



## **The Gateway**

**Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin  
October 2009**

**Eighteenth Issue**

## Welcome

Ah! Issue number 18 (拾捌). And 18 in Chinese lore is a very lucky number indeed. The reason is that the Chinese pronunciation of the number (*sap faat*) sounds very close to the highest form of wealth and prosperity. While this issue of The Gateway may not bring you too much material benefit, we hope it will bring you a rich diet of spiritual wealth.



In this part of the world, October 1<sup>st</sup> is National Day and therefore a public holiday. It was also the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Spectacular celebrations were held in Beijing to which our Bishop, John Tong, was invited. While there he did not meet any government officials but was interviewed by the media before, during and after the main events. He repeated the basic desire of the Church that along with material progress the government should facilitate the spiritual development of the people, tolerate differing viewpoints and release detained clergy and laity.

October in the Chinese lunar calendar usually coincides with the joyous Mid-Autumn festival. It is a happy feast, not only because of the succulent moon cakes and shimmering lanterns, but also because it is the end of the summer harvesting. The festival occurs on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month in the lunar calendar, when the moon is supposed to be at its fullest and roundest.

October in our Catholic tradition is the month of the Holy Rosary. The Rosary has stood the test of time, and is a most biblical prayer.

In the words of St La Salle:

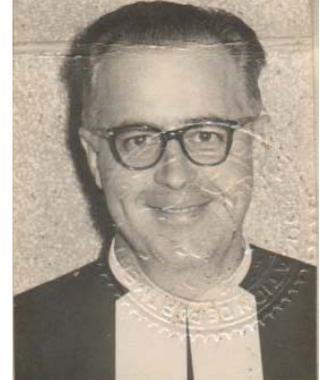
*“Let us be convinced that all we do to honour Our Lady will be richly rewarded by God”.*



## Brother of the Month

### Brother Gilbert Perrier 1916-1977

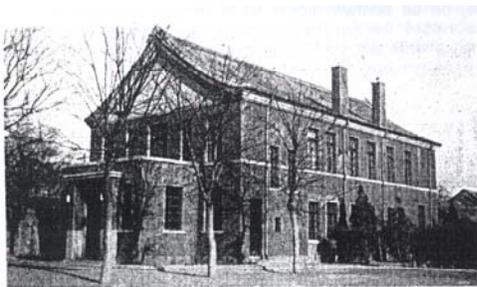
Roland Perrier was born on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1916 and baptized the day after. His place of birth was Moose Creek, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. His parents were good, practicing Catholics of French-Canadian stock and he was very attached to them. Later in life, he never failed to visit his family when the occasion arose.



After normal primary and secondary schooling he went to work, mainly in clerical posts. Up to then he had never come in contact with the De La Salle Brothers but when he did he had what he described as a “conversion”. “God called me and I answered”, he said simply. This virtue of straightforwardness would remain with him all his life.

He made his Novitiate at Montreal in 1937. He would have been older and more mature than most of his fellow novices but that did not deter him. There followed the studies in the Scholasticate in 1938. One of his mentors at the time said of him: “He was always serious in purpose; it was one of his characteristics”. From 1939 to 1947 he was sent to teach in primary schools in Ottawa. When asked what subjects he taught at that time he replied, “I taught nearly everything”. One subject, however, gave him a distinct advantage. He was accomplished in instrumental music and was able to teach and lead school choirs.

Little did he realize that he was been ‘targeted’ by the superiors for a much wider mission, far from home. In 1947 he was asked to become part of a new Lasallian opening in China, this time in Beijing. In his customary straightforward fashion Brother Gilbert said yes. And so it was that on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 1947, together with three other Brothers, he arrived in Beijing. The Brothers had bought a house of studies there, called Benildus House. The new residents had a twofold aim: to study the Chinese language and to prepare for a Lasallian school mission in Beijing.



La maison Bénilde à Pékin (1949)

All went smoothly at first and one photo shows the Brothers playing in the snow. One of Brother Gilbert’s companions at the time remarked that he “was very diligent in the study of Chinese language”. The honeymoon did not last long as China began to slide rapidly into chaos and social unrest. The communists were soon sweeping all before them and it was clear that they had set their sights on capturing Beijing. All missionaries were in danger and advised to leave and many who were able to move out did so. The Brothers were caught up in the general political and social unrest and reluctantly made

preparations to flee. Six of them and one postulant made it to Hong Kong arriving on the 27<sup>th</sup> December 1948.

