

The

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gateway



issue

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(Cover) This statue of St. John Baptist de La Salle graces the North Block of St. Joseph's College since 1921.

The gateway

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issue

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Welcome

In the run-up to the glories of Easter, we have had a month or so of topsy-turvy weather. The old adage warns us not to put our woolies away until the 15th May, the Feast of St La Salle. We can well believe it this year.

The annual Rugby-Sevens escaped the worst of the weather. Soon after the final whistle sounded the heavens opened and poured forth a deluge. Hailstones, larger than the size of your fist, rained down and caused quite a stir – as well as some damage. For the record, the Kiwis won ... surprise surprise!

We continue to travel down the pathways of our Hong Kong Lasallian history and in this issue we reach World War II. It is good for us to stand back and reflect on what went before, to appreciate the efforts of our predecessors and to say a prayer for them. Prayers and offerings were made to our ancestors on the festival of Ching Ming which fell on the 5th April. This is one of the two major remembrance festivals in Chinese tradition and it is heartening to see it observed faithfully every year.

Prayers and good works were also offered in the Catholic tradition of Lent. Our students and their parents contribute generously every year to church-run charities.

We wish all our readers a happy Easter.

He is risen! ■

**The Gateway
Hong Kong
Lasallian Family
Bulletin
April 2014
Fifty Second Issue**



Our Pathways

St. Joseph's College at Kennedy Road 1918 to 1930s

A Man of True Vision: Brother Aimar Sauron

Throughout its history, Hong Kong witnessed many dedicated and distinguished Brothers. There was one whose outstanding vision helped to set a solid foundation for the future development of the Hong Kong Lasallian Family. To him, difficulty was a source of inspiration.



Brother Aimar

Brother Aimar arrived in Hong Kong on the 21st May 1914. After assuming control of the College at Robinson Road, the school grew in size and fame. Eight new airy and bright classrooms were soon added and a new wing was later put up. Brother Aimar was Director of the College from 1914 to 1921 and from 1923 to 1931.

His tenure was marked by a number of outstanding events. By 1917 he had purchased a building in Kowloon to cater for the junior boys and save them the trouble of crossing the harbour every day. He saw the earthquake of 1918 as an opportunity to search for and find a new site for the College, on Kennedy Road. He established the Brothers as a legal entity in 1921. He managed to keep the school going during the Great Strike in the 20's which led to the closure of many other schools. He saw to the construction of the North and West Blocks of St. Joseph's, also in the 20's. And finally he acquired a large site in Kowloon in 1928 which would serve as the site for La Salle College and Primary School.

In an address of the Brother Assistant Superior General Michael Jacques at the Centenary Celebration Dinner, he remarked,

"I am sure you would like to join me in expressing our very deep debt of gratitude to all those Brothers who down the years and up to the present time have toiled here in Hong Kong ... Each of you will retain individual memories of your beloved tutors, some of whom have made such a tremendous impact. I would like to mention one name, that of the late Brother Aimar whose contribution Aimarto St. Joseph's and the creation of La Salle College have been such significant landmarks in the history of the past century. He is representative of a tribe of completely dedicated men to whom we are so indebted and whose spirit should fire us all to emulate their noble example."

Retiring and unassuming in character, Brother Aimar had far-seeing eyes and left an indelible mark on the Lasallian mission in Hong Kong.

Chatham Road Venture

In the 1900s, the population of the Kowloon Peninsula was growing and a number of Portuguese families settled there. To spare the young boys from the trouble of crossing the harbour daily, Brother Aimar purchased a house in Chatham Road, Tsim Sha Tsui and opened a branch of St. Joseph's College on the 5th September 1917 with 65 students attending.

The strong demand for places and the fact that so many students had still to cross the harbour to attend classes at Kennedy Road persuaded Brother Aimar that a permanent, fully equipped college in Kowloon was necessary. The St. Joseph's Branch School at Chatham Road would form the nucleus for the construction of La Salle College in 1930/31.



1918 Earthquake and the Purchase of Club Germania

On the 13th February 1918, an earthquake centred at Shantou shook Hong Kong. It is the only earthquake in history to have caused any damage to Hong Kong. According to Hong Kong Telegraph the quake threw the whole Central District into a state of panic. The shock lasted about half a minute and was felt all over Hong Kong Island and Kowloon.

