

The

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LASALLIAN EAST ASIA DISTRICT



issue

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HONG KONG LASALLIAN FAMILY BULLETIN

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(Cover) This statue of St. John Baptist de La Salle, with two pupils, stands in the office of Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School.

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Welcome

The Monkey is number 9 in the twelve year cycle of animals. Monkeys are characterized as curious, mischievous and clever ... and their favourite pastime is people-watching!

This year we welcome the year of the Fire Monkey. The Fire Monkey is the most active and aggressive of all, tending to dominate and automatically seek leadership. They often make good, creative and charming leaders.

This year we also welcome the Jubilee of Mercy which began when Pope Francis opened the Holy Door during a special ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica on the 8th of December 2015. We are asked to open wide the door of our hearts, to forgive others and to work for unity of all peoples.

This issue of *The Gateway* features Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School, our only Lasallian co-educational primary school in Hong Kong. It has come a long way since its humble origins in a low-cost housing estate in the early 70's.

We continue with our series of articles on a little-known piece of Lasallian history which took place in the 30's and 40's in northern China. A number of readers have indicated much interest in these articles.

In Hong Kong, staff and students enjoy two holiday breaks in fairly quick succession, the Christmas and Chinese New Year breaks. We wish them and all our readers a very Happy New Year of the Monkey. ■

**The Gateway
Hong Kong
Lasallian Family
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February 2016
Sixty-third Issue**



Our Pathways

Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School



In 1971 the Government of Hong Kong built a low-cost Housing Estate designed to provide living quarters for some 60,000 people in Homantin, on the West side of the Kowloon peninsula.

The estate to be built in Homantin in 1971 was to have two Primary schools, one under the care of the Catholic Church and the other would be offered to Christian Churches. The Maryknoll Sisters, who had a Primary School in the area, were asked to take the Catholic School but declined.

The De La Salle Brothers, with Brother Herman to the fore, showed interest and the new estate primary school was then given to them. Brother Herman was put in charge of the new school and he used the balance of the funds donated by the Chan family to equip and furnish it. That was in February 1973.

During the Chinese New Year nine classes were admitted to Primary 1 and 2 while the school was still being furnished. In the summer of that year all was ready and in September the school started with thirty-six classes, twenty two in the morning session and fourteen in the afternoon session. The following summer, twelve more classes were admitted giving the school its full complement of forty-eight classes in September 1974. That was all very fast-moving and there was obviously much demand. In fact in those years long queues would form in and near the Primary school just to receive an application form and all this despite the quite cramped conditions of both the school and surrounding estate.



Chan Sui Ki Primary School was co-educational from the start and was soon operating A.M. and P.M. sessions, twenty-four classes in each session. The building had seven storeys, each floor divided by a central corridor with classrooms and special rooms on either side. Altogether the building housed twenty-four classrooms, a General Office and Principal's Office, two staff rooms, music, art and library rooms, a school hall cum chapel. Facilities were basic but serviceable. The public estate playground doubled up as the school playground and nothing was lost in the process.

The official Blessing of the school took place on the 21st of December 1974 with Bishop Peter Lei saying the Mass and giving the Blessing. From the start, it



was noted that there were pupils making their First Holy Communion each year and there were service days to help the needy and elderly.

Also from early days the school took a full part in such activities as Sports Days, Christmas Concerts, Dancing and the Music and Speech Festivals. In 1974, it also established the 290th Cub Scout troop for the boys and 'Brownies' for the girls. Besides the traditional activities such as camping and cooking, the troops also get involved in service to others.

The school ran smoothly and before long, in 2003, it was celebrating its 30th anniversary. At its Open Day, the Guest of Honour was the Superior General, Brother Alvaro Rodriguez accompanied by his General Councillor, Brother Victor Franco. The school





put on a marvellous exhibition of Chinese culture and, with both staff and students wearing Chinese traditional dresses, it made for a colourful display.

It was around that time that the government began pushing for whole-day primary schooling. A window of opportunity for a new school building arose with the re-development of Homantin low-cost housing estate. The School Sponsoring Body (the Brothers) applied for a school adjacent to the new estate. There was stiff competition but the Brothers were awarded the school site and work commenced in 2004. The bi-sessional mode came to an end in September 2006 when students moved into their new premises. The school was renamed Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School to emphasise its place in the Lasallian tradition. Since the new school building is very close to the old, both parents and students adjusted easily to the change. The official Opening and Blessing of the new school building took place in 2008 with Bishop Joseph Zen, later to become a Cardinal, as Guest of Honour. He blessed a mural of our Founder St. La Salle and joined the guests for informal refreshment.

