



The Gateway

Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin

May 2009

Fourteenth Issue

Welcome

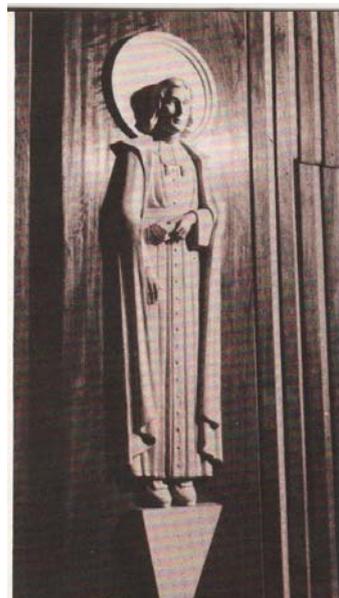
The month of May brings us Mary our Blessed Mother, Buddha's Birthday, the traditional Feast of St La Salle and the installation of a new Bishop in Hong Kong. It also brings public examinations of some importance.

We have an article on the devotion of the Catholics of China to our Lady.

The Buddha's birthday warrants a public holiday here and there is much visiting of temples.

There are Masses and spiritual devotions and a school holiday in honour of St La Salle and in one Lasallian school the lead up to the feast is called Founder's Week. The material side of the feast is not forgotten.

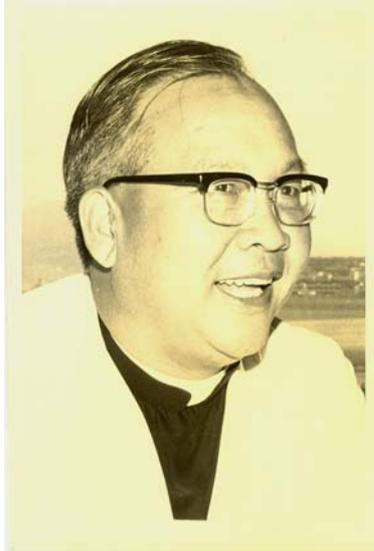
After 7 years at the helm as Bishop of Hong Kong, the resignation of Cardinal Joseph Zen was accepted by the Pope, and the Coadjutor, John Tong, duly installed on the 30th April 2009. The Catholics of Hong Kong welcome Bishop Tong as the new shepherd of the flock. He hopes that the Church in Hong Kong will continue to fulfil its role as a bridge to the Church on mainland China.



Bishop John Tong Hon

Brother of the Month

Brother Henry Pang 1920-1993



For a man so small in stature, Brother Henry packed a big punch. We are fortunate that he left us many first hand accounts of his life and times which makes any attempt at a life sketch that much easier. Here goes.

Brother Henry Pang was born on the 14th April 1920 into a long-established Hakka family in the city of Haifeng, China, where his father was mayor. His father was a man of great compassion and understanding and, though not yet a Catholic, worked closely with the parish priest, Fr Valtorta.

Brother Henry highlights two aspects of his childhood:

"We were fortunate to inherit a tremendous respect and love for learning. Even more, we valued respect for the individual. I remember my mother repeatedly reminding me that I ought to say thank you for every little favour and service rendered".

The 1920's was a time of turmoil in China. In 1929, Brother Henry's uncle, Peng Pai (彭湃), who had led a peasant movement against the warlords, was executed by the forces of Chiang Kai Shek. His father was also targeted but he managed to make it to Hong Kong with his family. They discovered that Fr Valtorta was now Bishop of Hong Kong. Here is Brother Henry's account of the family baptism:



Peng Pai, 1919

"I was baptized by Bishop Valtorta himself, on Christmas Day 1931, in the Hong Kong Cathedral. On that day my father, my elder brother and myself-all three of us- received the name Henry. We were named after the Bishop, who gave us no choice. My mother was named Elizabeth after the Bishop's mother"! Brother Henry was then eleven years old.

The Brother Director of St Joseph's College at the time was Matthias Linehan and, on the recommendation of the Bishop, he employed Brother Henry's father as a teacher of Chinese.

Both Brothers Henry Pang and Anthony Cheung first attended St. Joseph's College, which became the seed ground of their vocation.



Brother Henry (arrowed) as a Form 2 student in St. Joseph's College, 1935.

Brother Henry singles out one teacher in particular as being the main influence in his decision to join the Brothers:

"His son, Anthony Cheung, was going to the Brother's Novitiate in Penang and he said to me, "How about it. Will you go together with Anthony"? This good man, Benedict Cheung, also helped me secure my father's permission to leave home. In April 1937 I left for Penang. Since that time I have always been considered as a member of the Cheung family".