This unusual occurrence may be considered an epoch-making event in the history of the College. The old College building in Robinson Road, especially the recently-added wings, was found on examination to be so badly damaged that it was condemned by the Municipality as unfit for school purposes, with the result that it had to be vacated at very short notice.

'How and where to find another building to transfer the College to were questions that arose. The outbreak of the World War I in 1914 brought about a slump in land values in the Colony and there were many vacant houses. The rare opportunity thus presented itself for the acquisition of the extensive property in Kennedy Road. This happened during the early stage of Brother Aimar's administration. He took counsel of his spiritual chief, Bishop Pozzoni. Divine inspiration led to a bargain being promptly clinched and, since 1918, the College authorities have become the Crown lessees of this most desirable property.' (JP Braga)



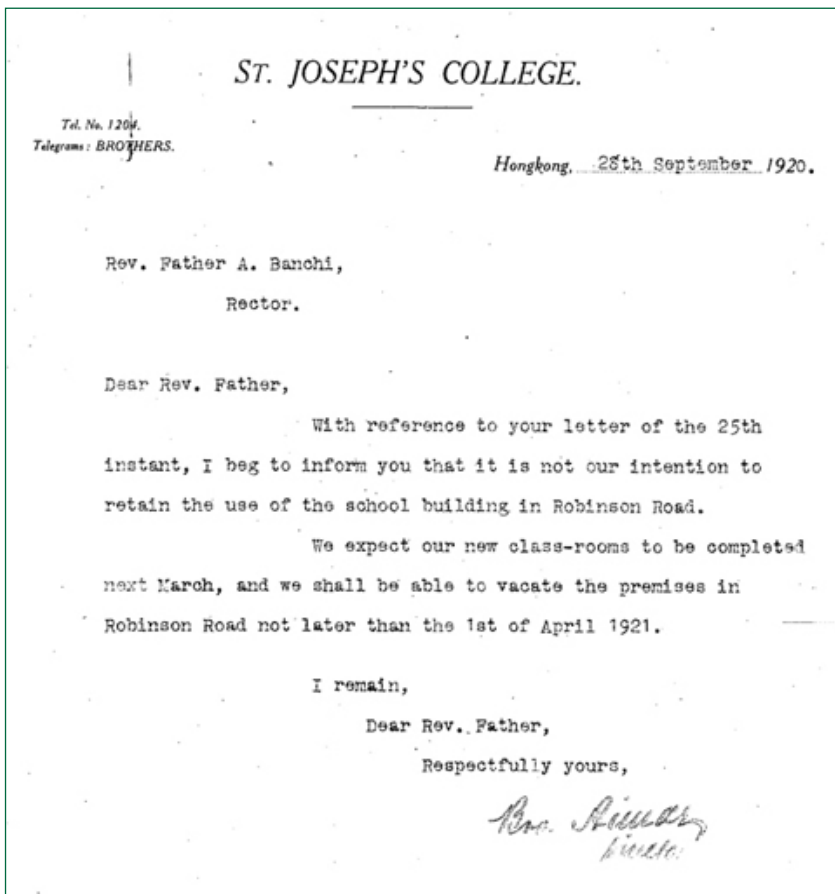
Father Leon Robert
Superior General of the Society
of the "Missions Etrangères", Paris

With the timely help of Rev. Father Leon Robert, the Procurator of the French Foreign Mission (MEP), the Brothers were able to take possession of the Club Germania on the 3rd September 1918. However, the Club, which was originally designed for social and recreational purposes, was ill-adapted for educational use. Nevertheless, the acquisition enabled the Brothers to reorganize their educational work. The new premises were suited as a hostel for the staff and the boarders but deficient in accommodation for classrooms.

As a result, some classes still remained in the hastily erected three storey building in Robinson Road and Brother Paul O'Connell was left in charge.

In Kennedy Road, every available inch of space was made use of. This situation went on like this until the new North Block could be used. The old building in Robinson Road, after 36 years of serving the youths of Hong Kong and as an arena of the labours of the Christian Brothers, was surrendered to the Catholic Mission. Club Germania had become the sole property of the Brothers and the immediate need was to adapt the Club and the land to suit the basic requirements of an educational institution.



