



The Gateway

Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin

April 2008

Second Issue

Welcome

The Gateway is still open. Here comes the second issue.

We hope you will like the Oriental flavour and not find it too spicy or too bland. We thank those of you who kindly responded to our first issue in one way or another. Please do continue to offer us your support.

We can be reached at hklsgateway@gmail.com



The Gold-Threaded Robe by Du Qiuniang (Early 9th Century)

Covet not a gold-threaded robe,
Cherish only your young days!
If a bud open, gather it,
Lest you but wait for an empty bough.



To touch the hearts of the children confided to your care is the greatest miracle you can perform.

St. La Salle

Brother of the Month **Brother Paul O'Connell (1889-1979)**

Brother Daniel O'Connell, more familiarly known as Brother Paul, was born in 1889 in Vicarstown, County Laois, Ireland. He took the Brother's Habit in 1905 and was sent on the missions to Hong Kong in 1907. He was assigned to teach in St. Joseph's College (at Robinson Road, Glenealy) at the age of 18. Apart from a short interlude between 1921-1922, when he was transferred to Singapore and Malaysia, he was to spend the rest of his life in Hong Kong.



When Brother Paul O'Connell came to Hong Kong in 1907, it was a comparatively small city. The Chinese Kingdom was still under the control of the Empress Dowager, Cixi. Four years later Brother Paul witnessed the birth of the China Republic. He was to live under 12 governors of Hong Kong (from Lugard to MacLehose), 7 Catholic Bishops (Pozzoni, Raimondi, Valtorta, Bianchi, Hsu, Lei, Wu): 9 Popes (Leo, Pius X, Benedict, Pius XI, Pius XIII, John, Paul, John Paul I, John Paul II) and 6 monarchs of the British Empire (Victoria, Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII, George VI, Elizabeth).

From 1907 to 1921, Brother Paul taught at St. Joseph's College. In 1918 an earthquake damaged a large part of the school campus and the Brothers were forced to move out. The Brothers eventually bought Club Germania at Kennedy Road and planned for a new school. Before the new school premises was ready to accommodate all classes, Brother Paul was assigned to take care of the remaining classes at the Robinson Road campus in somewhat trying conditions. In 1923, when Brother Paul returned from Malaysia, he was given a new assignment. He became the Principal of St. Joseph's College Branch School on Chatham Road, Kowloon. The students of this school were to form the nucleus for La Salle College which opened in 1932. The students of the branch school were transferred to La Salle and Brother Paul followed them.

Among his many responsibilities Brother Paul took on the role of Prefect of Boarders. The boarders came from such places as Indochina (Vietnam), Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Burma and Mexico.

He was reassigned to St. Joseph's College from 1935 to 1945. During the war, only three Brothers remained in Hong Kong, namely Brothers John Lynam, Martin Kelleher and Paul. They managed to survive and quickly resumed their

work when the war was over. Brother Paul continued to serve St. Joseph's and La Salle College until his retirement in 1965.

Many tales are told of Brother Paul as a teacher. One of his old boys of the class of 1935, now living in London, says that 'he was a very very strict teacher'. He was also a strict disciplinarian. The old boy recalls how he told a Mexican boy several times to have his hair cut. For whatever reason, the boy did not do so. One morning after morning prayers, Brother Paul called this boy out, took a pair of scissors and cut the boy's hair himself! We wonder what would happen if a teacher did this today!

After retirement he spent his last years in De La Salle Secondary School, Fanling, teaching religion in some classes and occupying himself in the garden and in the study of the flora of Hong Kong which was his hobby. Brother Paul passed away peacefully on 6th November 1979 at St. Teresa's Hospital, after visiting his home country in the summer.



Human dignity was less talked about in the 1910s than it is now. Yet those who had the privilege of knowing Brother Paul could see in him an expression of respect for personal human dignity such as is seldom met with in our more prosperous but more feverish age. In his youth in Ireland and in early manhood in Hong Kong, he learnt a grave courtesy that never seemed affected and never inhibited his sense of humour. With the passing years the world has largely lost this gracious gift; but Brother Paul, a man of strong character, refused to jettison what was good from the past.