Mr Benedict Cheung



After an initial period of preparation, Brother Henry joined the Novitiate in September 1939, just as the world was going to war. He spent some five years as a student Brother, prolonged because of the Japanese occupation. He had also to spend quite some time in hospital because of tuberculosis. Together with other Brothers he studied Japanese and for over a year had to teach through this medium. Henry was a good student and later took Japanese as part of his degree. In order to survive the war years he had to do some farming and fishing, tapioca and maize supplementing the meagre ration of rice.

The Japanese surrender in 1945 brought a huge sigh of relief and the Brothers were immediately sent to reopen various schools. Brother Henry was sent to St George's School, Taiping, Malaysia. He recalls: " I spent nine very happy years of my life in St George's School, and even now any news, article or photo of the school awakens happy memories of those activity-filled days of 1945-54". It was in Taiping that he learned good schoolmanship from three excellent headmasters, Brothers Denis Hyland, Casimir L'Angelier and Alban Rozario.



Those were hectic days. Each teacher had 42 periods a week. There were no free periods. Brother Henry proved to be a conscientious and capable teacher. In addition to the regular subjects, he taught Latin and Mandarin. In his limited free time he started to study Mandarin seriously, fitting in an hour's tuition every afternoon. In general he promoted Chinese culture in the school, preparing items for the annual concerts. He also promoted scouting and this was to be a lifelong interest.



His busy and fulfilling life in Taiping came to an end in 1954 when he was recalled to Hong Kong in view of starting La Salle Primary School in Kowloon. He proved to be the right choice. After detailed preparations, La Salle Primary opened its doors on the 2nd September 1957, with 425 students in 10 classes. Brother Henry was to be the school's guiding light until his retirement in 1984 when there were 36 classes in two sessions. Even before the opening of the school he had equipped himself with a B.A.degree from London University, taking Mandarin and Classical Japanese.



He worked hard for excellence, supervising school extensions and conversions. The library was a little beauty and fully utilized while the carpeted "storyland" was his pride and joy. A football field, swimming pool and hall were also built and well used. The school orchestra and cub scouts were always supported.

He shaped his teachers into responsible and conscientious educators. As to academics, here is a sharing from an old boy:

“In 1960, La Salle Primary secured 2 Grantham scholarships and 25 Government scholarships out of 150, a sixth of the total. That made Brother Henry the envy of all school headmasters and parents alike, so much so that it was jokingly remarked that he had a hand in setting the questions and marking the papers. The record was never broken”.



Staff of La Salle
Primary School
in 1962

Brother Henry had a good understanding of children and he knew that they loved animals, fish and birds. So he built an “Indoor Aquarium”, an “Open Air Aviary” and a miniature “Zoo” in the school. These and many other innovative projects made the children feel their school was their second home.

The 1960's, however, were by no means a bed of roses for Brother Henry. In June 1966 there was a fierce downpour and the school's granite retaining wall collapsed. Six people were killed and sixteen were injured. An inquest into the incident returned a verdict of accidental death. The verdict may have been a relief for Brother Henry but there is little doubt that the incident affected him deeply. Around the same time, six of his relatives in China fell victim to the atrocities of the cultural revolution. It was not a time for feet of clay.

By the 1970's Brother Henry was something of a respected public figure with a growing number of professional commitments. He was involved in the organizing of several seminars to help teachers become more socially aware, to relate the classroom to life. He himself was invited as guest speaker at many educational functions. Meanwhile, in La Salle Primary itself, the annual Christmas concerts ran for 3 nights to packed houses. In these ways the profile of the school was further raised.

Early on the morning of 6th September 1982 he received a phone call from his native city of Haifeng telling him that his mother, now ninety-one, was very ill. Taking the Blessed Sacrament with him, he caught the first flight to Guangzhou and after a six hours dash by car was at her bedside. She could not talk but showed her delight especially when told about the Blessed Sacrament. She lived for another 3 days. Brother Henry often spoke movingly of this trip to see his dying mother.



Retirement from formal school responsibility arrived in 1984. Streams of visitors came to visit him and he joked, told stories and enjoyed conversation. He also remained faithful to his duties as spiritual director of the Mother of our Redeemer Praesidium. He always possessed a deep devotion to the Mother of God.

He now found time to indulge in a life-long aspiration, water-colours and calligraphy. He tells us:



“Ever since I began to scrawl as a child, I have always wanted to write, and at some stage to take up Calligraphy as a form of Art. I thank God that after retirement I still find myself usefully and enjoyably self-employed with calligraphy and water-colour painting. I have now reached the stage when my work has become financially worthwhile. I am happy so far as I have been able to do

something to help relieve the poor and needy and support worthy causes.

My calligraphy always carries some inspiring message. So despite my dwindling strength I can still wield this gentle instrument in the cause of justice, peace and love”.