A statement signed by the six Brothers soon after arriving in Hong Kong shows how reluctantly they made this enforced move and their fond hope of returning. The statement reads as follows:

“Providence has actually brought us to a place where we can perfect our knowledge of English, as well as Chinese, as we still hope to return to China one day as the Lord may determine in his hidden designs. Even as we rejoice in our security in Hong Kong, we do not forget China where the Church is undergoing a terrible trial”.

Brother Gilbert, now at the age of thirty-two, was assigned to St Joseph’s College and there he was to remain until his untimely death in 1977, almost 30 years of service. Over twenty of these years were spent teaching English, Religion, Music and French in the College before he was appointed Headmaster of St Joseph’s Primary School in 1971.



At first glance he seemed to be very serious and, in the good sense of the word, he was. His students, however, quickly broke through to the real man, kindly and caring. After class he would often be seen festooned by boys, laughing and joking. These were students he was preparing for public examinations. He managed to create a relaxed but productive atmosphere in class and there were no

complaints. He took a deep interest in his pupils and in their studies and had a great influence over them. Later, many of them mentioned his evenness of temper and kindly disposition, an ideal temperament for teaching.

He possessed an extraordinary capacity for work. Besides full time teaching and extra mural lessons in Chinese at the University of Hong Kong, he directed the choir, played the organ, ran the Music Centre, took Catechism class to prepare boys for baptism, was spiritual director of the Legion of Mary and coordinated preparations for liturgical functions. There was more.

The Hong Kong Schools Music and Speech Association plays a prominent part in the cultural life of the territory. In 1949, soon after his arrival in Hong Kong, Brother Gilbert was appointed its Vice-President and Hon.Treasurer, positions he held to his death. The Association was founded pre war and one of the founders was Brother Cassian. Since then it has expanded tremendously and schools of any standing in the territory participate in either the speech or music events or in both. This entails catering to thousands of entries for varied competitions in instrumental music, bands, choirs, prose and poetry readings, choral speaking and so on, truly a Herculean task. The following, in part, appeared in the South China Morning Post newspaper on the eve of Brother Gilbert’s funeral:

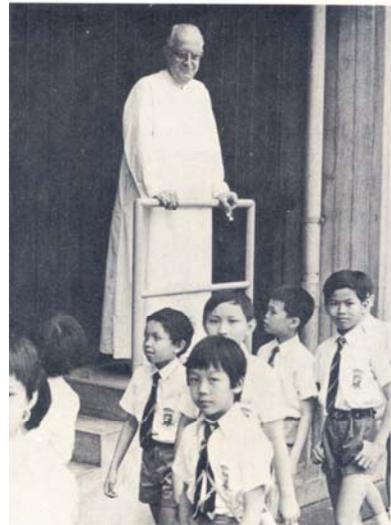
“Brother Gilbert was well known to generations of students and music-lovers in Hong Kong and was associated with the Festivals and the Association from very early days. His contribution to the work of the Association was beyond measure, and he will be missed by all who knew and worked with him”.

As if all this activity was not enough, he became involved with Church matters as an active participant in the Diocesan Convention of 1969-71. He was also a member of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. He believed in keeping up to date with Church developments and was an avid reader of spiritual books.

In his community of Brothers, he was not much of a man for small talk or gossip. He would, however, come to life if you brought up some of his favourite topics such as classical music, prayer or liturgy and on these he could discourse forever. He would also take great delight in telling an anecdote. The Brothers appreciated his solid presence, patience and faithful performance of his spiritual and educational duties. With Brother Gilbert, what you saw was what you got. One Brother had these memories:

“I first came to know Brother Gilbert almost seven years ago and during that time I cannot recall sharp words being exchanged between us, even once. For four years I slept in the room next to him and I never needed an alarm clock as I could always be sure of hearing him at his ‘ablutions’ at 5.30a.m. He was a man of solid piety, but there was nothing showy or sentimental in the way he led us in the religious exercises”.

St Joseph’s Primary School had existed from the early days but only at Primary 5 and 6 levels. A fully-fledged feeder Primary was established in 1968 consisting of 8 streams per level in two sessions, a large school indeed by any standards. In 1971 the Headmaster, Brother Lawrence Kelly, was reaching retirement. Brother Gilbert was selected for the task and it became his labour of love until his death. No doubt it brought him back in memory to his youthful teaching days in Ottawa.