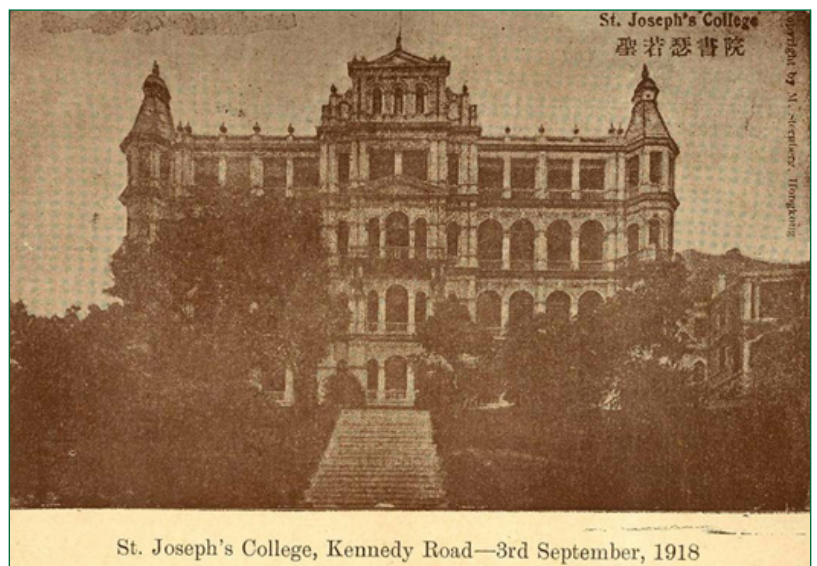


Arriving at Kennedy Road

Thanks to Brother Aimar's unflinching courage and determination to face all financial difficulties and to the aid granted by the Colonial Government, the erection of the fine, spacious building opposite the lower Peak Tramway Terminus became a reality.

The new building (North Block), giving accommodation to 650 boys, was opened by Governor Sir R.E. Stubbs on the 5th September 1921. It was erected at the cost of \$125000. The Brothers' Colleges in Singapore and Penang and the Government's building grant contributed part of the money needed.

Meanwhile, Brother Marcian Cullen and Brother Michael Noctor took charge of the College successively during the absence of Brother Aimar from 1921-1922. Another plan was hatched that would provide a connection link between Club Germania and the North Block. Brother Aimar returned, and with characteristic determination, asserted that the money could and must be found for a building that would provide room not only for the much needed Science classes but also for a Great Hall, Library and Chapel.





Sir Reginald Edward Stubbs
Governor of Hong Kong, 1919-1925

On the 24th October 1925, The Governor Sir R.E. Stubbs opened the new West Block (also known as the Science Block or Chapel Block). He was accompanied by Bishop Valtorta, Father Spada, Father Robert, MEP, Mr. G.N. Orme, Director of Education and Mr. E. Ralph, Inspector of English Schools. The event coincided with the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the College.

The North Block and West Block are currently the only existing pre-war buildings of the College. The former is a four-storey building topped at the corners by two turrets and has verandahs on one side whereas the latter is also a four-storey structure with a turret on top.

The Great Strike

During the Great Strike in Hong Kong and Canton from 1922 to 1925, the Brothers were all doing trojan work in keeping school life as normal as possible. Sir Claude Severn, Director of Education and Vice-Chancellor of Hong Kong University, agreed with the report of 1924 that St. Joseph's College was most excellent and enthusiastic, and it was the only English school not affected by the strike. Brother Cajetan Lhomailé, Prefect of Boarders managed to keep everything in order without the help of any servants. In 1925, while the new West Wing was under construction and with the strike going on, some of the bigger boys did police work, others acted as office boys and Brother Cassian Brigant led about 20 boys to serve at the General Post Office, where their service was highly appreciated:

GENERAL POST OFFICE
HONG KONG

8th August, 1925.

Sir,

I have the honour to express my appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered by the staff and pupils of St. Joseph's College during the strike and to thank you for your placing their services at the disposal of this Department.

I may add that the efficiency of the boys was considerably increased by the supervision and instruction of Brother Cassian in whose charge they were and I should be obliged if the enclosed letter could be transmitted to him.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sd.) M. J. Breen

Postmaster General.

