

## EDITORIAL

**T**he theme of this issue of *Tripod* is “The Ministry of Evangelization of China’s Ethnic Minorities.” Olivier Lardinois, S.J., in his article, calls the evangelization of the ethnic minorities in Taiwan “a still too unknown part of the Christian world.” He points out that there are 16 different indigenous tribes of aboriginal people, who migrated to Taiwan during three main migration periods, the Pre-neolithic, the Neolithic and the Iron ages. These indigenous peoples came to Taiwan much earlier than the Chinese Han people, who only arrived in the 16th century A.D. The tribes are all related to the big Malay-Polynesian lingual-cultural family, and live in the long central mountain range, which forms the backbone of the island of Taiwan. Helpfully, he lists the names of all 16 tribes.

Lardinois points out what he feels is a still little known fact, namely that between 1950 and 1970 nearly 90% of Taiwan’s indigenous population converted to Christianity, to either the Catholic Church or to the Presbyterian Church. He goes on to describe the difficulties the indigenous peoples faced when Taiwan became industrialized: most of the middle-aged indigenous inhabitants from the mountains or Pacific coast villages moved to the rapidly expanding cities on the plains and ports of the west coast. He then goes on to describe how the peoples’ lives have developed through the influence of their Christian faith, and how leaders have arisen among them in the areas of both religion and society. Lardinois’ article is a wonderful introduction to the situation of Taiwan’s aborigines today.

Next, Zeng Zhihui, an anthropologist in China’s southwest, describes the shrine to Our Lady of Mercy, which is located in the Diocese of Anlong in Guiyang Province. It is one of 4 popular pilgrimage places in China’s southwest (one other is in Guiyang and the two others are in Chongqing and Nanchong Dioceses in Sichuan Province). The ethnic minority peoples of those areas make

pilgrimages to the four churches on Marian feast days, especially on the Blessed Mother's birthday of September 8th. It is interesting to read the history of these shrines from a secular social scientist's point of view.

Next, I myself, as English editor of *Tripod*, sum up the life of Father Leonard Marron, MM, who spent most of his life among the ethnic minority peoples of the Bunun tribe in central Taiwan. I do this by quoting directly, or synopsising excerpts from Father Marron's autobiography, entitled *Call and Command, a Memoir*, which Father Marron wrote in 2006. In his book, Father Marron describes his evangelization work among the Bunun people, his training of local preacher-leaders, his translation of the New Testament into the Bunun language, and his writing of a Bunun dictionary with 10,000 entries, as well as grammar and conversation books in the Bunun language for the use of younger missionaries coming along after him. After living with the Bunun people for almost 60 years, Father Marron passed away on December 15, 2015. Hopefully, from reading the article, the reader will get an idea of the hard life missionaries working among the mountain peoples led. Father Marron indeed fulfilled Bishop James E. Walsh's description of a missionary: "The task of a missionary is to go to a place where he is not wanted, but needed, and to remain until he is not needed, but wanted."

Cynthia Pon completes our picture of ministry among the ethnic minorities with her piece, which originally appeared in the March 20, 2016 issue of the English Hong Kong diocesan weekly, *The Sunday Examiner*.

Leading off this issue is the usual feature of the Spring issue of *Tripod* each year, Father Sergio Ticozzi's "Church News Update" for the previous year (2015). We also include the English translation of a review of the Catholic population in China since 2000 by Anthony Lam, senior researcher at the Holy Spirit Study Centre. Finally, *Tripod* staff has added some pictures depicting the ministry of evangelization among the ethnic minorities.

We pray that the blessings of the Risen Lord come down upon all our readers at Easter! May God bless you all, Alleluia! (PJB)