The memory of Brother Paul is enshrined in the hearts of his old pupils of St. Joseph's and La Salle College who will not forget his untiring efforts. His genial personality will ever be remembered by those he taught and colleagues who worked with him. His insistence on order, hard work and vigorous exercise inspired generations of students. One of his favourite axioms was 'esto vir' (be a man)) and he himself gave a fine example of manly virtues to his students. He leaves behind the kindest of memories of courtesy and devotion to duty.

Here is a poem written in his honour by Brother Patricius O'Donovan who knew him well.

Requiescat In Pace

*The Lord had willed the hour of parting!
From our midst Paul's soul had gone,
Bearing myriad years of merit,
Meat of duties nobly done;
He had gone with prayers and blessings,
At his loving Master's call,
To his heavenly home – goal of his longings,
Where pure joys can never pall.*

*The Orient sun had just arisen,
And our cities hummed again,
Lion Rock looked clear and crimsoned,
And all its multi-mountained chain;
Well known haunts he'd loved and cherished,
Oft traversed with practised art,
Seeking Nature's hidden treasures,
With roving eye and throbbing heart.*

*Over seventy years of labour,
Always faithful – ever true,
An achievement unsurpassed,
Only meted out to few;
For God's honour, for his neighbour,
Always zealous for God's claim,
Never fearing in the struggle,
Never faltering in the strain.*



St. Joseph's College Brothers 1935
Bro Paul is front row 3rd from the right



Honoured by Bishop Bianchi

Take a break

You might be a teacher if

- When out in public, you feel the urge to talk to strange children and correct their behaviour.
- You check for spelling and punctuation errors in every piece of writing you see.
- You cringe at the way bank tellers grip their pens.
- You don't know the date, but you know it's day 5, week 4, term 4.
- You get a warm inner glow when just one child says "thank you for helping me."

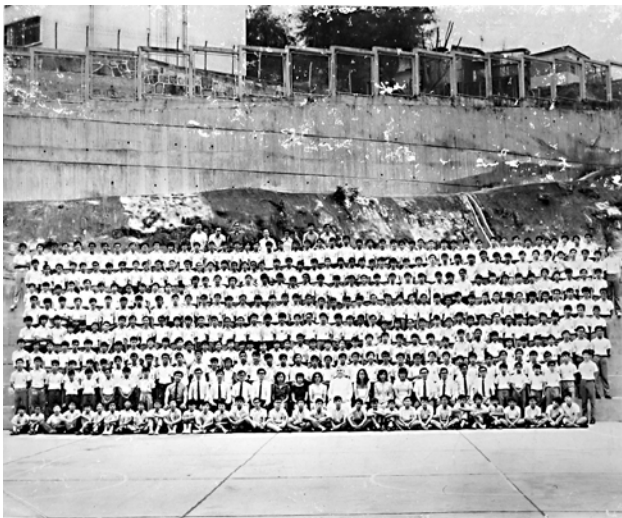
Touching Hearts

Here is the truly inspiring story of Mr. Chong Gene Hang who, like our Founder, saw the need for a good education for everyone. The story will reveal how he became involved with our Lasallian Mission in Hong Kong and why one of our schools is named in his honour. The ways of Providence are indeed extraordinary.

Chong Gene Hang College is the youngest Secondary School run by the De La Salle Brothers in Hong Kong. It is situated in Chaiwan on Hong Kong Island and opened its doors in 1971 to serve boys living in the resettlement estates and squatter huts nearby. Many of these had fled from China during and after the Cultural Revolution. The College was the first secondary school to open in the area.

The pioneer Brothers and staff had to work in less than salubrious surroundings. Amenities were few and transport inadequate. Squatter huts dotted the steep hillsides. Parents had to work hard to make ends meet. Yet they turned out their children beautifully for school.

Despite, or perhaps because of such circumstances, the school prospered. We think Mr. Chong Gene Hang and his wife would be well pleased.