The school could not have asked for a better Headmaster. Brother Gilbert set to with a will and the school became one of the leading and most sought after in the territory. His enlightened and sensible leadership and avuncular style appealed to staff, students and parents. His encouragement of all round development was particularly welcomed and the school turned out many who were to become notable personages. The Headmaster of the afternoon school and successor to Brother Gilbert, Mr. Y.C.Yung, had this to say:

“I was deeply impressed by his genuine love for children, his constant striving for improvement, his wisdom, his kindness and his humility. What else could we expect from an educationalist?”

Brother Gilbert had suffered from a heart condition for some time. He had regular checks and his general health gave no cause for alarm. On the 29<sup>th</sup> August 1977 he arrived back from home leave and complained of pain in the shoulders. The following morning he went back to work in the Primary school but saw his doctor that afternoon and got medication. The pains did not go away and he was persuaded to see the doctor again on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September and again got the all clear. That evening he did not seem unduly perturbed and retired to bed at his usual time.

The following day, Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>, he had scheduled a staff meeting in the Primary school, located about two miles from the College. When he did not show up on time the College and Brothers were contacted. Fearing the worst, Brothers Patrick Tierney and Thomas Favier, accompanied by the school clerk John Chan, opened Brother Gilbert's room door. They discovered him dead in bed. He had died during the night or morning of a massive stroke. His sudden passing came as a great shock to all.

Besides the Brothers, the first visitors were staff from St Joseph's Primary. Funeral arrangements were set in motion. The funeral Mass was celebrated in St Joseph's Church on the 6<sup>th</sup> September followed by burial at St Michael's Cemetery, Happy Valley.

The last word can go to Brother Gilbert himself. When asked in an interview if he had found fulfillment in his life as a Brother, he replied: "I have what I need. I have joy, the consolation that things have turned out well. I have the consolation that I have done the best I can, and the boys have done as well as they can". Brother Gilbert certainly always gave of his best and he wanted his students to do the same.



Yours faithfully,

Principal.

## St. Joseph's Old Boy a Nobel Laureate

On October 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, St Joseph's College rejoiced on hearing the news that one of its illustrious old boys, Charles Kao, had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics. The award is a first for our Hong Kong Lasallian Family and, we believe, could not have come to a nicer man, nor to a more brilliant but modest scientist.



Charles was born in Shanghai in 1933 and attended an international school there. He and his family moved to Hong Kong in 1949 when he was admitted to St Joseph's College, Class 4, which is equivalent to secondary 3 level. Brother Raphael Egan had just taken over the reins as Principal and he was ably assisted by Brother Brendan Dunne.

In the year 2000, when St Joseph's was celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Charles wrote his memories in an anniversary booklet emphasizing how he was influenced by Brother Brendan as well as by his science teacher. He joked that Brother Brendan would pretend to threaten to send lazy students to either Queen Mary or to Happy Valley, the former a hospital and the latter a graveyard! The boys learned well in Brother Brendan's class. He also had this to say:

St. Joseph's College  
7, KENNEDY ROAD  
HONGKONG

Telephone 21204

Date:

Registration Form

Name *Charles H. Kao*

Address *3rd floor, No. 1, Lau Sin Street, Hong Kong*

Place of Birth *Shanghai* Date of Birth *Nov 4th, 1933*

Nationality *Chinese* Religion

School last attended *Shanghai International School* Class *finished Class 5*

Result of last Examination (Passed or Failed) *passed*

Date of leaving last school *May, 1949*

Class to which admission is sought *Class 4*

Second Language *English*

Father's Name *C. H. Kao* Occupation *Business*

"The education I received at St Joseph's pushed me to excel. I am forever grateful to all the teachers and fellow students. They were instrumental to opening my mind."

Charles graduated from St. Joseph's in 1952. After furthering his studies abroad, he returned in 1970 as full-time professor in the Chinese University of Hong Kong, becoming its Vice-Chancellor from 1987 to 1996. During his

tenure the University became a powerhouse in engineering and science.

His revolutionary proposal about fibre optic communications in the 1960's was greeted with less than enthusiasm. Today, it is this technology that underpins the information superhighway and makes the internet possible. As the Nobel jury states, Charles Kao's discovery means that "text, music, images and video can be transferred around the globe in a split second." He had foreseen something unknown and unimagined at the

time and his scientific breakthrough brings immense benefit to the whole world. Now it is hard to imagine a world without fibre optics.

The Nobel jury states further:

“If we were to unravel all of the glass fibres that wind around the globe, we would get a single thread over one billion kilometers long-which is enough to encircle the globe more than 25,000 times-and is increasing by thousands of kilometers every hour.”  
No wonder Charles Kao was often referred to as “the father of fibre optics.”

