



The Gateway

Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin

June 2008

Fourth Issue

Welcome

We hope you will find this fourth issue of The Gateway rich in content and feeling.

Our children come to us in the richness of their gifts. We thank God for giving us the opportunities to touch their hearts and to celebrate their richness in diversity.

Here is a collage of our children's moods:



Brother of the Month

Brother Raphael Egan (1918-1990)

A Born Leader

Brother Raphael Egan was born on 3rd December 1918 in County Laois, Ireland, and was baptized Patrick Joseph. He came from a devoted Catholic family of nine children, five girls and four boys. All his five sisters became nuns, while two of the boys joined the La Salle Brothers. Two of his uncles and two of his cousins were also La Salle Brothers. This must be something of a record, even for the Ireland of his day, with its large families and strong practice of the Catholic faith.



Brother Raphael left for the Brothers' Juniorate in Castletown, County Laois, on 17th August 1932. Following his Novitiate, he went directly to Faithlegg, County Waterford, for two years of Scholasticate. In 1939, he did his teacher training course in De La Salle College, Waterford. Two years later, he was assigned to teach in a Lasallian school in Ardee, County Louth. After teaching there for four years, he was sent to Dublin to study for a university degree.

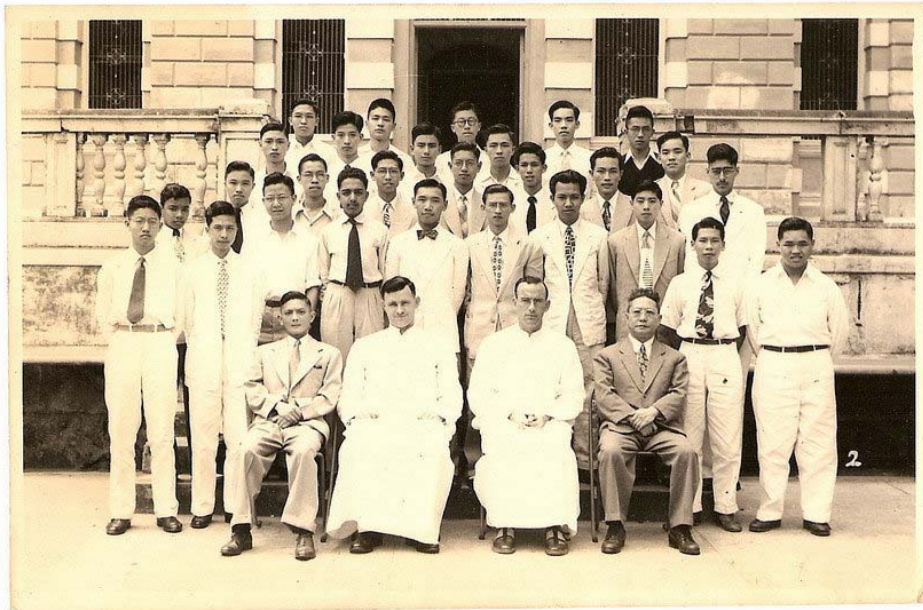
His superiors must have observed a missionary streak in Brother Raphael because in October 1947 we find him arriving at La Salle College, Hong Kong. At the time Hong Kong was trying to recover from the war years. Though conditions were far from satisfactory, Brother Raphael taught the matriculation class, worked hard, put new spirit into his students, and achieved unprecedented success in public examinations.

In the words of Brother Raphael himself: "It was tough going but the pupils who were all about 20 years old, studied like fury realizing how much they missed during the war years. I thought at the time that my standard of teaching was good but after only two years I was appointed Principal of St. Joseph's College. This sudden promotion made me have second thoughts as it has been said that if one can't teach well, it's better promote him to Principalship."

And so it came to pass that, at the relatively tender age of 32, Brother Raphael became a very youthful Director and Principal of St. Joseph's College and soon began to make his mark. With Brother Brendan Dunne as his right-hand man, Brother Raphael put St. Joseph's back on an even keel after the ravages of the war years. He set about refurnishing and reorganizing, recruiting better teachers and encouraging the students to make up for the four years of education they had

missed during the war. The staff and students considered him a born headmaster and a great educator.

Moreover, at this time he extended care and hospitality to the missionary Brothers and priests who had been expelled from Mainland China. He provided shelter and support for these servants of God. Indeed, throughout his life he continued to give generously to those in need.