Writing in the school graduation booklets of 2004 and 2005, Brother Herman had this advice for his young charges:

“Apart from your examination subjects, the teachers and school principals also taught you to remember that God is always near to help you, and you should pray every day. They also taught you to have good behaviour and to be kind and helpful to others. Sometimes you should take a rest from your books and take some time to play and exercise in the open air. This is necessary for your health. When you are in good health you will do better in class.”



Brother Herman’s desire to spread the loving presence of God was taken up with the establishment of a school chapel. The chapel came into being in 2006 and took its final shape in February 2012. It is striking in its simplicity and practicality and contains a nice blend of the old and new. The old is

*Creation of the World*

particularly evident in the altar which was originally used in the La Salle College chapel in 1932. The pews are also taken from the same source. The new is particularly evident in the statue of the Risen Christ which beautifies the wall behind the altar.

The design theme was based on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The entrance to and the ceiling of the chapel were divided into three parts forming a passage to the altar and the statue of Jesus Christ. This passage is meant to convey that we are led by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit on our journey to eternal life.

The statue shows the risen Christ with his right hand raised in blessing. His two upright fingers indicate that he was both God and man while the remaining three fingers represent the Holy Trinity.

The crucifix on the altar was brought to the chapel from the Holy Land by one of the school's religious studies teachers, Miss Ng Po Chan. At the four corners of the crucifix there are four glass-covered containers containing frankincense, olive leaves, petals and soil from the Holy Land. The Stations of the Cross are engraved on the back of the cross.

A rather nice touch was added by having the corridor leading to the chapel decorated with student art. The theme chosen was the Creation of the World. Each of the seven corridor columns leading to the chapel was beautified with a 'day of creation' artwork.

While the new school was being built and for some years afterwards, Brother Herman was a very old and a very dedicated Supervisor. He was avid for news of school progress, read every article, examined every photo and watched school videos

in his room. Despite his age and failing health he took every opportunity to visit the school and was regarded as a 'granduncle' by one and all. When surrounded by a group of children, he would break into a huge, blissful smile.



Brother Herman was called home on the 3rd of February 2009 and with his passing Chan Sui Ki Primary School entered a new era. He had been the founding Brother, first Principal and Supervisor.

The new school building has other interesting features. One of them is a greenhouse and the creation of two spaces for agricultural products. Plots are set aside for such products as beetroot, lettuce and sweet potatoes.



The 40th anniversary of the school was celebrated in 2013/14 with an array of activities including a Thanksgiving Mass, Gala Concert, Gala Sports Day, Open Day and Gala Dinner. The following message was sent by the head of the Sponsoring Body:

“The school motto of Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School is Laus Deo Semper which we render in English as Praise God Always.

On this, the 40th Anniversary of the school, let us praise God for

- Inspiring Brother Herman Fenton to found the school in 1973
- Inspiring members of the late Chan Sui Ki family to become benefactors of the school
- Inspiring the principals and teachers to touch the hearts of the children confided to their care
- Inspiring the students to give glory to God by the beauty of their lives
- Inspiring the parents and alumni with a love for the school and its welfare
- Inspiring all those, known and unknown, who have helped the school in any way.

May the spirit of faith, service and community be hallmarks of the school as it moves forward towards its golden jubilee.

May the school community strive for excellence and whole-person development.

May our loving and merciful Father keep the school in his loving care.”

The latest External School Review of Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School took place as recently as the summer of 2015. The school received a pleasing report which said in part:

“The School has committed to the provision of whole-person development which aims towards the moral, intellectual, physical, social, aesthetic and spiritual nurture of its students. The School strives to create harmonious, respectful and healthy learning environment. Under the Principal’s leadership in

recent years, the pace of curriculum development is speedier. The effectiveness in promotion of reading, high order thinking strategy and catering for learner diversity are all pretty good. The School’s effort on moral education over the years is worth recognized. Students are sincere, polite, self-disciplined and beaming from ear to ear all over the campus. The School organizes ‘Campus Big Challenge’ during lunch breaks while physical exercises promote teacher-student relationship and students’ sense of loyalty. Besides, the School also provides diverse learning and creates many opportunities for students to display talents. Students are allowed to take charge of activities, such as leading prayers, Campus TV programmes, etc, which make their school life richly colourful.”

