

## *Editorial*

The Bible recounts the history of a people chosen by God for the revelation of his Word. Its events and stories, taken at face value, speak of another time and world and seem a far cry from our present technological, fast-moving, fast-communicating era. Yet, this ancient document speaks to every age, generation and culture. It is old, yet ever new because the questions and issues behind the biblical events and stories plumb the depths of our humanity. When God calls Abraham, we the readers, realize that Abraham is none other than ourselves being challenged by a loving God to set out in faith into life's unknown and uncertain journey. When Jacob struggles with the angel, we ourselves are made to understand the difficulty and cost of faithfulness. The stories of Cain and Abel, of Joseph's brothers and Jacob and Esau are all vivid reminders of our human condition always in need of God's mercy and reconciling love. The Gospels teach us the value of redemptive suffering and how human beings are to walk with God and each other in love. The Acts of the Apostles remind us of the Holy Spirit sent to us by Jesus and ever present among us. The Apocalypse brings us to an end time of joy after the sufferings and violence of this world have come to an end.

And so it is that "God graciously arranged that the things he had once revealed for the salvation of all peoples should remain in their entirety, throughout the ages and be transmitted to all generations" (D.V. No 7). This issue of *Tripod* deals essentially with the importance of the Bible in each Christian's life.

"Access to the Sacred Scriptures ought to be wide open to all the Christian faithful" (D.V. No. 22). Three articles in Issue No.63, *The Word of God Entrusted to the Church*, by Theobald Diederich; *The Studium Biblicum*, by Marcus Chen; and *The Studium Biblicum Grounded in Chinese Culture*, written by Antonius Lee, recount the history and the work, principally of one man, Fr. Gabriel Allegra, who enamoured of God, God's Holy Word and Chinese culture succeeded in making the Sacred Scriptures accessible and relevant to Chinese Catholics not only in China but throughout the world. He was convinced that the

Word of God "strengthens faith, gives food for the soul and provides a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life" (D.V. No.21).

In the short article, pertinent to our theme, *Suffering and the Servant of the Lord*, Sr. Monica Wong links the sufferings of modern day life in Hong Kong to the sufferings of the Messiah. She points out how suffering in faith, hope and in the acceptance of God's will can be an instrument to reveal God's mysterious and loving ways.

The lead article, *First the Kingdom of God*, by Prof. Dr. Jürgen Moltmann, is a creative and in-depth search for an answer to the question: Where is the kingdom of God to be found? In attempting an answer Dr. Moltmann wishes us to "learn to see again, to learn to discern and to judge what the kingdom of God is". He singles out the concern of Jesus for the coming of the kingdom in all situations where life is threatened. Therefore, the sick are healed, the justice of God is brought to those without rights; the poor, the insignificant of this world, have the Gospel preached to them. Dr. Moltmann explores how the kingdom, experienced in and through our senses, is both a present and future reality, both an experience and expectation. It is a kingdom of this world which is also the kingdom of the world of heaven. While it is God's preserve, it is also Jesus' and so it is ours. This *new creation*, an expression of communion of love here and present in us now, is the object of our hope. The final message is clear and simple: let the Church, the State and the self "Seek first the kingdom of God..." in human relationships, in politics, in the economy, and in culture and the rebirth of all things will begin to take form and shape in our world, a work which Christ himself will bring to completion on the day of his coming."

Invited to lend a helping hand to those who care for the elderly and handicapped in China, Caritas responded with a professional known-how and generous selfless Christian witness. Two reports, *Caritas Lends a Helping Hand to the Motherland* and *Service to China's Elderly* are accounts of these difficult but rewarding endeavours.