Brothers Brendan and Raphael with a St. Joseph's College Matriculation Class in the 50s.

After nine years of dedicated service at the helm of St Joseph's, Brother Raphael was entrusted with a new challenge. He left behind a school with an enviable reputation as one of the best in Hong Kong. The new challenge was to pioneer the Brothers' first venture in Sabah, Malaysia. He was to spend the next thirteen years building up the Lasallian schools in Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan. He did Trojan work in these schools and is still gratefully remembered by staff and students of the time.



Brother Raphael was the first Brother Principal of La Salle Secondary School, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah from 1958-1966

Hong Kong came calling again in 1971.

After being absent from La Salle College for 14 years, Brother Raphael returned in 1971. He was to be Principal for the following 12 years. During his tenure, he made lots of innovations. In 1975, he turned the old Prefect's Board, which helped the administration to oversee student affairs, into the Student Association, which represented student welfare. He established the Guidance Centre and the Religious Centre and introduced Computer Studies into the curriculum. He also allowed the old boys to use the schools' sports facilities on Sundays. He himself took charge of two praesidia of the Legion of Mary and rarely missed the weekly meetings.



Brother Raphael and staff of La Salle College in the 70s.

In the midst of all his responsibilities, one more was added in 1979 when he was appointed Auxiliary Visitor to oversee the Lasallian mission in Hong Kong. He held this post until 1988. Brother Raphael's style was to trust the Supervisors and Principals to do their work without undue interference. The Brothers joked that he would give you enough rope to hang yourself!

In fact he had a distinctive sense of humour. Sometimes his quips and jokes would be left hanging in the air and the penny would only drop later. One Brother recalls how he was invited by Brother Raphael to be Guest of Honour at a school Swimming Gala. Before he realized what was happening, Brother Raphael had introduced him to the spectators as a champion swimmer, almost able to swim across the Atlantic ocean. The Brother concerned could hardly swim a stroke! Perhaps this is poetic (or Principals') license!

Brother Raphael's most memorable and daring undertaking was his proposal to demolish the original La Salle College building and build a new one. He had come to the conclusion that the old school, despite its majestic dome, was functionally inadequate. He put forward his proposal and left it to the Brothers to decide. In discussing the question, the Brothers were acutely aware that the old school held fond memories for the old boys. After much debate on the pros and cons the decision to go ahead was made. Work began in 1977. On Friday, 8th June 1979, the Brothers took possession of the new La Salle College. The whole building is centrally air-conditioned. Sports facilities include a 50 metre swimming pool, a 6-lane 400 metre track, an indoor gymnasium and a full-size astro-turf soccer pitch. "In building this school we had in mind not 1979, but the year 2000" said Brother Raphael.



The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, flanked by Brother Raphael and The Superior General Brother Pablo, declares the new building open.

In 1984, Brother Raphael reached mandatory retirement age and duly passed the baton to Brother Alphonsus Chee. However he remained the Supervisor of the College. All augured well until cancer raised its ugly head. At the end of September 1988, Brother Raphael underwent a major operation. This marked his two-year personal Calvary. He lost his physical strength and appetite. His spirit, however, was strong. Brother Henry Pang said, "He is very cheerful and bears his sufferings very bravely, trying his best not to show it and sometimes even venturing into my art

room in order to crack a joke. He is full of faith and very prayerful, making regular trips to the chapel when he can walk."

Brother Raphael, accompanied by his cousin and confidante Mary Egan, returned to Ireland in 1990. He visited many of his relatives, in between repeated bouts of fever and hospitalization. Although he was thousands of miles away, his heart was with Hong Kong. He told his family, "If I feel alright, I want to return next month to Hong Kong which has 85% of me, of my heart and soul."

It was not to be. On 23rd July 1990, he was again hospitalized. On 24th July 1990, at 04:20, the great man left for heaven.



"He lies buried thousands of miles from his beloved Hong Kong but his spirit and example must remain to animate and to inspire us all. May his memory ever remain fresh and vivid, stimulating all of us to ever greater things, always to do 'something more' for the Lord in the service of our fellow-men" (Homily by Brother Michael Jacques)

Our Heritage

“There’s No Place Like Home”

I was present when St. Joseph’s College was established in 1875. Of course I was not very mature then but in 1881 I was old enough to attend the laying of the foundation stone of the new St. Joseph’s College on Robinson Road. Yes, I was there.