Another milestone in the history of the school was reached on the 1st of September 2015 with the retirement of its Supervisor, Loretta Yu Kuen On. Loretta had served the school almost from the beginning, adding up to an unbroken service of 38 years. She had filled the roles of teacher, principal and supervisor and was the living history of the school, its heart and soul. We wish her the very best on her retirement.





The most recent school highlight was the visit in December 2015 by the Superior General, Brother Robert Schieler, and Councillor Brother Ricky Laguda. They visited classes, mixed around with the students and were entertained by the school juggling team. The young ones were not in the least intimidated by the 'big brothers' and were happy to have a break from regular schooling.

Right now, the original site of Chan Sui Ki Primary School is part of a massive redevelopment site for housing. Families that move in there will have a ready-made and popular Primary School on their doorstep. ■



Platinum Jubilee

Brother Alphonsus

The 'Sons of St. Joseph's' is a chapter of the St. Joseph's College Old Boys' Association and aims to introduce a better understanding of the Catholic faith to the St. Joseph's College community.

Members made plans some time ago not to let the 70th anniversary of the taking of the holy habit by Brother Alphonsus Breen pass unnoticed. To this end they arranged for a Thanksgiving Mass which was held in the College Chapel on the 2nd of January 2016. Rev. Stephen Lee Bun Sang, Auxiliary Bishop of Hong Kong, was the main celebrant and Rev. William Lo, SJ, concelebrated.

Brother Jeffrey had secured an Apostolic Blessing from Pope Francis and this was presented to Brother Alphonsus by Bishop Lee.

There was a sizable attendance, especially of Brothers, old boys and former teachers. The choir sang beautifully, the Bishop delivered a thoughtful homily and hundreds of photos were taken afterwards both in the chapel and at refreshments.

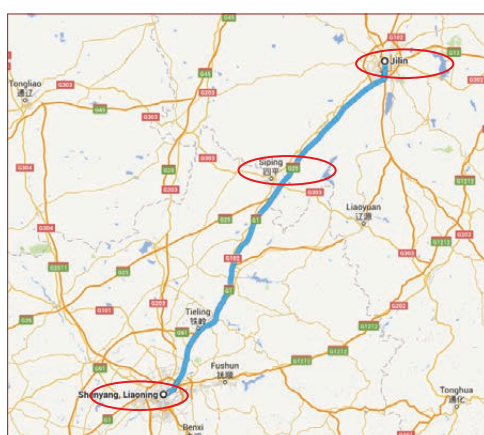
Brother Alphonsus may be 86 years old but his mind is not at all old and his memory is sharp. May the Lord grant him length of days.



A Lasallian Mission in a Forgotten Land

The Story of the First Foundation of De La Salle Brothers in China 1936-1948

Part 4: Prisoners of War



Introduction:

In October 1940, there were two communities of Canadian Brothers in China, with a total of nine Brothers.

The Moukden (Shenyang) Community:

Brother Liguori (Director), Brother Leopold and Brother Mederic

Kirin (Jilin) Community, about 300 km from Moukden:

Brother Barthelemy (Director), Brother Marcel, Brother Jules, Brother Hippolyte, Brother Odilo and Brother Guy

It was just two months later, in December of 1940, that all foreigners in this part of China were placed under arrest and sent to internment prison by the Japanese army. The Moukden Brothers were imprisoned in the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Building in Moukden (Shenyang) while the Brothers in Kirin were brought to Szupingkai (Siping) to join the other missionaries there. The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour on the 7th of December 1941 and the Pacific War began. The Brothers were prisoners of war until 1945, in a place almost forgotten by history.