*The Rev. Brother Aimar,
St. Joseph's College,
Hong Kong.*



Teacher Stalwarts from Abroad

Good teachers in the 30's were hard come by in Hong Kong. They were poorly paid: they were not paid directly by the Education Department, as they are now, but by the school authorities. The Grant-in-Aid Code, as it stands today, was not implemented until after the War. The Brothers of Hong Kong owed a special debt to Brother James, Visitor of the Penang District, for recruiting well-formed teachers trained in the schools of the Brothers in Malaya, Singapore and the Philippines. He persuaded them to leave their own countries and "seek fresh fields and pastures new" to take up a teaching career in Hong Kong. To Brother James' consolation, these teachers not only showed that they were competent teachers but they also contributed to the society of Hong Kong in various fields. Many Old Boys of the College may still have vivid and fond memories of these teachers.



Mr. Roy Pereira

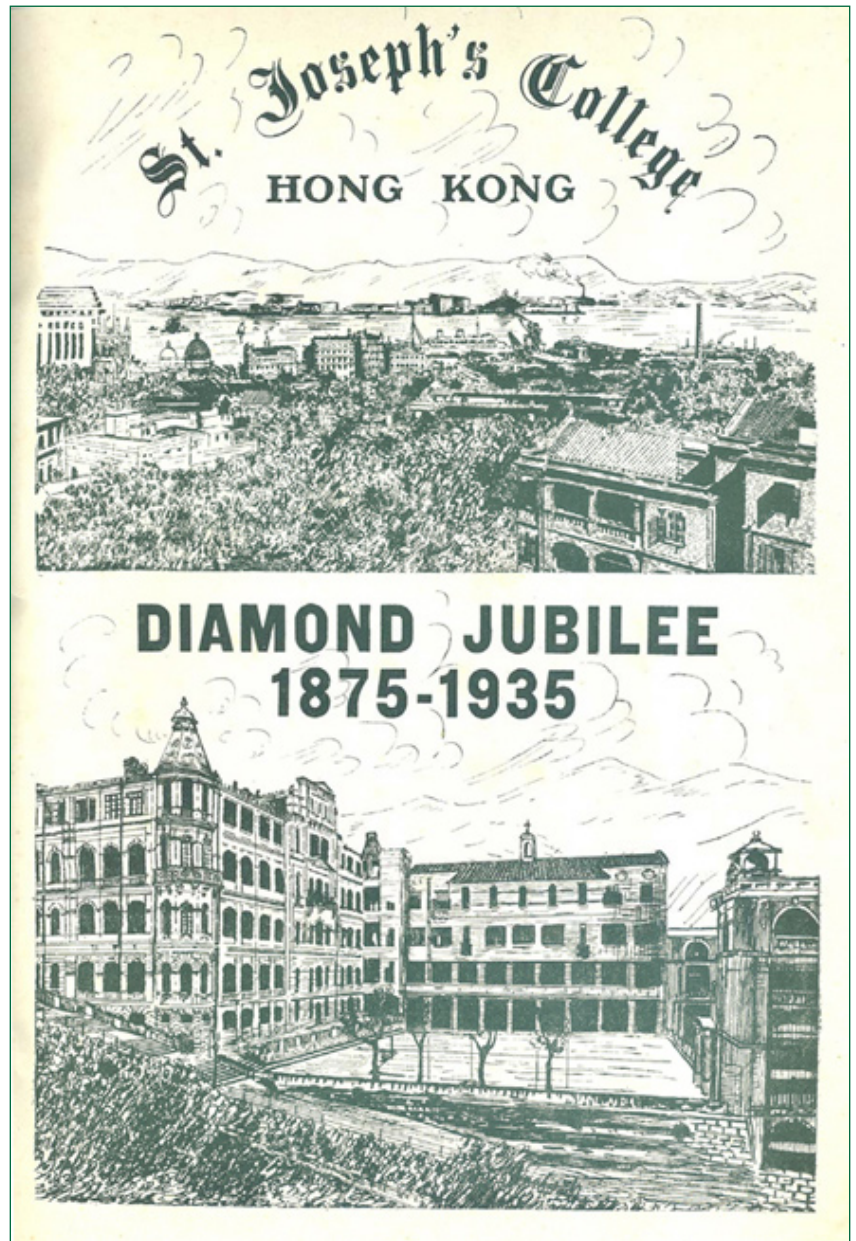


Mr. Quah Cheow Cheang

Name	From
Cheang Wye Sum	Penang, St. Xavier's Institution
Boay Kah Seng	Penang, St. Xavier's Institution
Quah Cheow Cheang	Penang, St. Xavier's Institution
Oei Eng Bee	Penang, St. Xavier's Institution
Lim Siang Teik	Penang, St. Xavier's Institution
Lim Hoy Lan	Ipoh, St. Michael's College
Roy Pereira	Singapore, St. Joseph's Institution
Patrick Ho Beng Chong	Teluk Anson, St. Anthony's Secondary School
Percy Felix Lim	Malacca, St. Francis' Institution
Chin Sit Chin	Kuala Lumpur, St. John's Institution
Anthony Lim	Manila, De La Salle College
Vincent Chan	Manila, De La Salle College



Mr. Vincent Chan (second left),
Mr. Boay Kah Seng (far right)



The College celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1935 and maintained steady growth in the 30's right up to the outbreak of War. The number of students ranged from 600 to 700. Besides regular subjects, the College also provided commercial and technical subjects to students from Standard 8 (equivalent to Primary 5) to Standard 1 (Form 6) classes. English was the medium of instruction at all levels. Owing to the varied and mixed races represented on the school roll, lessons were also given in Cantonese, Portuguese and French.

This peaceful period of time in the history of the College did not last long. The Pacific War and the chaotic political development in China in the 50's and 60's had brought tremendous change to the College. ■

In Our Hearts Forever

— by Brother James Dooley

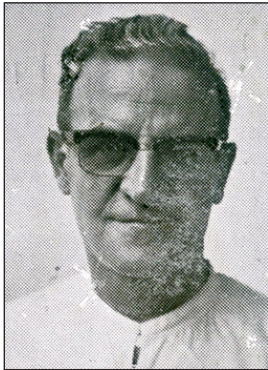
Taiping Without Peace