St. Joseph’s College at
Robinson Road

The Principal then was Brother Cyprian Gendreau. I met the Governor, Sir John Pope Hennessy. In fact I still remember when he first shook hands with me. Later we became good friends and in fact I lived in Government House for 4 years.

In 1885 I left Hong Kong with the Governor. We travelled by ship to Ireland and we settled in County Cork. At first, life was good and I enjoyed my time there. Then my master, the former Governor, passed away in 1887. I was sad and depressed. I was sold into slavery and for many years I led a miserable life. Then suddenly, one bright day in 1936, a friend arrived from Hong Kong and immediately recognized me. He was Brother Stephen Buckley, the Principal of St. Joseph’s College. He found me in a pawnshop and rescued me. “You must come back to Hong Kong with me,” he said. I jumped with joy, cleaned myself up, and both of us made the long trip back to Hong Kong by ship.



Sir John Pope
Hennessy

When we arrived, it was to a new St. Joseph’s College on Kennedy Road. I was happy to be back and I made many new friends. Unfortunately my joy was short-lived. During the Second World War St. Joseph’s was taken over and occupied. When the Brothers and teachers returned in 1946 most of the furniture and equipment had been looted. I was ‘kidnapped’ and for many years lived a life of

exile in various places in Hong Kong. Finally, I was taken back to St. Joseph's. I remember the day so well. It was on July 7th 1979. A kind soul brought me, wrapped in a Chinese newspaper, to the school office, handed me over to the clerk Mr. John Chan and then departed the scene. Mr. Chan looked hard at me: "You have been away for a long time," he said. Then he took me to see the Principal Brother Patrick Tierney. He welcomed me like a long-lost son and said, "No more wandering for you!"

Now I am here in St. Joseph's to stay! In fact at this very moment I am in the main entrance. Why don't you come and see me?

Now you have read my story. Who am I? I am the silver trowel used by Sir John Pope Hennessy to lay the foundation stone in 1881. I was given to him as a gift by Brother Cyprian. The Governor took me to his retirement home in Ireland. After his death I was sold and ended up in a pawnshop where Brother Stephen found me in 1936 and brought me back to Hong Kong. That was not the end of my travails. I was stolen during the Japanese occupation of our College but a mysterious man brought me back in 1979. This is what I look like:



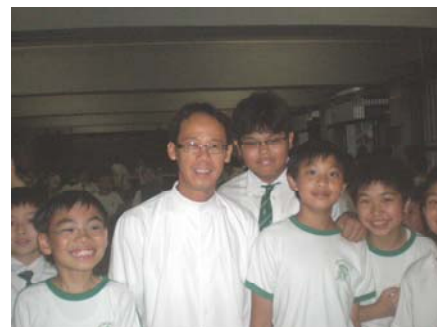
"Mid pleasures and palace though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

By Brother Thomas Favier

Family News

We welcome Brother Jeffrey

Brother Jeffrey Chan of St. Patrick's Community, Singapore, spent a week with us from 25th of May to the 3rd of June and actually gave a few lessons in St. Joseph's Primary School. We are indebted to him for "rediscovering" precious relics of our Founder and Brother Saints lying unnoticed in our sacristy drawers.



Lasallian Principals' Conference



Mrs. Elizabeth Pau

At its meeting on the 5th of June, Brother Patrick thanked two of our retiring Principals, Miss Joyce Leung of St. Joseph's Primary and Mrs. Elizabeth Pau of La Salle Primary, for their many years of dedicated service to our Lasallian mission in Hong Kong.



Miss Joyce Leung

APLEC Plenary Meeting

Our local APLEC members are preparing assiduously for the Asia-Pacific Lasallian Educators' Congress which we are hosting in December. One of our long serving APLEC members, Miss Edith Loong, was presented with an Appreciation Certificate at its recent meeting on 14th of June.



Lasallian Volunteers

Our Lasallian Volunteers, recently graduated from our schools, plan to send 9 members to Australia for the International Lasallian Youth Gathering and World Youth Day in July.



In Remembrance

We pray for the repose of the souls of our departed Brothers.

