

## EDITORIAL

The main topic of this issue of *Tripod* is the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. The reason that this encyclical is so important is that it was the first one ever written which directly addressed the social issues of the day. In Pope Leo's time these issues mostly concerned the conditions of labor, which were abhorrent in 1891, when *Rerum Novarum* was promulgated. It was also the beginning of the Catholic Church's tradition of speaking out on social questions facing the modern world. Later popes, following Leo's example, issued their own encyclicals, or gave radio addresses on the social problems of their day. Examples are Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, issued on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pope Leo's encyclical, Pope Pius XII's many radio addresses on the social issues during the years 1939 to 1958, when Pius was pope, John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra* (1961), and Pope John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus* (1991), on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*.

In this issue we have three articles on *Rerum Novarum*, one each by Cardinal Joseph Zen, bishop-emeritus of Hong Kong, Fr. Sergio Ticozzi, PIME, a researcher at Holy Spirit Study Centre and Patrick Poon, a member of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese. All three authors show the importance of this famous social encyclical, and point out how it is still relevant to the social issues of today.

All the papal teachings on social matters in the last 120 years, taken together, have come to be known as "the social doctrine of the Church," or the "social teachings of the Church." To make these teachings more digestible for the Catholic faithful, or for any person interested in social issues, in 2004, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace published a book entitled *Compendium of the*

*Social Doctrine of the Church*. Happily this volume has been translated into Chinese, and is now published. In fact, Cardinal Peter Turkson, the President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace came to Hong Kong on Sunday March 20 to launch the Chinese version of the *Compendium*. Now the social teachings of the Catholic Church are available to a Chinese audience.

A prominent “social issue” today is the problem of immigration. We have two short articles on the problems faced by Chinese immigrants in Europe. We also have a short report on the elevation of Archbishop Savio Hon, a native son of Hong Kong, to the position of Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in Rome.

At the beginning we re-produce the communiqué of the Holy See Press Office regarding the 8<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Chinese Catholics, and the appeal letter of the priests of the Cangzhou Diocese (Hebei) regarding the illicit episcopal ordination in Chengde.

Concerning the two incidents mentioned above, Chinese authorities must ask themselves if they really want to take the Catholic Church of China down the road of independence from the Holy Father. With Anglican bishops now entering the Catholic Church, they seem to be going against the tide of history. Also, the methods used to force bishops to attend the Chengde ordination seemed quite barbaric, and not commensurate with the status China now enjoys in the modern world. The authorities must ask themselves: is a re-think of China’s policy towards the Catholic Church within its borders in order?

We also include in this issue the “China Church and News Update for 2010,” and a Tripod Index for the years 2009-2010. (PJB)