The “worthy causes’ mentioned above covered the globe. Lasallian projects for the poor and needy in India, the Philippines, Vietnam and Africa were special beneficiaries.



Signs that all was not well health-wise, however, had been evident for some time. Already he was suffering from ankylosing-spondylitis and his stoop had become quite pronounced. He walked with a cane in the manner of an ancient Chinese philosopher. He was soon affectionately dubbed Commissioner Pang! Apart from spondylitis, he was now afflicted by diabetes and psoriasis and a weakening of the heart. Hospitalisations increased in frequency and seriousness and when discharged he was in a wheelchair most of the time. In his 1992 Christmas message he writes: *'The end of 1991 and early 1992 nearly saw the end of me. I received the Last Sacrament twice and survived two heart attacks'*. Members of his Legion of Mary group visited him in hospital.

'He could hardly recognize us and his voice was feeble. His words were: "Study hard and be a good student". These last words really touched us'.



I shall pass through
 this world BUT once.
 Any good therefore that I
 can do OR any kindness that
 I can show to any human
 BEING let me do it now. Let
 me NOT DEFER NOR neglect it,
 FOR I shall not pass this way again

Bro Henry
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On the 1st May 1993 he underwent high-risk heart surgery. Although he came through the ordeal, there were complications and he remained critically ill. A second heart attack as well as renal failure on the 22nd brought about the end and he passed away in St Teresa's Hospital. The funeral Mass was held in St Teresa's Church on the 27th and the church was packed to capacity. He was laid to rest in the Brothers burial plot in Happy Valley.

Thousands of boys passed through Brother Henry's hands, some of whom, like the kung-fu star Bruce Lee, became famous. Yet he somehow could remember the names and faces and even special traits of almost everyone of his students - an astounding feat of memory.

Bro. Henry D. Pang F.S.C. ^{BP} ^H

Oriental Flavour Our Lady of China

The Catholics of China have a special devotion to Our Lady. As with many other cultures, they depict her in their own image.

The Holy Father has asked all the faithful to pray for the Church and people of China on May 24th, the feast of Mary Help of Christians, the Patroness of China.

There are a number of Marian Shrines in China, the most famous, perhaps, being that of Sheshan in Shanghai. Every year in the month of May, Marian pilgrimages to the various shrines are held. These pilgrimages are occasions “for the Catholics of the whole world to be united in prayer with the Church which is in China”. (Pope Benedict XVI)

Prayer to Our Lady of China

Hail, Holy Mary, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

Mother of all nations and all people.

You are the special heavenly Mother of the Chinese people.

Teach us your way of total obedience to God's will.

Help us to live our lives true to our faith.

Fill our hearts with burning love for God and each other.

Stir up in our youth an unconditional giving of self to the service of God.

We call on your powerful intercession for peace, reconciliation and unity among believers

and the conversion of the unbelievers in China and throughout the world,

for God's mercy is our only hope.

Our Lady of China, Mother of Jesus, hear our petitions and pray for us.

Amen



Each shrine, as well as Churches dedicated to our Lady has its own image or icon, many of them very beautiful.



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
Antony Kilbourn	1936-1942&1949	03-05-1961	Philippines
Cyprian Gendreau	1880-1887	10-05-1887	Japan
Casimir Husarik	1933-1977	10-05-1977	Hong Kong
Hidulphe-Marie Nicolas	1875-1879	11-05-1886	France
Gregory McGrath	1894-1895	15-05-1913	France
Henry Pang	1954-1993	22-05-1993	Hong Kong
Anthony Cheung	1960-1966	25-05-1998	Malaysia
Hugh Bates	1946-1953	31-05-1953	Hong Kong



Brother Antony Kilbourne
aka "Big Brother Antony"
Interned in Stanley Prison, Hong Kong,
for a few months during WWII



Brother Cyprian Gendreau
He was Director of St. Joseph's
College. In 1887, he went to Tokyo to
recuperate but sadly died en route, at
Kobe.



Brother Casimir Husarik
May have set a record for 44 years of
unbroken service in La Salle College



Brother Hidulphe-Marie Nicolas
The pioneer Director of the first
Community of Brothers in St Joseph's
College in 1875



Brother Gregory McGrath
Widely known for insistence on
discipline and good order in school



Brother Henry Pang
Our Brother of the Month



Brother Anthony Cheung
A flair for publications, magic and
music.



Brother Hugh Bates
A generous, kind, but no monkey-
business type of teacher.

Family Updates

Devoted Service

Three of our APLEC members are retiring this summer. They received Certificates of Appreciation at our last plenary meeting. We thank Miss Loretta Yu of Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School, Mr. David Cheng of Chong Gene Hang College and Mr. Joseph Chung of La Salle College for their many years of devoted service to our Lasallian Mission.