The "pioneers", with Brother Brendan Dunne at the helm

The school, as it stands today, on the steep slopes of Chaiwan



Here is the story

South China Morning Post

Vol. XXVI No. 59 Friday, March 13, 1970

Ambition Fulfilled: \$500,000 Gift Presented to School

The ceremony was simple and very brief - it took just ten minutes for a slip of paper to change hands. But in that space of time an old man's life-long ambition was fulfilled

The piece of paper was a cheque for \$500,000 and it had taken Chong Gene Hang more than 40 years of frugal living to amass.

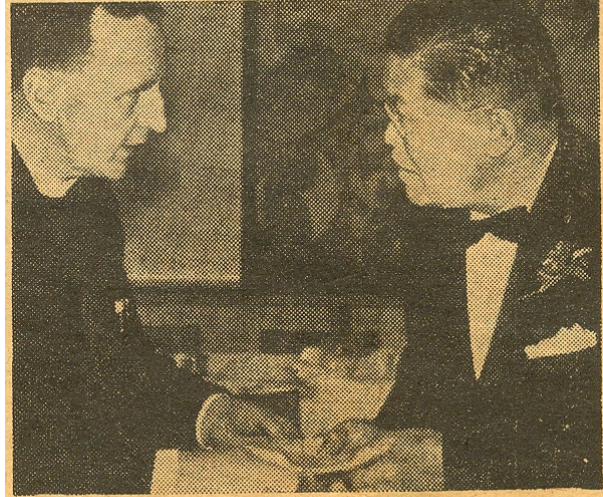
In 1925, Mr Chong left Hong Kong for the United States with two goals in mind : to make as much money as he could and to donate it towards the building of a school to be named after his late wife and himself.

"I worked extremely hard for over 40 years in the laundry business in Boston, Massachusetts, scrimping and saving every dollar possible.

"But it has been worth it. I have had very little education myself. Therefore, I wanted to do something to further the cause of education and to be associated with it in a permanent way.

"Today is the greatest day of my life," Mr. Chong said when he handed the cheque to the Principal of St Joseph's College, the Rev Bro Alphonsus Breen, yesterday.

The money, together with a subvention from Government and other private donations, will go towards the building of the Chong Gene Hang College in Chaiwan. The school is expected to be completed some time next



Mr Chong presenting the \$500,000 cheque

year (1971).

Mr Chong and his wife returned to Hong Kong in 1968, but at the time he did not know "how to donate my money."

Last September, his wife died and it was one of her last wishes that he do something about it.

Mr. Chong, a simple man, sought the advice of a Mongkok shopkeeper (Mongkok is a local residential area for the man in the street) who, in turn, directed him to the Mongkok City District Office.

The City District Officer, Mr. Albert C. C. Lam, said Mr Chong walked into his office about six months ago and asked to whom he could donate \$500,000 towards the building of a school (this was a substantial amount of money in those days). Mr. Lam said it happened at the time that St Joseph's College was holding a fund-raising campaign for the building of a new secondary school in

Chaiwan. The school would be named after the person who made the largest single donation. Introductions were made and yesterday's brief ceremony was resolved.

The Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr. D. Akers-Jones, said the donation was in keeping with the immemorial and high traditions of the Chinese people.

"It is made doubly significant in this particular instance because, Mr. Chong, your generous donation represents a considerable proportion of your whole

life's saving from hard work in a foreign



country which you have returned to spend in Hong Kong for the benefit of future generations of Chinese children. "It is an inspiration and example to us all," he said.



Extract from the address of Mr. Chong Gene Hang made on the day of the Founding Ceremony of Chong Gene Hang College:

"Forty- four years ago, with only two years of schooling behind me, I set out from my native village of Hoi Ping (Guangdong) to take a job in the laundry business in the United States. Starting life in a foreign country is generally not easy. But for me it was particularly difficult, as I had very little education in China and I did not know a single word of English. I worked and studied day and night, rain or shine, with only two goals in my mind: first, to educate myself, and second, to save some money to help in the

cause of education for the benefit of future generations of children. For forty years my beloved wife shared my determination and was for me a never-failing source of inspiration and encouragement. Indeed, it is in fulfilment of a wish that we have mutually shared that I have saved during a life-time of hard work for the building of this school, which I dedicate in her honour. Ladies and Gentlemen, I will say no more except to tell you that this is the happiest moment of my life. May God bless you all."

