

EDITORIAL

On January 6, 2012, the Feast of the Epiphany, the Vatican announced that the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI appointed Bishop John Tong, Bishop of Hong Kong and our beloved Director of Holy Spirit Study Centre, to be a Cardinal of the Catholic Church. Of course, we were all overjoyed! What an honor for the Church in Hong Kong, and for that matter, for the Church in China! The Consistory, at which the 22 new Cardinals would receive their red hats, was set for February 18th.

The Hong Kong Diocese quickly organized a pilgrimage to Rome. Five members of the Centre staff were among the 75 Hong Kong Catholics who signed up for the tour.

Setting out from Hong Kong on February 15, all 75 of us arrived safely in Rome at about 9 AM on Feb. 16. Two tour buses were waiting to take us to Orvieto and Bolsena, where an eucharistic miracle took place in the Middle Ages. The next day, Feb. 17, we went to the famous Benedictine monastery of Montecassino, and the picturesque seaside town of Gaeta. On both days we saw much evidence of the snowfall, which blanketed northern Italy the previous week, its heaviest in 26 years.

The elevation of the new Cardinals got underway in earnest with the Consistory in St. Peter's Basilica on Feb. 18. Each candidate knelt before the Holy Father to receive the red hat and ring signifying his appointment as Cardinal. On the afternoon of this day each Cardinal received well-wishers in the various halls in and around the Vatican. Cardinal Tong received his guests in the Paul VI Hall.

On Sunday, Feb. 19, the new Cardinals concelebrated Mass with Pope Benedict at St. Peter's. Then on the morning of Feb. 20th, it was back to the Paul VI Hall for an audience with the Holy Father. The hall was a sea of red. Each new Cardinal could take two guests to the stage to meet Pope Benedict personally. Cardinal Tong brought Fr. Michael Yeung, one of the vicars-general of the Hong Kong Diocese, and Fr. Lo Iok Seng, chancellor of the Macao Diocese. That evening Archbishop Savio Hon, Secretary of the Congregation for the

Evangelization of Peoples, invited Cardinal Tong and his guests for dinner at the Collegio Urbano. Cardinal Tong graduated from this university 46 years ago, in 1966. Dinner was preceded by a Mass in the chapel of the Collegio, at which over 50 priests concelebrated.

The Hong Kong pilgrimage group left Rome on Feb. 21 and arrived back in Hong Kong on Feb. 22, tired, but joyful for being part of the wonderful events they had just witnessed in the Eternal City!

The special topic for this issue of *Tripod* is the history of religious congregations who are celebrating over 100 years of history in the China apostolate. We begin with an article by Sister Betty Ann Maheu, a former English editor of *Tripod*, on the history of the Maryknoll Sisters, who celebrate their centennial of foundation this year. Sister Betty Ann not only sketches a brief history of her congregation, but she also describes some of the famous apostolates of the Sisters, like the Maryknoll Convent School and the direct evangelization apostolate in the Kaying Diocese (now Meixian), in the 1930s and 40s.

Next Fr. Gianni Criveller describes the 155-year apostolate of the PIME Fathers in Hong Kong. PIME made a monumental contribution to the foundation of the Hong Kong Diocese, and provided its first five bishops. In a true missionary spirit, the last PIME bishop, Lorenzo Bianchi, generously turned over the reins of leadership in the diocese to its first Chinese bishop, Bishop Francis Hsu, in 1969. After World War II, Bishop Bianchi warmly welcomed other religious congregations to do missionary work in Hong Kong. Thus when he retired, besides PIME, more than 30 other men's and women's religious congregations were working in Hong Kong.

Fr. Anton Weber presents the history of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), originally founded in Germany 135 years ago in 1878. Their first mission was in China, but they later expanded their apostolate to other countries in Asia, most notably to the Philippines and Indonesia. Now many young men from these two countries have joined SVD, and are continuing the missionary work of their European forebears.

It is hoped that these brief histories will help to offset the many criticisms of 19th century missionaries to China, pointing out, as they do, their many contributions in the fields of education and medicine.

Finally, Fr. Sergio Ticozzi presents his usual update of news about the Church in China, this time for the year 2011. (PJB)