The following article was written by Brother Marcel Petit, Director of the Brothers in Japan, after the war:

WAR TIME AND PRISON CAMP

First Internment Camp: Hong Kong Shanghai Bank

At Moukden the 11th of December at 1900 hrs, four police officers arrived at the Brothers' residence. They examined their passports and informed them that they were being arrested, apart from Brother Leopold, in view of his age [he was 59]. The three Brothers collected personal essentials and left with no hint as to destination. That same evening, the military administration issued a decree arresting all foreigners without distinction. Thus Brother Leopold was also arrested in due course. The table boy, Lao Tsan, followed on his bicycle and saw that they were being interned in the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank. A few days later he turned up with some food. Brother Liguori was very depressed, while Brother Leopold, being more philosophical, remained in good spirits — he claimed he had known worse!



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The internees were placed in a locked room devoid of all furniture apart from a camp bed without sheet or blanket. Brother Mederic who suffered from rheumatism was given the bed. The first night an officer came in the middle of the night and was surprised that they lacked basic essentials. Some seven Presbyterians from Scotland had preceded them into internment: pastors, pharmacists, doctors and teachers. They related cordially with the Brothers as companions in misfortune. Towards morning an officer arrived with some bed linen, which was not sufficient to go round: there were 15.

The night passed with nothing but pain and discomfort. Next day there was no breakfast or lunch. The police finally became aware of their situation and about 8pm brought along some macaroni and coffee. This was their meager ration for the next three days. The pastors were more foreseeing than the Brothers and had brought along suitcases of food. These gentlemen sensed the Brothers' dilemma and graciously shared what they had, to the point of their feeling a little uncomfortable; truly these Protestants reached out to their brothers in Christ.

Next day, there was no breakfast as usual, nor lunch, nothing except a plate of macaroni after 9pm. Some began to wonder if it was a Japanese custom to live on one meal a day! The faithful servant, Lao Tsan, arrived one Sunday in December. He had obtained permission from a Manchurian police officer to bring along some food. This was shared among all and the Brothers felt good to have their turn to be good Samaritans. As from the 15th of December, meals were more regular – not enough, but an improvement on one meal a day.

Second Camp: YMCA in Moukden – 'Moukden Club'

Their stay here lasted from the 21st of December 1941 to the end of January 1942. The number increased to a total of 23 men and eight women, one of whom was a Japanese lady who had an American passport — this was the reason for her detention. They managed quite well.

Mass was celebrated for the first time on the 18th of December at the Moukden Club, where there were three Maryknoll priests, a clerk of St Viator and a priest of the Foreign Missionaries of Quebec. As from the 22nd of December, all the priests were able to celebrate simultaneously thanks to the Missionaires Etrangères de Paris priests who provided the sacred vessels. For Christmas at the Club on the 25th of December, the priests celebrated Mass at midnight. The ceremony began with Brother Mederic singing 'Minuit Chrétiens!' Of the three Masses, one was sung.

On the 27th of December, they had a visit from the Inspector of Concentration Camps. He told Brother Visitor Liguori that the Brothers in Kirin were interned at Szuping kai and that the military authorities wanted people of the same organization to be together. The Brothers sensed that they would shortly be transferred.

Third Camp: The Seminary at Szuping kai

In fact the transfer took place the very next day. In the early morning the Brothers were conducted to the Moukden railway station where they took the train to Szuping kai, which they reached in late afternoon. There were now nine Brothers



(Back, left to right)
Brothers Jules,
Odilo, Hippolyte
and Guy
(Front, left to right)
Brothers Marcel
and Mederic

in the camp: Liguori, Leopold and Mederic from Moukden and Odilo, Marcel, Barthelemy, Jules, Guy and Hippolyte from Kirin. The number of guests in the seminary was now 168: two bishops, Mgr. Lapierre from Szuping kai, foreign missionaries of Pont-Viau and Mgr. Janssens from Jehol, and a Prefect Apostolic Mgr. Masse. Maryknoll Mgr. Lane joined them later.

A pontifical high Mass was celebrated on the Feast of St. La Salle the 15th of May and in the evening a small concert was organized. Patronal feasts for other groups were similarly celebrated.

On the 13th of July 1942, all internees over 50 were allowed to return to their posts. Mgr. Lapierre, Brother Leopold and 23 Belgian priests were able to take advantage of this ruling. The remaining Canadians were transferred to the bishop's residence.