There was now no law or order in the town of Taiping. The British army had moved south, the police force had been disbanded, the St. John Ambulance and A.R.P., had followed the army, short-term prisoners had been released from the local jail and were roaming the streets looting and killing. The advancing Japanese army with its reputation for cruelty, torture and barbarism would soon enter the town. Brother Dennis Hyland, Director, had been advised by certain officials that it would be safer for us to evacuate to the Maxwell Hill Station until the troubles blew over; we were still naïve enough to believe that there would be a massive counter-attack and the Japanese would be repulsed.

A few of us ventured between air raids, which were still going on, to get supplies for the Hill Station. With the help of some soldiers detailed to maintain order, we managed to bring home a good supply of tinned goods. We knew there was plenty of fresh food available from the Australian Experimental Farm on the Hill, a ten





Brother Gaston

mile walk through the town, the park and through the jungle leading to the bungalow.

When we reached the foot of the Hill in the torrential rain, we found a large number of evacuees – men, women and children all looking miserable and frightened in the pouring rain. We got together and decided we should all make the nearest bungalow, about two miles up the Hill our base camp for the night and move on in the morning. Brother Gaston and I set out first with the remainder of the Brothers on our heels. Gaston and I had a huge basket of tinned food slung on a pole between us and with our personal effects on our backs. We struggled along, slipping and sliding in the mud and dropping our precious load more than once. We finally reached the base camp, deposited our load, had a shower and a bowl of scalding tea and back to the bottom of the Hill again. By morning, we had the entire group with their bundles and their buckets, their hens and ducks safely landed.

By mid-afternoon of the next day, the Brothers had reached the "Cottage", the bungalow we had rented for the holidays. We now experienced an atmosphere of peace and freedom we had not felt for weeks. Our prayer life – we had all our Community religious exercises – and we had time to reflect. The spirit of comradeship and fraternal charity among us was excellent.

We were in our very own Garden of Eden but, as in the first Garden, a snake slithered in. We began to receive telephone calls from the Muslim Caretaker of the Hill Station, advising us strongly that we should quit the bungalow and return to Taiping, or 'there could be trouble for everybody'. We pondered these thinly veiled threats. Was he right? Should we be in our school to meet the Japanese army, or should we do as we were told and stay where we were?