When Charles first shared his vision of fibres transmitting near limitless amounts of digitized information, even his wife thought he was pulling her leg. In effect he was trying to sell a dream. In an interview he gave in 2000 he said: “I only hope that my opening of the ‘Pandora box’ will bring much joy to the world and not the reverse.”

Charles never forgot his roots. When he heard that his alma mater was raising funds in the school improvement project, he dropped in personally with his contribution. As recently as 2004, he kindly agreed to be the Guest of Honour at the school Open Day.

Early this year it was confirmed that Charles was suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and is taking treatment in San Francisco. His wife is a tower of strength to him. Upon receiving news of the award, Charles said he was knocked speechless and that he had not expected it in the least.

The Principal of St Joseph’s, Mr C.H.Leung, and the Supervisor, Brother Thomas Favier, were interviewed by local newspapers and TV. The entire school community is on a high.

Since Charles now lives in California, the school toasted him from afar.



The Supervisor, Br Thomas Favier, 3<sup>rd</sup> from left, and Principal, Mr CH Leung, 4<sup>th</sup> from left, front row, toasting the occasion with the Old Boys

The people of Hong Kong, too, have expressed great pride in Charles’ achievement. The Government is planning various forms of educational projects. The first will be the issuing of a set of stamps to commemorate the event. They will be snapped up quickly.

## Lasallian Family News

### 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday

The 29-9-1929 (all the nines) is Brother Hyacinth Fitzgerald's birthday. This year was the big one, when he reached the age of those who are strong and joined the ranks of the octogenarians. The community held a simple celebration and Brother Thomas Lavin, Visitor, was on hand.



### APLEC Plenary Meeting

APLEC stands for Asia Pacific Lasallian Educators' Congress and is composed in the main of staff who have followed Lasallian Formation programmes. Our Hong Kong APLEC group is quite active and meets regularly. The latest meeting was on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2009 when, among other things, members discussed the preparation of Lasallian Formation material for schools, the revamping of our Lasallian Family website and preparation for the Visit of our Superior General in March 2010.

### Track and Field Re-opening



The much anticipated soft opening of the newly resurfaced La Salle College Track and Field took place on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2009 with a friendly football tournament of four teams. This was the first test of the lush green astro-turf and players and spectators alike professed themselves pleased with the result. The new pitch surface is the latest fourth generation, FIFA approved astro-turf, and the first pitch in Hong Kong with this surface. An interesting addition to the sports-ground is the

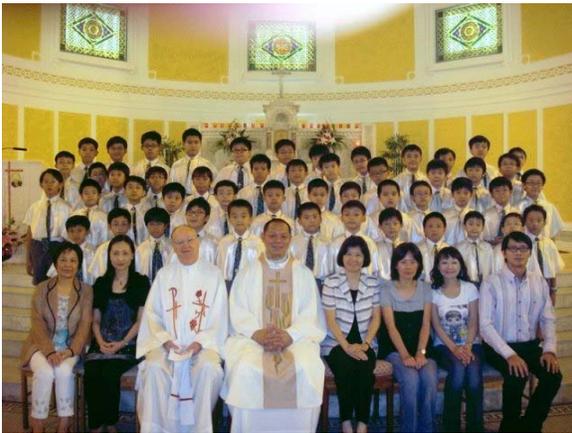
discus cage, something the athletics coaches will like in the interests of safety. The official opening of the Track and Field will be held at a later date.

### Welcome Brother Joseph Hung

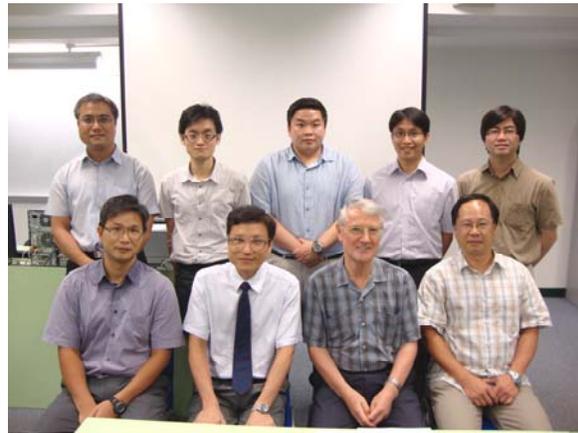
The latest and very welcome addition to our Lasallian Family is Brother Joseph Hung who hails from Vietnam. At the age of 30 he will certainly help to bring down the average age of the Brothers! Brother hopes to help us in the areas of moral education, art and craft and IT.