Fourth Camp: Bishop's Residence in Szuping kai

At the bishop's residence, the internees had the benefit of the good cuisine of the Sisters, which was as well as they could do with what was provided by the wardens. Once day, Mgr. Masse was rushed to the infirmary and the diagnosis of Doctors Hasaka and Wang was: Manchurian Fever! He died two weeks later.

Scarcely had his tomb been sealed when Brother Liguori was also affected. For a whole month he was confined to his bed with intermittent fever. By the 21st of October, it was clear the end was approaching and he personally asked for the last sacraments. The following night he was delirious and Brother Guy who knew he had a great love for plain chant began to sing some pieces to calm his spirits. He passed away a week later on the 28th of October 1943. He was only 46. Mgr. Lapierre sang the funeral Mass in the Cathedral assisted by Mgr. Gaspais and Mgr. Lane; all the internees were present as well as the Sisters and several representatives of the police, both provincial and local. His remains were laid to rest in the garden of the Immaculate Conception Sisters at Szuping kai.

Brother Odilo then fell victim. Brother Guy applied ice to moderate the fever. He also managed to construct a stove from beaten clay and got charcoal from the guards to lessen the chill in the room. Thanks to his efforts, Brother Odilo pulled through.

(To be continued)

Postscript: Brother Marie Liguori was the first Lasallian Brother who died and was buried in China. According to Sister Huguette Turcotte, MIC, Brother Liguori was interred in the garden of the Sisters' Convent in Sipling. When the communist government started building on this spot, they found bones and they called some Catholics to witness this. They were watched by the communists and they could do nothing except for bowing their heads in respect to the dead and saying some prayers. A big tobacco factory was built there in the 90s.



Family Updates

De La Salle's Visit to Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College



On the 8th of January 2016, 59 teaching and supporting staff of De La Salle Secondary School went on a visit to Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College. They received a warm welcome from Mr. Lee Ting Leung, the Principal. Besides a sharing on the history, vision and mission of the College by Mr. Lee Ting Leung, Ms. Lily Leung Kit Yee, Panel Head of Religious Studies, gave a meaningful sharing on how to promote Religious Education in the College. Ms. Winnie

Lee Ting Yan, Pastoral Assistant of the College, also shared on how to promote religious activities among their teachers and students. The staff of the School also took the opportunity to tour the campus and to visit the Brothers' Quarter. The visit ended with a taste of Taize Prayer and this way of praying deeply impressed the staff of the School. On the whole, the visit has cultivated more in-depth understanding of the College, especially in their development of religious and spiritual education.

Principals' Conference

The first meeting of the academic year was held on the 12th of January with representation from all our Lasallian schools. The agenda covered such topics as the Highlights of the school year to date, the Lasallian Mission Fund, the establishment of the Hong Kong Lasallian Family Archives Centre, a Code of Conduct for school managers and the Pastoral Life of our schools. The discussion topic revolved around the question of the 'Territory-wide System Assessment', (TSA) a hot topic in current educational circles. Some people want it abolished, some want it modified and some are happy to retain it. The next Principals' Conference will be held in June.



45th Anniversary Open Day

Chong Gene Hang College has reached middle-age. To celebrate its 45th anniversary, an Open Day was held on the 15th of January with Ms Li Mei Fun of the Education Bureau and Brother Patrick as Guests of Honour. The attendance included former Principals, Brother Lawrence Blake and Mr Ho Kong Hin as well as Principals and Supervisors of our Lasallian schools in Hong Kong. The school is named after a benefactor of humble origins who valued education so much that he saved all his money to invest in it.



Marathon Men

It must be a first for Hong Kong Lasallian history. Two intrepid Brothers took to the streets on a wet and cloudy morning on the 17th of January, taking part in the Hong Kong Marathon. All right, it was just the 10k, but they were almost certainly the first Brothers in our Hong Kong Lasallian history to compete and finish. And so, Brothers Steve and Dodo go down in history. Both managed to finish within the hour. We wonder are the organisers of the Marathon aware of this piece of history!

Still in the 40's



Brother Chris celebrated his 49th birthday on Sunday the 17th of January and is the second youngest member of our Community. It is the first time he celebrated his birthday in Hong Kong. Compared with the singing and dancing that would prevail in his native India, ours was a low-key affair but we are sure just as joyous. We were also happy that our full Community of six was present and we did justice to the birthday cake. Many happy returns to Brother Chris.

