

## *From the Editor*

As we have done in former July-August issues of *Tripod* we depart again this year from our usual format of articles and news briefs, this time to present a Chronology of the Catholic Church in China. Last August's pictorial history of Xujiahui, one of the Catholic Church's most ambitious missionary enterprises, was received with enough enthusiasm for us to consider offering other historical-pictorial accounts of the Church in other places in China. A general chronology was not a part of our original plan. Our intention was to initiate a series of brief pictorial-historical articles by featuring the history of the Church in China's three municipalities: Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai. Subsequent articles on the history of the Church in various provinces would then follow in each issue of *Tripod* throughout the year. It suddenly occurred to us that to make any sense out of such an all inclusive series of narrative accounts, we would need an historical overview, some kind of thread on which to string all the relevant beads. The result is the Chronology you will find in this issue. We have tried not only to record the major historical moments of the Catholic Church in China but to situate them along side and in apposition to significant happenings in China as well as in the world at large.

The problem then has been one of selection. The mass of historical information readily available is formidable, and the task of choosing what events best reflect the on-going movements of history, in this case, Catholic Church history, is not an easy one. In the end, one cannot avoid a certain arbitrariness in the selection process.

We have deliberately not included, with few exceptions, the significant historical events of other Christian churches or other religions. And this for two reasons: one, our study is not meant to be exhaustive and the inclusion of such additional material, no matter how relevant and informative, goes beyond the boundaries we have set for ourselves; secondly, we admit our inadequacy in this area and prefer to leave the task to those more knowledgeable and experienced.

Our Chronology moves from the general to the more specific. Accurate dates are given whenever possible, the earliest dates being sometimes open to dispute. World events are mentioned to provide a wider context for what was happening in the Church in China at that same time. In the latter part of the Chronology which deals with China's recent history, where events multiply and move forward at an unprecedented pace, we have tried to choose those events that capture the momentum with which China is now opening itself to the outside world.

Along with the Chronology, we have added a few charts and tables of statistics which might prove helpful and informative to you, our readers. We have also included a list of sources used in obtaining our information.

To complete the August issue of *Tripod* and to complement our Chronology and bring our readers up to date on the Church in China, we are publishing, as our lead article, an update of Fr. John Cioppa's address to the delegates of the National Catholic China Conference, held in Burlingame, California, in January of this year. Father Cioppa's talk has won acclaim and sparked interest in China not only in the United States but in Europe and Asia as well. The article is insightful in its concise analysis of the Church in China today as it moves from death to a resurrection.

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