

From the Editor

Before his death in 1985, Father George Montillon, M.E.P. wrote a series of ten articles wherein he reminisced on the Chinese family as he had known it in the early part of the 20th century. He wrote with glowing praise of the structure, unity and stability of the Chinese family and maintained that the solid foundation of the Chinese family was one of the principal reasons for China's perpetuity. China's families with incredible passive strength, he wrote, had emerged unscathed from all of China's evolutions and revolutions, from all its wars and multitudinous changes in regimes.

Inspired by the United Nations declaration of 1994 as the International Year of the Family, we use this issue of *Tripod* to reflect on and examine various elements which characterize China's families today. As an institution the family in China, more than any other institution, is feeling the effects of the Mainland's quick changing societal systems and values. In this ambience of rapid change and often painful transition the family as a "community of persons whose proper way of existing and living together is a communion of persons," as expressed by the Holy Father in his *Letter to Families*, is confronted with challenges hitherto unfamiliar within China's closeknit traditional family system. The severity of the crisis is already showing signs of family disintegration. The trends developing in the new China are in great measure responsible for the situation. China's openness to the outside world, has brought with it things both good and bad. The Chinese, now emerging from years of isolation, are making giant strides in an effort to catch up with the rest of the world. But like many other nations they are also quickly being caught up in what Pope John Paul has characterized as "a civilization inspired by a consumerist and anti-birth mentality." According to the Holy Father, such a society "can never be a civilization of love."

Will China's families emerge unscathed from the changes and transformation taking place today? As China joins the international community in the third millennium, will it be able to maintain the family stability which has been the hallmark of

its perennialty?

In *Family Structure in Mainland China*, Fang Shan examines China's historic and complicated economical, political events which during the last forty years have had a profound influence on China's family structures. Professor Stephen Lau critiques Fang Shan's work and analyzes a number of additional factors which have had an impact for change on China's family structures. The *China News Analysis*, 'feature article, *The Chinese Family Facing the Twenty-First Century*, provides an important piece of documentation. Another piece of documentation is a compilation of data on the condition of China's families and youth as reflected in the Chinese press. Father Sergio Ticozzi in his article, *The Young in China's Families*, describes the characteristics of China's students, youth in general and Christian youth in particular.

Mindful that June 4 is the fifth anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown, we asked Dr. Anthony B.L. Cheung to reflect on this significant event. His article, *Tiananmen Revisited*, is the lead article for this issue.

As usual we present a *China Church Update* as well as an anonymous document titled, *Eight Instructions from the Vatican's Representative in Hong Kong*, presently circulating in Mainland China. We print it in full not for its validity since its validity is more than suspect, but in the hope that it will help explain the complex situation which is the Church in China today.

*The family has its origin
in that same love
with which the Creator
embraces the created world...*