All this time Brother Denis Hyland was keeping us informed about developments in the town and sending us more tinned food brought to us by our most loyal school caretaker, Mr. Sebastian. Brother Denis kept a diary of events; here are some excerpts in his own handwriting:

The van-guard of the Japanese army arrived in Taiping about 5 P.M. They came up along Station Road on bicycles & turned up Jalan Abdul Jalil towards Main Road, about an hour afterwards they returned & occupied St. George's. They ordered the safe, & all the Almeriahs to be opened & took away all they could lay their hands on & chairs to be used as fire-wood. Everything was theirs & no one could reason with them. They acted in a very haughty manner & broke up desks, tables

“... Next morning a Japanese officer arrived, apologized for the conduct of the soldiers and assured me they were here to protect property. The soldiers were back again on the 25th, Brother Francis and I spent a sad and frightening Christmas Day confined to one small room. It was mid-afternoon before we broke our fast ... I was able to send a letter to the Japanese authorities giving the names, ages, nationalities and present whereabouts of all Brothers ...”

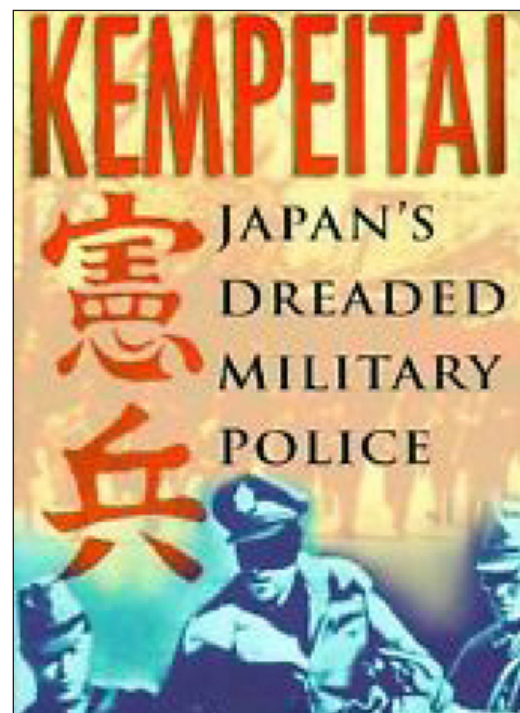
Brother Denis has been severely criticised for his handling of the Taiping Affair, especially his refusal to recall the Brothers from the Hill Station to meet the Japanese, despite even being urged to do so by a Japanese woman brought to the school by the local parish priest, Father Aloysius. Brother Denis saw no danger in his stance. There were no ‘enemy nationals’ among the Brothers. Conditions in the town were appalling, no security, no food, no sanitation ... and anyway, he had been informed by the Japanese officials that we could remain on the Hill and that they themselves would visit us. So he decided we were safer where we were. The local Brothers were not so convinced. They had their families to think of and they were Asians like their ‘liberators’. The telephone calls became more frequent and vicious. During subsequent cross-questioning by the Kenpeitai, they told us they had received information from the Hill, stating there were “European spies” there.

So while we awaited the visit from the Japanese officials it was the dreaded Kenpeitai who came with results even the most terrible of nightmares could never have conjured up.

(To be continued)



Brother Francis



Brother James Dooley was Principal of St. Joseph's College, Hong Kong, from 1964 to 1970 after which he taught in La Salle College until called to Rome in 1977.

For more about Brother James, please read our Issue 6 at <http://www.lasalle.org.hk/pages/docs/TheGateway06.pdf>

Family Updates

Exchange in Five



All five of our Lasallian secondary schools in Hong Kong took part in the annual exchange programme starting the 7th April 2014. The programme is a great way of introducing participants to different schools. They had an opportunity to broaden their horizons, to develop communication and other social skills, and simply make friends. The Opening Ceremony brought together the principals of all five schools as well as a number of supervisors and teachers. In his welcoming speech, Brother Steve stressed that the future of our mission in Hong Kong is in the hands of our youths.