The Brothers, staff and students of Chong Gene Hang College still strive to keep Mr. Chong's spirit alive today.

Our Man in China

Brother David Liao is our man in China. He had been teacher and principal, in a number of Lasallian schools in Malaysia as well as Brother Visitor from January 1991 to December 1999. After his retirement as Brother Visitor of the Penang District, he took up a new challenge in a very different turf. He offered his services as a teacher of English and computer to the children in his ancestral village Changjiao in Huliao to the east of Meixian, in the District of Dabu in Meizhou, on the north-eastern border of the coastal Province of Guangdong, China.



It all began in 2001 when Brother David visited his ancestral village in Changjiao with his cousin. In the course of their visit, the villagers showed their awareness of the importance of learning English for their younger generation but they could not afford to hire an English teacher and furthermore no good English teacher would want to stay in a remote village. A formal invitation was soon made after the villagers learnt that Brother David had retired as a secondary school principal in Malaysia. On his return to Hong Kong, Brother David related his story to the Brothers. Brother Patrick Tierney then called for a meeting to study this opportunity in the context of a possible future Lasallian education service to mainland China and as a natural extension to our existing mission in Hong Kong. It was decided that Brother David should respond to the invitation. After 7 years of God's blessing and hard work, La Salle Study Centre, Changjiao is now an established and popular English Study Centre serving hundreds of students, not only from Changjiao and the surrounding villages, but from as far as Guangzhou, Foshan, Shenzhen and Fujian.

You can read more about La Salle Study Centre, Changjiao, China from the website:

<http://www.lasallechina.com>



Br. David's ancestral house is nestled at the foot of the hill. He has turned it into the La Salle Study Centre, Changjiao

Brother David, in jovial mood, getting a point across.



Though amenities are limited, the students enjoy their lessons and treasure the opportunity to learn

Students are all well disciplined. They line up and do their revision before class



Family News

1. Director of Formation arrives

We had the pleasure of welcoming Brother John D'Cruz from the 6th to the 16th of March and appreciated his presentations and sharing.

2. The Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council

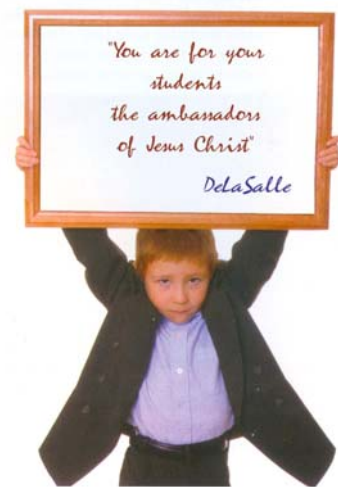
The Council met on the 15th of March and had a sharing with Brother John D'Cruz as well as tackling local Lasallian educational issues.

3. Retreat

The Brothers held their annual retreat during Holy Week with Brother Thomas Lavin, Visitor, as Retreat Director.

4. The Sevens

We were happy to welcome Brothers David Hawke and Aidan Kilty, rugby fans of a high order.



5. Restructuring

On the Feast of our Founder 7th of April 2008, the Alliance Council whose task is to map out our future new District, met in Petaling Jaya Malaysia. Our new District is expected to comprise Malaysia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong.

6. 50th Anniversary

La Salle Primary School is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year. Some readers may have known its founder, Brother Henry Pang.

7. Another 50th

Old boys of St. Joseph's College feted Brother Alphonsus Breen on 9th of March in recognition of his 50 years of continuous service in Hong Kong.

8. 95 not out

Brother Herman Fenton celebrates his 95th Birthday on the 16th of April. He is the Dean of our District. Ad Multos Annos!

9. APLEC 7

The Asia Pacific Lasallian Educators' Congress will be held in Hong Kong from 7th to 12th December 2008. We are eagerly looking forward to this important event.

