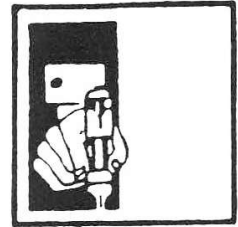


FROM THE EDITOR



"The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows." These words from Vatican Council II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy indicate the central role the liturgy plays in the life of the Church and provide the basis for the present worldwide liturgical renewal. This issue of Tripod studies some aspects of the history of that renewal and the effects it has had on the local churches of Taiwan and Hong Kong.

In our lead article, Father Thomas Law, having recently returned from studies in Rome to his home diocese of Hong Kong, gives a brief account of changes in the Mass - the central act of worship in the Catholic Church - and the historical reasons for those changes. What seems to many Catholics to have been an up-dating of the Eucharistic liturgy, turns out to be a recovery of an ancient tradition, when the Mass spoke more directly to the people and, as a result, participation was more active and natural.

For a review of what the liturgical renewal has meant to Christians in Hong Kong and Taiwan, we invite our readers to turn to articles written by Father John Ahearn and Father Andrew Chao. Both are highly regarded liturgists who have given years of dedicated service to the practical task of renewing the liturgy in their respective local churches - Father Ahearn in Hong Kong and Father Chao in Taiwan.

In this issue, we also bring you Part II of Father Jean Charbonnier's thought provoking article on "The Church in China Today". As frequent readers of Tripod will already know, Father Charbonnier is the director of the China Catholic Communication Centre in Singapore. In the second half of his essay, he deals with two key questions in China's new policy towards religious belief: will China retain the severe critique of religion represented by Marxist atheism, and does the new policy represent a genuine breakthrough with regard to freedom of religion and the independence of religious groups there.

We are already planning our next issue and have chosen "Reading the Bible" as our special topic. So keep an eye peeled for our next Tripod offering, coming your way shortly.