Let us Remember



Ching Ming, meaning 'Pure Brightness', is a major Chinese festival and normally falls on the 4th or the 5th April. It is often referred to as the 'Tomb-Sweeping or Grave-Sweeping Festival'. The equivalent in some western countries would be the 'Cemetery Day'. It is a time to remember our departed ancestors and loved ones. A selection of Form 4 and Primary 4 students from La Salle College and Primary went to pay their respects at the Brothers gravesite in Happy Valley. They were given a talk by an old boy, and there was also a prayer service. Flowers were offered in remembrance. Our departed Brothers are not forgotten.

Spring Carnival Here

La Salle Primary School held its Annual Spring Carnival on the 2nd March. The Parent-Teacher Association is the chief organizer. The forecast was for a cloudy day and that is what we got. In many ways, that kind of weather is preferable to the boiling sun. In any case, the Carnival turned out to be a lovely family day. The stall games were entertaining and creative and challenging and the souvenirs were very appropriately selected. Every child went home happily.



Family Fun Day There

On the 13th April, it was the turn of St. Joseph's Primary School to open its doors for its Family Fun Day. The weather was pleasant, warm and sunny. After the opening ceremony, there was a special feature with the unveiling of a plaque in memory of all those who served or studied in the Kindergarten which operated on the top floor of the Primary for thirty eight years. Brother Jeffrey Chan did the honours at the unveiling. The Family Day continued unabated until evening and pretty well all visitors came away with souvenirs and prizes.



Rugby in the Air



On Saturday the 15th March La Salle College C-Grade Rugby team won the Inter-school Championship, retaining the title won last year. The team's performance was in the awesome category because they scored 223 points with only 10 points against. Congratulations to players, coaches, supporters, and teachers. Then, between 25th and 27th March, La Salle College hosted Fiji, the Hong Kong Sevens defending champions. Fiji selected La Salle as their training ground for this year and the last two years. There was a photograph and autographing session.

Table Tennis Overall Champs

The La Salle College table tennis team won the overall title again in a rather dramatic fashion. Entering the finals of the junior (C Grade) competition the school was lying third. In the semi-final the red-hot favourites were unexpectedly beaten but one of the winner's best players, not expecting his school to win, had gone off to play in another tournament. On entering the final, they started calling the boy to come back and asked the referee to wait. The referee waited but as there was no sign of the boy he eventually declared a walkover in La Salle's favour and they thereby secured the overall championship. There was much rejoicing in La Salle's camp.



It's Lent

Masses, Prayer Services, Confessions, Lenten Box Collections and Easter Liturgies were held in our schools over the Lenten period.

Mass at
St. Joseph's College



Prayer Service at
Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School



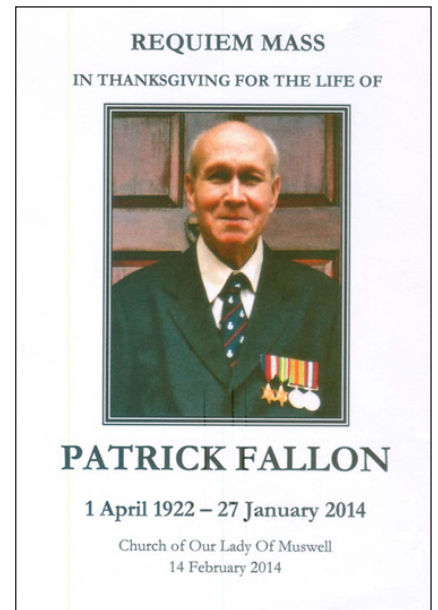
Easter Liturgy at
La Salle Primary School



Lenten Collection at
St. Joseph's Primary School

Patrick Fallon R.I.P.

One of the oldest old boys of both La Salle College and St. Joseph's College, Patrick Fallon, died in London, England, on the 27th January 2014. He was within a few months of his 92nd birthday. Patrick and his brother John enrolled in La Salle a few days after its official opening in September 1932. In 1933, following the transfer of his father to Hong Kong Island, he and his brothers moved to St. Joseph's College. Patrick graduated in 1939 and joined the Whampoa Docks as an apprentice engineer. He and his brother also joined the Hong Kong Volunteers Defence Corps. They were captured by the Japanese, held for a year in the Shamshuipo internment camp before being transferred to Innoshima Island in the inland sea of Japan. We extend our sincere sympathies to Patrick's wife and family on their sad loss.



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