

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Tripod* goes to the press on the wings of two amazing events involving Pope Francis. On the day I was writing this editorial the world famous *Time* magazine announced that they had chosen Pope Francis as their “Man of the Year” for 2013. Nancy Gibbs, the managing editor of *Time*, said Pope Francis was chosen “for pulling the papacy out of the palace and into the streets, for committing the world’s largest church to confronting its needs, and for balancing judgment with mercy.”

The second event was the publication last week of Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, or “The Joy of the Gospel.” The exhortation was originally a summary of the October 7-28, 2012 Synod of Bishops, which had as its theme: “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith.” However, the Holy Father also took up several matters regarding evangelization, though perhaps not mentioned on the synod floor, which are themes close to his own heart. In fact, he stated clearly in the document that he did not wish to take up every issue concerning the Church’s work of evangelization. Many of these things can be left to the bishops in their own dioceses. “I am conscious of the need to promote a sound ‘de-centralization,’” he wrote.

This long 220 page document deserves to be read, and meditated upon, by all clergy, religious and lay people involved in the work of evangelization. Pope Francis’ own exuberance and joy for evangelizing, and of being evangelized come through on every page of *Evangelii Gaudium*. The document is very practical too. Many paragraphs of it are devoted to the nuts and bolts of preparing and giving a homily! Priests and missionaries take note!

The theme of this issue of *Tripod* is “Urbanization.” In his Exhortation, Pope Francis deals with this theme when he writes at some length on evangelization in cities.

Father Sergio Ticozzi, PIME sets the stage by citing the statistics of rural village residents migrating over the years to the

big cities in search of jobs and of a better life. Father Zhang Wenxi of Zhaoxian in Hebei Province presents the urgent need of the Church to address the challenge of migration. In stark terms, he warns that the Church is in danger of losing 2 generations of Catholics from these migrations. From his Scriptural back ground he offers a solution from the trials and tribulations of the Israelites in their journey from slavery in Egypt, through the desert, to the Promised Land.

Father Alan Doyle, MM of Taiwan presents the almost 50 years' experience of the methods used by the Catholic Church in Taipei to deal with the migration of young workers from the south of Taiwan to Taipei, during the 1960's, 70's, and 80's. It appears to be the same phenomenon that is taking place in China today. So the Taiwan church's experience may be helpful to the Chinese church as they deal with the problem of preserving the faith in the midst of the migrations they face.

Audrey Leung shares her experience of working, along with other foreign professionals in China, to try to help the children of migrant workers to get a better education.

Our final 2 articles are not on the theme of urbanization, but we feel they are timely topics. Sister Lina Rong of Hebei gave her talk at the 25th convention of the U.S. Catholic China Bureau at Loyola University in Chicago in early October, 2013. Lastly, Annie Lam of our staff presents the results of a survey she conducted among clergy, religious and lay persons in China regarding their opinions of Pope Francis' call for a church which is "poor and for the poor."

Finally, we pray that God's blessings come down upon all our readers at Christmas. At the same time, we ask them to keep Bishop Ma Daqin of Shanghai, and the whole Catholic Church of China in their prayers, especially Bishop Liu Jinghe of Tangshan, who passed away on December 11, 2013, 20 days short of his 93rd birthday. (PJB)