Spring Carnival

All day the rain threatened and all day it stayed away, despite the lowering clouds. And so, the La Salle Primary School annual spring carnival went ahead as scheduled and attracted a large attendance. The opening featured a lovely performance by the Chinese Drum Band followed by an introduction to the art of fencing. The various school clubs each had their own booths, each beautifully decorated, each hosting enticing games and each with popular prizes. The Year of the Monkey was well ushered in. The Parent Teachers Association was the organizer of the carnival and simply did a tremendous job.





St. Joseph's College Open Day 2016

The College is celebrating her 141st Anniversary this year. The Student Union, organizers of the Open Day, chose Amaranth, a flower that never fades, as the theme of the day. The event was held on the 31st of January 2016. An Old Boy, Mr. Douglas So, was the Guest of Honour. Douglas is the Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Hong Kong University. In his address to the younger Josephians, he encouraged them not just to work harder, but also to be zealous in learning about the world outside the school. He also advised them to make good use of the diversity and vitality of life in the university. Students from the College and the Primary, parents, Old Boys and guests all enjoyed the day with games, good food and most of all, meeting old friends and teachers.

Buenos Aires Visit

La Salle College recently hosted a visit by students and teachers from La Salle College, Buenos Aires, Argentina. This must surely be a first in the history of the school. La Salle College Buenos Aires is a renowned school in Argentina. It is a private school from kindergarten to grade 12 with a small Tertiary College attached. The students enjoyed their experience of Hong Kong and were not immune to its shopping attractions.



Reflection

Call to Evangelize a New World

Brother Andre Labelle has spent nearly all his life as a Brother in Japan. He is currently a member of the Community in Hakodate, a cold spot in winter, but nothing special to Brother Andre who is a Canadian. We are grateful to Andre for permitting us to publish a reflection he wrote recently.



Our diocesan region of Hakodate city has presently five parishes. Up till now, we had three priests but since last year, we have only two. Among the five official Christian communities, two parishes with

a small number of Christians are situated one hour and a half or two hours by car, from Hakodate itself. So, from last year, it is impossible to have Mass every Sunday for every parish. At least once a month the Mass has to be replaced with a prayer service, liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion.

Teams of lay animators, women and men have been formed and appointed for these services. By special request, a Trappist monk, from the not too far Tobetsu Trappist Monastery, comes to Hakodate itself once a month, to celebrate Eucharist for one parish.

In our parish church, four lay persons, all men, have been chosen and appointed for presiding over the prayer services. Since I am a lay religious and because I am involved in religious teaching in our school, I was asked to help.

I accepted, since, being officially retired, I have some free time. I was 85 years old when asked. So, last year, I could help at the parish in three services, the last one being this December 2015. Of course, the four helpers have been renewed for 2016, for the same number of services.

THEN, another call! This time for a Home for the Aged. The founder of this thirty years old Catholic institution, a priest, died last year and there is no replacement now. About 120 residents live in that home, in various states of health, from an independent state, to requiring complete care because they cannot do anything for themselves.

Thanks to the founder, the few Catholics could have mass every day. Now, no priestly replacement has been found. So the two parish priests are also responsible by this special service to the three small groups of Catholic people of the three sections of this big institution and also for the Christian animation of this important place.

