

## THE FAITH OF PEOPLE TODAY

*translated by Michael Sloboda, M.M.*

### The Story of Chen Rui

Chen Rui is young, attractive, stylish, the wife of a businessman and the mother of twenty-four children. Twenty-three of these came as a result of a chance visit last year to the Social Welfare Home in her native city of Kunming. When she entered that part of the Centre where the little ones under four were kept and saw how pale and thin they all were, many suffering from birth defects, she felt a strong sense of mission and decided then and there without any hesitation to become their mother. Of the twenty-three, the youngest was six months and the eldest just over three, five were boys and the rest girls. I asked her what her husband's reaction was. She laughed...Chen Rui is a woman quick to laugh: "It never occurred to me to ask him for his opinion in the first place. He hit the ceiling when he found out. 'How

do you expect to take care of 23 children who belong to other people,' he said, 'when you can't even manage one of your own?' He was referring to our son, who was 6 at the time." She smiled, mischievously: "His response only made me more determined than ever to make a go of it...just to prove to him I could do it. Of course, the other man in my life, my son, was delighted when I told him the good news that he had twenty-three brand new little brothers and sisters. He promised me he would do his best to be a good big brother to them all."

She showed me pictures of the *House of Love*, which is what she calls her section of the Welfare Home. It was warm

他們多幸福！  
They are so  
fortunate！





「媽媽，請您也收留我吧！」陳銳（左）、吳玲（右）與昆明市兒童福利院的小朋友。

'Mama, please take me with you!' Chen Rui (on left) and Wu Ling with child at the Kunming City Social Welfare Home.

and cheerful, carpeted in red and furnished in very good taste, everything nice and neat and tidy. And, of course, there are stacks of photos of the children, all of them smiling and looking quite content at the one taking their picture. "I am indeed blessed by God," Chen Rui said in a more serious moment. "My husband is very good to me. Although he did not approve at first, he no longer sees the project as a total disaster. In fact, the 250,000 RMB that it took to support the Home last year was all donated by him, and without a word of complaint, either." And what would she do if for one reason or another her husband could not afford to continue to support the House of Love? She smiled: "It's really up to



God. If it is not God's will that this work continue, then there is nothing for me to do but accept God's will and offer up all the pain it would bring to see it close down."

A recent letter from Chen Rui said that the House of Love was not only moving to a new location, but it had also gained a new mother, Wu Ling, the younger sister of Chen Rui's husband. Chen Rui wrote, "A kind-hearted landlord is renting the bottom four floors of his new five-story building at a low price. He said he wants to do a good deed. See, how God is taking care of us?"

## Grandpa

The Catholic Church in Anshun in Yunnan is half-way down a narrow alley, with dilapidated shacks on each side and a basketball court in the front. It may be a run down section of town to the tourist but it is paradise to Father Zhong Jinming

陳銳的夥伴——  
吳玲和她的小寶貝。

Wu Ling With  
one of her dear  
orphans.



鍾神父（左）與  
他的孩子們。

Fr. Zhong With  
his children.

and his thirty children. All the buildings in the area in which they live are near collapse but the children do not seem to care. The church, however, is sturdy and secure. When you enter the gate, you are met with warmth and laughter and a wondrous spirit of joy that you can almost taste and touch. Father has been raising children in this church for a long time. His family now numbers eighteen boys and twelve girls, ranging in age from 4 to 20. Some of the older boys have been with him for over a decade and know no other home than the one he has provided for them. About one third of the youngsters are orphans and the rest are from families where there was not enough food to go around.

“Their parents brought them here to me,” said Father. “They trust me to take care of them until times get better. Our family is over ten years old now.” He smiles: “We haven’t done so badly, now have we?” In fact, they have done very well indeed. Two of the young women, who recently graduated from nursing school, run a neighbourhood clinic in the church. Three young men have just graduated from secondary school. Father laughs: “They tell me they want to join the seminary, study philosophy and theology, and become priests. That would be good. The Church here really needs young people to become its future leaders.” One of the young men spoke up, cheerfully: “I just want to be like Father Zhong and take care of kids who might be in trouble.”

Father is past the age of seventy, a happy old man surrounded by grandchildren, some spilling over into his lap, others sitting beside him holding tightly to his hand, and still others climbing onto his shoulders. He has an impish grin on his face and a kindly twinkle in his eyes. You can tell he is enjoying himself immensely. When I ask how he manages to feed and clothe his large brood, he says: “Nothing definite, mind you; nothing you can count on. Some help from Mass offerings, some from relatives and friends, some from people overseas who know about us. In the end, though, you have to say it all comes from God. For ten years now God has seen to it that we lack for nothing.”