western philosophies of the past hundred years. The motive may have been noble, i.e. an earnest effort to modernize China, but the result often disastrous, and the task of an authentic Chinese cultural renewal that harmonizes China's past with China's present is still, for her intellectuals, a continuing challenge.

Atheism and Contemplation, by Michael J. Buckley, S.J., is an article that originally appeared in Theological Studies and is reprinted here with the author's kind permission. Father Buckley, who is a theologian presently on the faculty

of the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, California, takes as his starting point contemporary religious experience and the "two religious movements effecting in a general way the character of the 20th century...atheism and contemplation" as they confront the problem of religious projection. Fr. Buckley covers some of the same philosophical ground as Dr. Ly, but his is the point of view of a theologian rooted in the Western philosophical traditions that have spawned the recent challenges to traditional theism in the West. His conclusion is that "For the reflective and sensitive mind... the alternative may well lie between atheism and contemplation." For how he arrives at this thought-provoking conclusion, we advise a close reading of this most stimulating article.

Last month we also promised you further developments on the historic visit of a delegation of Shanghai-Catholics to Hong Kong. Brothers and Sisters in the Lord brings together statements by Bishop John B. Wu of Hong Kong, Bishop Jin Luxian of Shanghai, and Fr. John Tong on behalf of the host organization the Holy Spirit Study Centre. Also included are the delegation's words of farewell, and a brief commentary on their visit by our editor Fr. Tong. It was indeed a most cordial and mutually satisfying meeting of brothers and sisters too long separated from each other.

Fr. Elmer Wurth has been touring mainland China again. This time he went in the good company of four Hong Kong based Canossian Sisters (Canossian Daughters of Charity) to the port city of Xiamen (Amoy). The sisters were in search of their former centre house established there exactly one hundred years ago. If you want to know why you should make every effort to include Amoy on your coming China tour, we suggest you read A Memorable Visit to Xiamen. With that we bring to a close our current issue of TRIPOD also taking the opportunity to wish you all a happy and peace-filled Autumn Moon Festival.

<p>PAPAL DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE NEW CHINA</p> <p>天主教</p> <p>Edited by Elmer Wurth, M.M.</p>	<p><i>A selection from 46 encyclicals and major addresses from Pius XI to John Paul II on New China and the Catholic Church.</i></p> <p><i>With an introduction and summary comments by Elmer Wurth.</i></p> <p><i>Published jointly by Orbis Books, New York & The Holy Spirit Study Centre, HK</i></p> <p><i>Order from:</i> 1) Orbis Books, P.O. Maryknoll, N.Y., 10545, USA 2) Holy Spirit Centre, 6 Welfare Road, Aberdeen, HK</p> <p><i>Price U.S. \$5 or H.K. \$40</i></p>
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