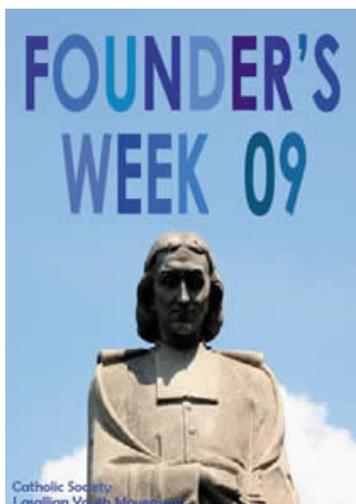
Mr. Joseph Chung



Miss Loretta Yu

Honouring Our Founder

Feast day Masses, board exhibitions, service programmes, intentional prayers and quizzes were among some of the activities arranged to honour our Founder. The memory of this great man is forever green.

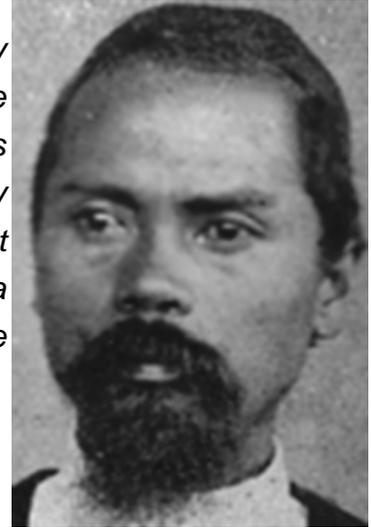


Lasallian Saints/Blessed

The Beatification of Brother Raphael Rafiringa FSC 1856-1919

It is with great joy that I give you the good news that on Trinity Sunday, June 7 2009, Brother Rafael- Louis Rafiringa will be beatified in a ceremony in Antananarivo, Madagascar. It is significant that the beatification will take place on Trinity because of its importance in the life of the Founder and it being the day of our renewal of our vows. This day will be a special time to renew our commitment in the light of the example of our newest beatified Brother.

(Brother Alvaro Rodriguez, Superior General)



Brother Raphael-Louis Rafiringa was born in Malagasy (Madagascar) in 1856.

The De La Salle Brothers began their apostolate there in 1866. One of their first students and the first local vocation was Brother Raphael, a convert to Catholicism from his native religion, who entered the Institute in 1876. After completing his religious formation quickly, he showed himself to be highly talented in several areas as well as an effective teacher. While devoting himself to his teaching and working with the poor, he also wrote books and composed both poems and music.

However, the Brothers' promising work on the island suffered a serious setback when, from 1883 to 1886 and again from 1894 to 1895, wars broke out between the local Hovas and the French colonial regime. During these conflicts, the De La Salle Brothers along with all other foreign missionaries were expelled from the country. But because he asserted his rights as a native citizen, Brother Raphael was able to remain in Madagascar.

Deprived of all their clergy who had been expelled from the island, the local Catholics found a leader in the humble De La Salle Brother. Chosen as president of the Catholic Union of Madagascar, he effectively ran the Church during these years, making himself the very soul of its Catholic population.

While doing so, he was exposed to threats and insults from some of his fellow citizens, in spite of which he held strongly to his faith and his vocation.

Once French control was reestablished on the island, he resumed his work along with the missionary Brothers who returned to Madagascar. In time, his efforts of various kinds were recognized when he was named a member of the Academy of Madagascar and given the Medal of Civil Merit for his successful efforts to normalize relations between the island and France.

He endured one more trial when in December 1915 he was imprisoned because of an unfair accusation. He was, however, exonerated in February 1916. He spent a lot of his time in prison saying the rosary and praying to God in the silence of his heart.



The Catholic people of Madagascar have a special affection for and devotion to Brother Raphael. On June 7, the Church will recognize and honour the virtues and the devoted zeal of a humble religious Brother. At the same time the Beatification will provide another model for all Lasallian educators.

Two commemorative posters for Brother Raphaël Rafiringa. The left poster has a dark brown background with vertical lines and white stars at the top. It features the text: "The message:", "Brother Raphaël was:", and a list of three roles: "– A religious - apostle", "– A scholar - educator", and "– A peacemaker - enlightened man". At the bottom, it says "Brothers of the Christian School POSTULATOR GENERAL Rome, Italy - 2000". The right poster has a light beige background with a circular portrait of Brother Raphaël Rafiringa at the top. Below the portrait, it says "Blessed Brother", "Raphaël Rafiringa", and "a brave and inspired leader". At the bottom, there is a colorful illustration of Brother Raphaël Rafiringa walking with a group of children.

Blessed Brother Raphael, pray for us.