

## EDITORIAL

The main theme of this issue of *Tripod* is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Xinhai Revolution, which took place in Wuchang on October 10, 1911. On that day some soldiers in the Wuchang garrison rebelled against their Manchu commanders, and set off the revolution, which led to the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China. The name most associated with the revolution was Sun Yat-sen.

Although there were the beginnings of republicanism, e.g., a parliament of two Houses was elected in December 1912, China soon descended into a period of warlordism. Sun, elected first as provisional president, had eventually to turn that office over to a stronger leader, the Beijing warlord, Yuan Shikai. Yuan himself betrayed the revolution by appointing his own sycophants as cabinet members, and by at one point dissolving the parliament. He became a virtual dictator. Yuan died in 1916, and no strong leader emerged to lead the country. Although the Xinhai Revolution brought hopes for freedom and democracy in China, the country was still unsettled.

In this issue we have three articles, by R G Tiedemann, Sergio Ticozzi and this editor, connected to the main theme. Prof. Chen Fang-Chung of Taiwan's Fu Jen University has sketched a portrait of Archbishop Stanislaus Lo Kuang, who prided himself on being born in the same year as the Xinhai Revolution. Roderick O'Brien includes the review of a book, originally in Chinese, on religious affairs regulations. We also include the statements of the Holy See regarding the episcopal ordinations, without papal mandate, which took place recently in Leshan and Shantou.

This brings to the attention of the universal church a disturbing trend becoming now more and more prevalent in the government's policy towards the Catholic Church in China. Stronger measures are being taken to implement an independent church, containing self-elected, self-consecrated bishops. This is seen from the practice of forcing bishops to participate in the ordination of candidates unapproved by the Holy Father as bishops, and the detention and interrogation of priests in the unofficial church to force them to join

the patriotic association. Recent examples are the episcopal ordinations mentioned above, and the detention of priests from the unofficial Catholic communities in Xuanhua and Heze.

The government now seems more forceful in its efforts to set up a state-run church, independent of the Holy Father. Many articles about this have appeared in recent issues of the *Sunday Examiner*. The September 4, 2011 issue of *Sunday Examiner* also contained an article describing a combination sight-seeing tour – study session for about two dozen bishops held in Heilongjiang on August 16-23, 2011. The United Front Department and the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) organized the activity. Many of the bishops held high office in the Bishops Conference or the patriotic association. The tour ended in Beijing on August 23. No doubt discussions about an independent church, and the self-election and self-consecration of bishops came up.

Coincidentally, for the answer to the question about separation from the Holy Father, the participants needed only to look at the Gospel provided on the one Sunday, which occurred during their meeting. They should have considered it as a special revelation to them. The Gospel for that Mass on August 21 was from Matthew 16: 13-20. In it, Jesus says these words to Peter: “And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.” Jesus also gave Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and the power of binding and loosing. Both the bishops and the government officials know that the primacy of the Pope derives from this passage.

I can’t imagine that the Chinese authorities would want to act to change this tenet of the Catholic faith for Chinese Catholics. They are too intelligent to imitate the time-worn and failed attempts by a Henry the 8<sup>th</sup> of England or a Napoleon of France to set up a state-run church. Nor would they want to be associated with the netherworld because of the many terrifying stories told about that place by the Taoist believers in their country. Anyway, as Jesus said the netherworld will not be able to overcome His church. Why not go the route of dialogue and negotiation with the Holy See for solving problems, such as the appointment of bishops and other church matters, which over 170 other countries around the world seem to have no problem with? (PJB)