## Photos of the Month



First Holy Communion, St. Joseph's Primary School



Lasallian Schools webmasters' meeting



St. Joseph's College Opening Mass



Chong Gene Hang College Cross Country Race



Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School Honouring Our Lady of the Rosary



La Salle College Swimming Gala

## Oriental Flavour A Touch of Autumn

The “season of mists and mellow fruitfulness has arrived” and we would like to give you a taste of what it meant and means to the Chinese poets.

Autumn in Chinese poems is often associated with a mood of loneliness. This may be caused by the pangs of human separation, or because the poet remembers someone who is far away from home. For Chinese people the symbols of Autumn, such as fallen leaves, a bird on a branch or the lonely moon in a clear sky, are reminders of friends and loved ones apart.



Li Bai and Du Fu are often regarded as the two greatest poets in Chinese literary history. Li Bai is said to have composed at astonishing speed and without the need of correction. He is probably the most beloved poet in Chinese history. The following poem about Autumn is one of the most typical and most loved:

**Li Bai (701-762) 李白**

**The Autumn Wind 秋風詞**

**The autumn wind is cool,  
The autumn moon is bright.  
Fallen leaves gather and scatter,  
A trembling crow perches on a branch.**

**We, my beloved, miss each other,  
Not knowing when we will meet again.  
This hour, this night,  
my feelings for you are beyond words!**

秋風清，秋月明，  
落葉聚還散，  
寒鴉棲復驚，  
相思相見知何日，  
此時此夜難為情。



Du Fu (712–770) 杜甫  
Clearing Rain 雨晴

The rain has fallen, and thinned the  
autumn clouds,  
The western wind has blown from  
afar,  
This morning is clear and bright,  
The rain has not harmed the farmer.

The row of willows are still green,  
The pear trees on the hill bloom red.  
The sound of the flute is heard,  
A goose rises high into the sky.

天水秋雲薄，從西萬里風  
今朝好晴景，久雨不妨農  
塞柳行疏翠，山梨結小紅  
胡笳樓上發，一雁入高空



Su Shi, also known as Su Dongpo, is a major poet of the Song dynasty. He was a master of prose, poetry and calligraphy, and as if that were not enough, a highly-qualified engineer. In the following poem he captures the traditional concepts of separation and sadness in the midst of Autumn's cool beauty:

Su Shi (1037- 1101) 蘇軾

Mid-Autumn Moon 中秋月

The sunset clouds are gathered far away,  
it's clear and cold.  
The Milky Way is silent,  
the bright moon is as white as the jade plate.

The goodness of this life and of this night  
will not last for long.  
Next year where will I watch the same bright  
moon?

暮雲收盡溢清寒，  
銀漢無聲轉玉盤。  
此生此夜不長好，  
明月明年何處看。



## Justin (Francis) Lee

Justin, also known as Francis before he joined the priesthood, attended St Joseph's Kindergarten from 1982 to 1984, St Joseph's Primary School from 1984 to 1990 and Form 1 of St Joseph's College. During his time in the Primary school he distinguished himself particularly in the area of public speaking. In 1989 for example, he was the champion of the Hong Kong Chinese verse speaking competition. One of his teachers at the time interestingly recalls that Justin had already begun to ask questions about the meaning of life.



In 1991 he went to Marlborough College in England to further his studies and was admitted to read Modern History at Merton College, Oxford, in 1996.

Justin's path to the priesthood is best described in his own words:

"Born into a non-believing family, I received the gift of faith while in my last year in St Joseph's (Form 1). I waited until just before my 15<sup>th</sup> birthday to be baptized. I believe the first signs of a vocation to consecrated life already appeared before baptism. In my first year in Marlborough, I joined prayer meetings of Evangelical Christians at school and was very inspired by their life totally dedicated to Christ and his Will. It never came to mind to become a Protestant, and the conclusion I naturally drew was that it would be good to become a monk/priest."



After graduating from Oxford, and through the inspiration of a friend, Justin joined the Community of St John, a Catholic religious order named after the "beloved disciple" of Jesus and author of the fourth gospel. Members follow in the footsteps of St John in a life of contemplation, fraternal charity, Christian formation and works of compassion. They live in small communities.