Our Brothers	Service in HK	Date of Death	Place of Burial
Felix Dennis	1924-1930	02-06-1938	Malaysia
Alphonsus MacDonagh	1894-1905	11-06-1946	England
Joseph Brophy	1928-1929	13-06-1972	Malaysia
Vincent Kozak	1964-1990	15-06-1990	Hong Kong
Felix Sheehan	1936-42;1950-84	16-06-1986	Ireland
Henry O'Brien	1961	22-06-2003	Ireland
Hidulphe de Jesus Nicolas	1875-1883	23-06-1906	France
Theophilus Icard	1906-1907	27-06-1948	France



Brother Felix Sheehan



Brother Vincent Kozak

Blessed Are They
That Die in the Lord



Brother Joseph Brophy

Paying our Respects

‘When you drink the water, remember the source’ (Chinese Proverb)

The Ching Ming Festival is the time of year when Chinese people all over the world remember their ancestors. This year, for the first time, a group of about 40 primary students went to St. Michael's Cemetery in Happy Valley to pay their respects to the La Salle Brothers buried there. Here are some of the boys' reflections.



A Special Ching Ming Experience

On 21st April 2008, I went with some classmates and teachers, along with some Old Boys and parents, to a cemetery in Happy Valley. There we offered flowers, said prayers and gave blessings. It struck me how much the Brothers sacrificed themselves for our sakes. Besides thanking the La Salle Brothers, I also promised to be a good boy, to strive for the best, not to let them down. That way I won't feel sorry or regret wasting my time. I deeply appreciate how meaningful it is to spend time and effort teaching and educating the young. It's like spreading the seed of hope, love and sharing. Let's keep it up.

Samuel Ng Long Sum

A Proud Moment

On 21st April 2008, my fellow schoolmates and I went to St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery to pay our respects to the late La Salle Brothers.

First, we went into the small chapel to say prayers. Then we each took turns to bow in front of the Brothers' mausoleum. We were all very solemn when bowing and one of the students bowed so low that his forehead nearly touched the tombstone!

A few hours after we left the cemetery, I was overwhelmed with a strong sense of pride. I felt proud to be a member of the Lasallian Family, knowing that past La Salle Brothers spent their lives devoting themselves to God and to teaching us.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle once said, "I adore in all things the will of God in my regard."

We should be grateful that we are in such a good school. I hope we can visit the cemetery again soon.

Aaron Lee



Mark Huang, an old boy, has the boys enthralled.



Not An Ordinary Visit

I have never been to a Catholic cemetery. It is very new to me.

After participating in this meaningful activity, I have learned more about the La Salle Brothers who pay much effort and selflessly dedicate their lives to education.

Thanks to their kindness and unflinching determination to overcome all difficulties, we can happily concentrate on our studies in such good learning environments.

It was a great experience for me and I'm proud to be a Lasallian.

I hope I may have more opportunities to participate in this kind of event in the future.

Eugene Chan

An Oriental Touch

A poem by Su Shi (Dongpo)

Su wrote this poem sitting by the West Lake on the night of the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival in 1076 A.D. After long years in political exile, he missed his brother.

Will a moon so bright ever arise again?

Drink a cupful of wine and ask of the sky.

明月幾時有，把酒問青天

I don't know where the palace gate of heaven is,

Or even the year in which tonight slips by.

不知天上宮闕，今夕是何年

I want to return riding the whirl-wind! But I

Feel afraid that this heaven of jasper and jade

Lets in the cold, its palaces rear so high.

我欲乘風歸去，又恐瓊樓玉宇，高處不勝寒

I shall get up and dance with my own shadow.

From life endured among men how far a cry!

起舞弄清影，何似在人間

Round the red pavilion

Slanting through the lattices

Onto every wakeful eye,

轉朱閣，低綺戶，照無眠

Moon, why should you bear a grudge, O why

Insist in time of separation so to fill the sky?

不應有恨，何時長向別時圓

Men know joy and sorrow, parting and reunion;

The moon lacks lustre, brightly shines; is all, is less.

Perfection was never easily come by.

人有悲歡離合，月有陰晴圓缺

Though miles apart, could men but live for ever

Dreaming they shared this moonlight endlessly!

但願人長久，千里共嬋娟

Translated by A. Ayling & D. Mackintosh

Su Shi (1037-1101) was born in Meishan, near Mount Emei in what is now Sichuan province. He was a writer, poet, artist, calligrapher, pharmacologist, and statesman of the Song Dynasty, and one of the major poets of the Song era.



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Chinese Paintings of our Talented Parents



**St. John Baptist de La Salle,
Pray for us;
Live Jesus in our hearts,
Forever.**

Postscript. The Gateway will take a break in July to give the editors a chance to recharge their batteries. They hope to be firing again on all cylinders in August.