

## EDITORIAL

**T**wo events took place in 1919 which had a lasting effect on China and on the Catholic Church in China, even up to the present day. This year marks the 100th anniversary of both events. One was the May 4th Movement, when 5,000 students of Peking University took to the streets to protest against the decision of the Versailles Treaty, ending World War I, which granted the German Concession in Shandong Province to Japan, China's mortal enemy. How could the Allied leaders commit such a travesty of justice? After all, China was on the winning side in the war.

The Chinese delegation did not attend the final session of the negotiations, and were not signatories of the Treaty. Intellectuals, like Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, decided that China could not depend on the Western Powers for support, and that China must build itself up on its own. So, they, with other intellectuals, founded the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. This year the Party celebrates the 70th anniversary of the CCP's victory in the civil war, when Chairman Mao, on 1 October, 1949, declared in Tiananmen Square: "The Chinese people have stood up!"

In 1919, the Roman Catholic Church also underwent "a revolution" of sorts, when Pope Benedict XV published the encyclical on missionary work called *Maximum Illud*. In the encyclical, Pope Benedict urged that local priests be ordained bishops in mission territories. Up until that time all the 70 or so vicariates apostolic (territorial jurisdictions in mission lands) in China were headed by foreign missionary bishops. To promote its policy, in 1922, Rome appointed Archbishop Celso Costantini as Apostolic Delegate (a papal representative to a local church) to China. He called the Shanghai Synod into session in 1924, and in 1926, he accompanied six Chinese priests to Rome to be ordained bishops in St. Peter's Basilica by Pope Pius XI, Benedict XV's successor, on 28 October, 1926. It was a sign that the Chinese Catholic Church had come of age. There had only been one Chinese bishop up until that time, and that was Bishop Luo Wenzao. Born in Fujian province, Luo was baptised in 1633, entered the Dominican

Order, studied theology in Manila, and was ordained a priest in 1656. Finally, Bishop Bernardo della Chiesa consecrated Luo Wenzao bishop of Nanjing in 1685, meaning that there was a wait of 241 years before the next Chinese bishops were ordained. *Maximum Illud* also urged that Chinese priests be given the same education as their foreign confreres. The creation of native hierarchies in mission territories not only showed that the Church was universal, but that the Catholic faith had truly taken root in those territories.

It is interesting that the two movements, May 4th and the establishment of native hierarchies in Catholic mission territories began at the same time. Both were concerned about the self-determination in the entities in which they took place. Much interaction and many exchanges have taken place over the years between the two entities, the most recent being the September signing of an Agreement regarding the appointment of bishops in the Chinese Catholic Church in September 2018. The dialogue is ongoing, as indicated by the Vatican's issuance of "Pastoral Guidelines concerning the Civil Registration of Clergy in China" on 28 June, 2019. The discussion in the "Guidelines" revolves around the question of the meaning of "independence" for the Catholic Church in China. The "Guidelines" say this regarding "independence:" The recognition of the particular role of the Pope "leads the Holy See to understand and interpret the 'independence' of the Catholic Church in China not in an absolute sense, namely, as a separation from the Pope and the Universal Church, but rather relative to the political sphere, as happens everywhere in the world in the relations between the Universal Church and the particular Churches. To affirm that for the Catholic identity there can be no separation from the Successor of Peter, does not mean making the local church an alien body in the society and the culture of the country in which she lives and works."

No doubt the discussion regarding relations between Church and State in China will continue during the provisional period of the agreement. It is hoped that the articles in this issue of *Tripod*, which cover various aspects and consequences of the two historical movements, will be helpful to the ongoing discussion, and we thank our authors for their enlightening contributions. (PJB)