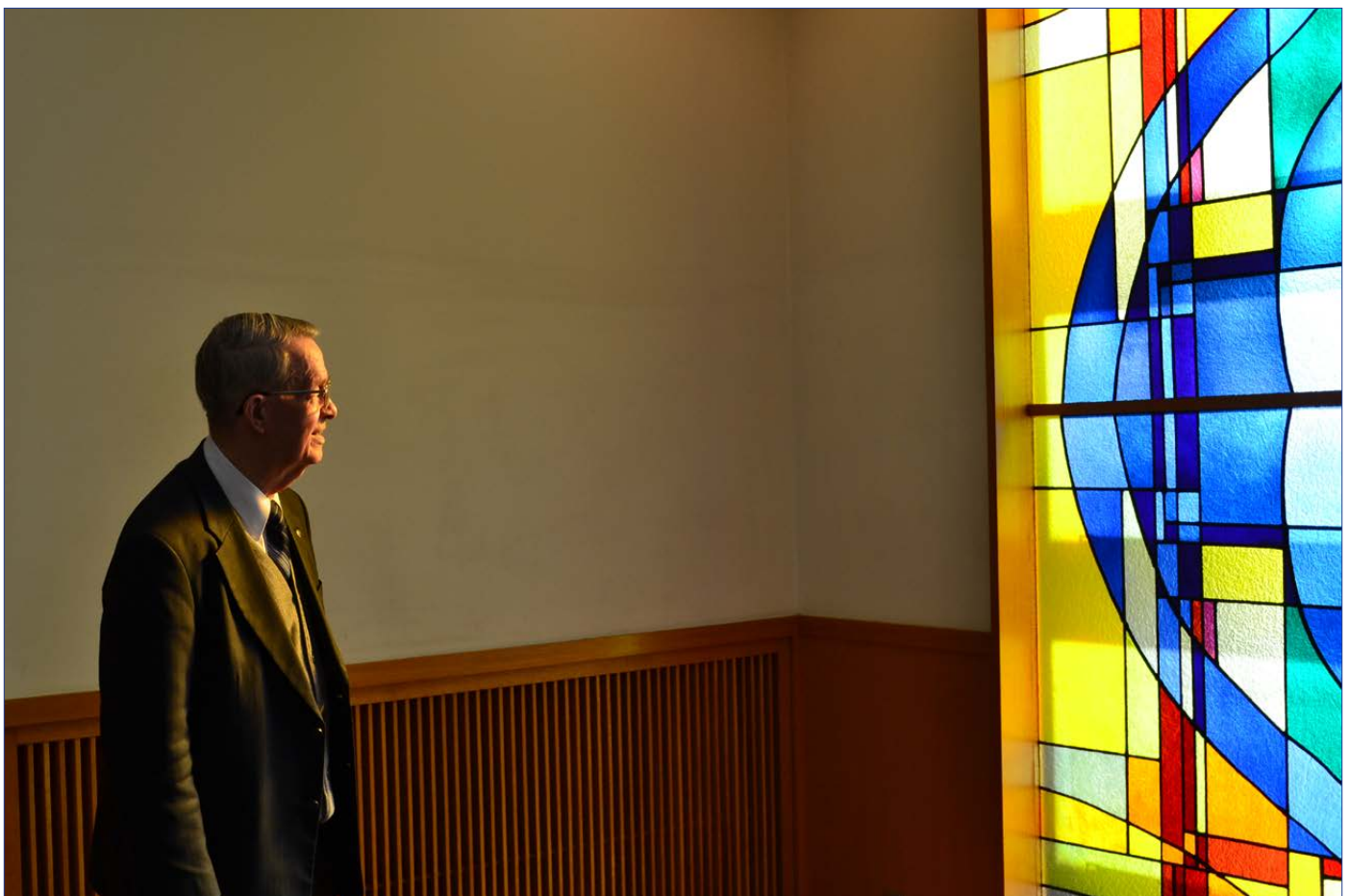
They again asked for volunteers till they could find a priest coming as full time chaplain. I was again called to help regularly for the Sunday services. It would be quite another experience and responsibility for me, a call to another world! It is a mission to preside at the prayer and give a "kind of homily" every Sunday ...

I was used to teaching young people in the classroom, or giving talks or sessions to adults, staff or parents — healthy adults. Now I find myself speaking to aged and sick people who are accompanied by nurses, not being able to move by themselves, unable to hear or speak well, thinking with difficulty, getting tired easily and also having to receive communion with jelly to be able to swallow the host ... For me, a new world with completely new needs. I needed and I still need a kind of “conversion”.

My vocabulary has to be much simpler words, offering short sets of clear thoughts understandable to the patients, filling their hearts with hope, consolation, and tenderness. And ... how should I, or could I present the beautiful message of God’s plan, his infinite love, his constant and tender forgiveness and presence to each one of them?

This new task is a new world for me and at the same time, a new and wonderful grace of God. I will be 86 soon, but being in good health, I strongly feel that God calls me and expects me to do something for his Kingdom. This Home for the Aged is a “periphery” for me. My community also is very supportive. This is my beautiful task for this special Holy Year of Mercy! I consider myself a lucky La Salle Brother. ■

“A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just”
— Pope Francis





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