Justin is convinced that it was Providence that led him to where he now is and that it corresponds to the desires of his heart. He believes that union with Christ's prayer and compassion, linked with rigorous philosophical training, is a very good way to be open to the modern world.

We pray for Justin's continued growth in the love and compassion of the Lord and know that he too will have us in his prayers.

## Lasallian Saint

### Saint Jaime Hilario

Manuel Barbal Cosan was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1898 in Enviny, a small town at the foot of the Pyrenees in northern Spain.

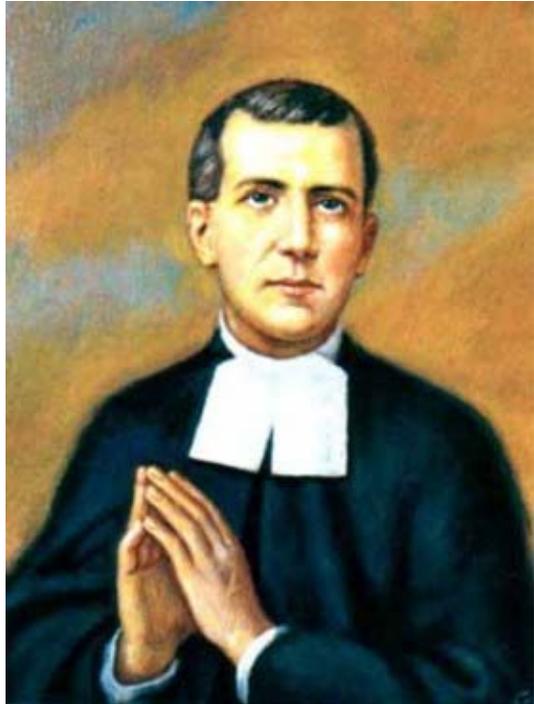
At first he wanted to become a priest but a hearing defect came against him and he was advised to find his vocation elsewhere. Convinced that God was calling him, he was overjoyed in 1917 to learn that the De La Salle Brothers would accept him and he entered the Novitiate at the age of 19.

Having taught in school for several years he was assigned to houses of formation and eventually became Vocations Director, working to attract young men to join the Brothers.

He gradually became harder of hearing and had to give up teaching and work instead as gardener in a Brothers house of formation south of Barcelona. His deafness had become a big cross for him as a Brother involved in education. We can see this from his personal notes: "If God had revealed to me the difficulties I would have to face as a Brother, I would have been afraid, and I would never have entered. But now I would not give up my robe for all the gold in the world."

At the outbreak of the Spanish civil war in 1936, while on his way to visit his family, he was identified as a Brother, arrested and sent to join other Brothers and lay people detained on a prison ship. On the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1937 he was taken before the People's Tribunal. His lawyer advised him not to reveal his identity as a religious Brother but simply to state his occupation as a gardener. This he would not do and so his fate was sealed.

Six months after his arrest, Brother Jaime was sentenced to death. His reaction was similar to that of our Founder in very difficult circumstances: "God be blessed". To his family he wrote: "I have just been judged and condemned to death. I accept the sentence joyfully". On the way to execution he said: "What more could I ask for than to die, when my only crime is that I am a religious, and that I have worked for the Christian education of youth".



Brother Jaime was placed before a firing squad and the order given to open fire. The first volley of shots rang out but he was unharmed. The commander repeated the order to fire and Brother Jaime received a slight wound in his arm. At this stage some of the soldiers dropped their guns and ran away in panic. The commander approached and fired five shots at close range. Brother Jaime died at the age of 39 on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1937. His last words to the soldiers were: To die for Christ, my young friends, is to live”.

Brother Jaime was beatified on April 29<sup>th</sup> 1990 and canonized on November 21<sup>st</sup> 1999 by Pope John Paul II.

On the same day that Brother Jaime was canonized, so too was Brother Cyril Bertran, his seven Brother companions and a priest, all of whom had been martyred over two years before Brother Jaime.

Spiritual reflection of Brother Jaime:

*‘The day you learn to surrender yourself totally to God, you will discover a new world, just as I am experiencing. You will enjoy a peace and a calm unknown, surpassing even the happiest days of your life.’*

Let us pray:

God our Father,  
we honour Brother Jaime  
who willingly gave his life in joyful sacrifice,  
proud in the knowledge of who you called him to be.  
Inspire us with his living faith and vitality  
that we may hear your words addressed to us  
and be faithful messengers  
of the gospel of Jesus your Son.

Saint Jaime Hilario, Pray for us.  
St Cyril Bertran and Companions, Pray for us.