Bookmarks by our creative parents



陳瑞祺(喇沙)書院家長教師會
Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College
Parent-Teacher Association

十週年誌慶
10th Anniversary
(1998-2008)



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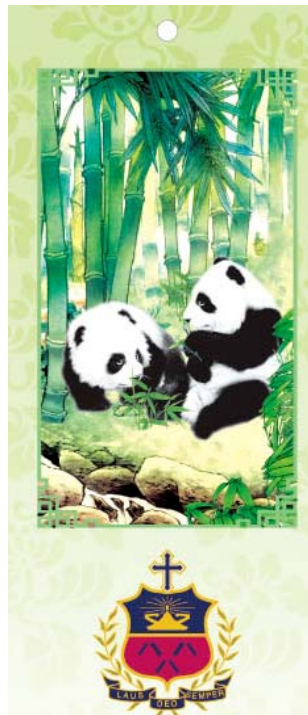
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An Easter Reflection : Not Only of the Book



The three major religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, are often grouped under the title of 'People of the Book' - meaning that we draw our inspiration and seek guidance from our inspired writings: the Torah, the Bible and the Koran. For Christians, however, Jesus, as Emmanuel – God among us - replaces all literature as the model for the human race because He is simply the perfect human being and there has never been another to equal him. In the last discussion Jesus had with his followers he made it clear that there was a new road to eternal life, that it was a person, not a book and that person was/is himself.

Stained glass window, in Shanghai Cathedral

During the three years in the company of Jesus, the apostles had been subjected to the most overwhelming love-relationship imaginable, ending in tears shed by the toughest - Peter - a name chosen by Jesus himself. His denial was to become the moment of his epiphany. The 'rock' would melt in the warming, forgiving presence of Jesus. How otherwise could a simple question like, 'Do you love me?' cause such distress in a rugged character like Peter if not from exposure to the personality of Jesus?

All fell under the influence of his Fatherly love but the barrier of ignorance in all, had to be removed and it took three years and His traumatic death to bring the twelve to a state of utter surrender to the power of love, understanding, compassion and unconditional forgiveness.

It is not so difficult to understand the suicide of Judas if we suspect that he too had been touched. We know enough about the tragedies of love in today's world to realize that whatever the outcome, love is the power to be reckoned with.

So, twelve men and a devoted band of women marched into history in the train of the Son of God whose only weapon was love and the world is still witnessing the tragedy and the triumph.

Right up to his arrest and crucifixion, the chosen followers failed to come to terms with the truth in Jesus. After three years of constant companionship and instruction including practical experience, John alone, of all the apostles was present at the foot of the cross. We are told 'this was the disciple that Jesus loved'.

How stunned they must have been by the Resurrection! And then, to have it announced by Mary Magdalene, of all people. They huddled in a room waiting for the latest bulletin after Peter and John had rushed to the tomb to confirm Mary's story.

Suddenly there was Jesus, among them. It was the same affectionate, familiar Jesus but they didn't recognize Him. Only the open wounds convinced them. Is it possible they never really had known Him? The next forty days, it seems, were needed, for them to grow to the point where the love that is Jesus could take hold in their hearts. This was accomplished by some simple exchanges - an enlightening conversation on the road to Emmaus, followed by the unforgettable breaking of bread; cooked fish on the seashore after a night's fishing; and finally, the question for Peter: **Do you love me more than these?**

This is the crucial question of the New Testament. It suggests the vulnerability of Jesus in the face of love, as well as the single requirement for the future ministry. The affirmative answer of Peter was in effect, accepting that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life; that the Word had become flesh. The guiding star of our lives is now Jesus.

Peter: 'Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.'

Peter's answer confirmed that the time was ripe and the Spirit that descended on Jesus at His baptism would now be released on humanity, beginning with the first disciples.

It was time for Jesus to disappear. But as John later said, much more could be written.

Brother William Byrne



After his "retirement" as a teacher in Ireland, Br William Byrne began his second career teaching English in universities in China. He is now helping Aitece (Association for International Teaching and Curriculum Exchange Ltd) to prepare teachers to teach in China. Brother William can be contacted at La Salle College, Kowloon.

May Our Holy Founder, whose ecclesial feast we have just celebrated, be for us a light to guide the young along the path of virtue.