

Editorial

Centesimus Annus is John Paul II's third encyclical to deal with social matters. In most respects it reflects the same vision, found in his previous ones: each person is created by God, redeemed by Christ and is entitled to human dignity.

Addressed not only to the church's faithful and their leaders but to all men and women of good will, the Holy Father celebrates the past with the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*. He focuses on the present in the recognition of the historic events which have taken place in Eastern Europe and the consequences these are likely to have not only in Europe but throughout the entire world. He looks to the future "at new things which surround us" as we journey together towards the third millennium, an era filled with "promises which appeal to our imagination and creativity and which reawaken our responsibility as disciples of the one teacher." (CA,3).

Both capitalism and socialism come under the scrutiny of the papal eye. Socialism, as it has been practiced throughout most of the Marxist world, has led to economic bankruptcy and bureaucratic inefficiency--this is especially true of Eastern Europe--to alienation, the violation of human rights and, through propagation of atheism, has produced a spiritual void.

By stressing the pitfalls that have befallen the socialistic countries, the Pope is not extolling the glories of capitalism. His view is clear. The only acceptable form of capitalism is one in which an economic system recognizes the proper role of business, the market and private property, as well as the responsibility for the means of production. Acceptable capitalism also recognizes free human creativity in the economic sector. Any political society to be truly human must be founded on a binding moral ethos and espouse values consonant with the values of the Kingdom.

The encyclical is a challenge to all, but especially to the church, to keep abreast of the social changes taking place in societies everywhere and to recognize that its social teachings are integral to the Gospel message of peace, justice and love.

Two authors have provided *Tripod* with an analysis of this

encyclical: Lothar Roos summarizes its contents in relation to communism, capitalism and consumerism. He sees the social encyclical as affording an opportunity for dialogue between the social and ethical sciences. He points out that John Paul II, through this new work, wishes to convey that the Church today, just as it did one hundred years ago when *Rerum Novarum* was published, faces "new things" and new challenges which call on people of good will everywhere to take up positive and peaceful action. Thomas Marti, M.M. sees *Centesimus Annus* as a call to apply the social principles, laid down by Leo XIII, in new ways. He places special emphasis on the peaceful means stressed by the Pope to bring about social transformation and understands the encyclical as a mandate for instruction and action in the process of mission and evangelization.

This issue of *Tripod* carries a double theme. The second is *religion and science*. Both science and religion are powerful institutions engaged in the quest for truth. In this process, unfortunately, they have often been at odds with one another. History is replete with agonizing accounts of their stormy and uneasy relationship. Yet, it is universally agreed that both religion and science need each other. Neither can afford the luxury of isolation. To be true to themselves and others they must engage in constructive collaboration and informed interaction. To this end *Tripod* is fortunate to have secured permission to publish Fang Lizhi's article, *Religion and Science*. Professor Fang, noted Chinese astrophysicist, maintains that, contrary to popular opinion, religion has indeed been a significant factor in the early stage of the development of Chinese culture.

Professor Fang confines himself to the positive factors in the inter-relationship between religion and science. He believes that points of interaction between science and religion are readily discernible in the formulation and choice of presuppositions or hypotheses which are an essential part of scientific activity. He holds that every component of human culture, including science and religion, is both important and necessary. Since human culture is holistic, it cannot be compartmentalized; each component inevitably influences and complements the other.

Tripod asked two noted Chinese scholars to comment on Professor Fang's paper. Thaddeus Hang, Professor of Philosophy in Taiwan, in his commentary, stresses the positive influence Christianity has had on the development of Western cul-

ture. He broadens Fang's remarks regarding Christian cultural "presuppositions" and maintains that no conflict need arise between science and Christianity.

Professor Luis Cheang, Professor of Philosophy in Hong-Kong posits that cultural backgrounds rule over cultural activities. He maintains that on the one hand, the background of Western culture is reasoning which directs the culture toward the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. The background of Chinese culture, on the other hand, inclines it toward values and life. He develops the concepts of cultural antecedents as *background of culture*. Professor Cheang feels that the faculty of reason and Tao are present both to the Chinese and the Westerner. The cultures differ in emphasis and not in substance. They can be complementary. Both cultures could profit from a relationship of mutual influence.

Professor Fang says that the traditional *literati* rejected the Catholic faith because they placed their emphasis on social morality. The *literati* were concerned about how human beings should function in society. It would be interesting to ponder that challenge in light of the church's recent emphasis on its social teachings.

Included in this issue is an article on the Universities Service Centre located at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. This world famous centre is a landmark in the history of China research. With its scholarly publications the Centre has been largely responsible for providing the world with a clear picture of China's situation, especially during the 60's and early 70's. It is an outstanding vehicle for promoting cultural exchange between China and the West. Its presence in Hong Kong provides an invaluable resource as the Territory prepares to return to Chinese sovereignty.

Our *China Church Update* gives church news items selected for their long-term importance or history.

Finally, in an era when religious communities everywhere are interested in having an accurate, professional historical account of their foundation, development and works, we are publishing a book review of *Against All Odds*, the account of the Sisters of Providence's mission to the Chinese from 1920-1990.
