

EDITORIAL

From April 19 to 22, 2010, over 280 participants attended a symposium at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei in honor of the 400th anniversary of the death of Father Matteo Ricci in Beijing in May 1610. Over 80 academic papers were presented. The organizer of the symposium was Fu Jen Catholic University, and the sponsors were the National Science Council of Taiwan, Taiwan's Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Scholars came from over 30 countries, including from Europe, the Americas, as well as from Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and other parts of Asia. However, volcanic ash spewing from a volcano in Iceland prevented some European scholars from attending. The papers presented provided a rich feast of knowledge about the history of the missionary work of Ricci and his fellow Jesuits in late Ming–early Qing China, and about the cultural interchange, which accompanied it.

So many papers were being delivered that three scholars had to speak at the same time, in three different conference rooms. The participants had to make a choice as to which paper they wanted to hear. Luckily all the conference rooms were on the same floor of the Msgr. Fahy Memorial Building at the university, so that they were easily accessible to the participants. Simultaneous interpretation for both Putonghua and English was provided. It was a unique arrangement. But the disadvantage was that participants could only hear one paper at a time, and had to miss other interesting papers being delivered at the same time in another venue. So the Fu Jen organizers gave a memory stick containing all the papers to each of the participants. No further publication of the papers is planned.

Speakers at the opening ceremony were Don Barthélemy Adoukonou, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture; Prof. Bernard C.C. Li, President of Fu Jen Catholic University; H.E. Paul

Cardinal Shan, SJ; Larry Yu-yuan Wang, Ambassador of the Republic of China to the Holy See; Msgr. Paul Russell, Chargé d’Affaires of the Apostolic Nunciature in Taipei; and Mario Palma, Representative, Italian Economic, Trade and Cultural Promotion Office in Taipei.

In his opening message, Fu Jen President Li cited the commendation of Ricci given by our late Holy Father, Pope John Paul II: “Father Matteo Ricci made himself so ‘Chinese with the Chinese’ that he became an expert sinologist, in the deepest cultural and spiritual sense of the term, for he achieved in himself an extraordinary harmony between priest and scholar, between Catholic and orientalist, between Italian and Chinese.” Hopefully all Christian missionaries to China will strive to reach this ideal.

Fu Jen Catholic University is to be commended for organizing such a rich and fruitful symposium in honor of this great Western friend of China, who is still favorably remembered by both sides 400 years after his death.

In this issue we have the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI’s address to the Bishop and Catholics of Macerata, Ricci’s birthplace, on the anniversary of his death, and articles by two Fathers, Gianni Criveller and Zhao Jianmin, one from the West and one from China, who discuss various aspects of Ricci’s life and work. Both papers were given at the Ricci Symposium. At 42 pages in length, Father Criveller’s is longer than we usually have for one article in *Tripod*. But we made an exception this time in honor of the occasion, and because of the richness of content of the article. We just did not feel we should break it up, and spread it over two issues.

We also include the letter of Cardinal Ivan Diaz, Prefect of the Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples, to the priests of China, on the occasion of the conclusion of the Year for Priests. Finally, there is a book notice for *Light a Candle*, a festschrift in honor of Father Angelo Lazzarotto’s 85th birthday in May of this year. Father Lazzarotto was one of the founders of Holy Spirit Study Centre in October 1980, 30 years ago. Like Matteo Ricci, Father Lazzarotto has been a friend of China all his missionary life. (PJB)