

The

# gateway

June 2017

LASALLIAN EAST ASIA DISTRICT



issue

# 70

HONG KONG LASALLIAN FAMILY BULLETIN



June 2017



(Cover) The picture comes from a set of wall paintings along the avenue leading into Chong Gene Hang College. The paintings were done by some of the school students. St. La Salle is seen as being guided by the spirit of peace and teaching his students about heavenly things!

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# The gateway

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# Welcome

Late spring to early summer. First it was the African tulips, then the creamy-white spider tree blooms, then the royal purple flush of the jacarandas, then the swirling white cotton and now the crimson flame of the forest. Summer is a comin' in.



As far as school is concerned, summer has well and truly arrived because the end of year examinations are in full flow. School-based assessments make up a certain percentage but the exams still carry the main weight.

The final school term of the year brought a welter of activities and finals of sports competitions. It is great to see the students taking part in such a wide variety and array of extra-curricular activities. They help them to see the wider picture.

In the midst of the hustle and bustle, the Brothers were able to take time off before Easter for quiet reflection at a Retreat in Sheung Shui. The peace of the surroundings was really appreciated.

A feature article of *The gateway 70* is an Interview with Ray Cordeiro, or "Uncle Ray" as he is affectionately known. He has led a long and colourful life and has much to offer across the generations.

Here's to Summer 2017 and we wish all our readers a very happy and relaxing break. ■



**The Gateway  
Hong Kong  
Lasallian Family  
Bulletin  
June 2017  
Seventieth Issue**

# Memories

## “Uncle” Ray Cordeiro

Uncle Ray Cordeiro is a Hong Kong living legend, in the musical field. He has also entered the Guinness Book of Records. An old boy of St. Joseph's College, he still retains fresh memories of his schooldays. On top of that, he has led a very interesting life and is still going strong at the age of 93.

Some years ago, a group of St. Joseph's students decided it was time to document Uncle Ray's life and they successfully interviewed him for a feature article in their school magazine, called *'The Green and White'*. This is what they came up with.

The **I** stands for the Interviewers and **R** for Uncle Ray.



**I:** How would you describe your Green and White days, and what was St. Joseph's like in the old days?

**R:** It's funny you should ask. To be honest I was not a very good student at St. Joseph's. I barely made it through a keyhole, if you know what I mean. But I must say school isn't everything for there are so many things that you would never be able to learn in school. I've been through good times and bad times, and sometimes you just have to learn how to work your way up.

St. Joseph's was very much like today back in 1941. The desks, the pipes, the fence ... they were all rusty. And toilets were stinky like they are today. (laughs) Is Brother Thomas still playing football? I used to play football a lot in the old days. Those were great times really.

**I:** How about other sports? What did you play apart from football? Were you into any other sports?

**R:** I used to play softball during weekends. Softball was really popular back then you know? I also used to swim a lot. I still swim now even though I am over 80. I think swimming is a much better sport than jogging. I used to jog a lot but now I mostly swim. Jogging is bad for your knees and ankles, especially for a many of my age. Swimming is so much better.

**I:** Do you still keep in touch with Brother Thomas?

**R:** Of course. Come to think of it, I actually recommended someone to Brother Thomas. He failed his F4 exam but Brother Thomas helped him get to F5. He was a very, very good swimmer though. He is also quite successful now. He has his own club and I am the patron of the club.





### CLASS 7-A

*From Left to Right.*

- Sitting:** P. G. Gilbert, John Anderson, Rev. Bro. Alban (*Form Master*), Poon Tso Yut, Francis Botelho.  
**2nd Row:** Rene Ohl, Henry Crestejo, Marcos Roza, Alvaro Andres, Simon Lee, Paulo Rosa, Gustavo Fong, H. Tavares, R. Barradas, Francis Gutierrez.  
**3rd Row:** Edward Pereira, Harvey To, Dick Gutierrez, Victor Gutierrez, H. Tominaga, Hakuno Sha, To Wing Kwong, Fu Tack Sing, Liem Thian San, Lee Pak Cheong.  
**Back Row:** Henry Carmo, Chan Tek Cheong, John Castilho, Wong Chak Lam, Lam On Sui, H. Nomura, Peter Fallon, R. Cordeiro, Freddy Morales, Dicky Becker.

**I:** That is indeed great to hear. Are there any other St. Joseph's contacts that you have maintained?

**R:** Hmm, let me think. Oh yeah! I was once interviewed by Radio 2. Alex Fong ... you do know him right? He was the one who interviewed me. The first thing he said was "Do you remember me, Uncle Ray?" I replied "Of course I do." That was a nice moment.

Actually my ties with St. Joseph's go back a long, long way. I wasn't the first Josephian in my family. My father and my elder brother were both Josephians. So it wasn't by accident that I ended up in St. Joseph's.

**I:** We never knew that! I'm sure most Josephians would be glad to hear that. But I think we should move on. Uncle Ray, how did you end up being a DJ?

**R:** Well I never thought of being a DJ when I was small. I used to stutter a lot when I speak. The whole story was like a dream to me really.

It started during WWII. We had these Japanese warplanes flying over Hong Kong. They wouldn't stop dropping bombs on us so we had to scramble to shelters almost every day. And those Japanese soldiers were like monsters.

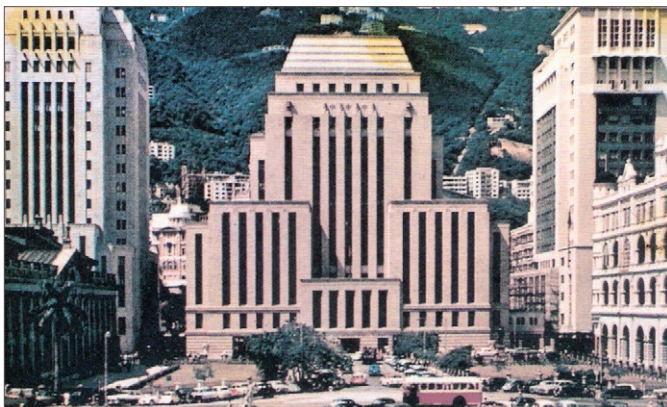
My mother, my brother and I went to Macau. That's where they were originally from anyway. My father initially stayed in Hong Kong but finally decided to leave. He actually left just one day before the Japanese came to arrest us at our house. At Macau my mom became a cook in a refugee centre. I helped around, cooking rice mostly. I was really good at my job and during my time there I never burned rice once. (laughs)



There was a band at the refugee centre providing entertainment. I used to watch and listen to them play a lot. My favourite song was *In the Mood*. In retrospect that was when I really started to love music. I was fascinated by the drummer. You know what, the drummer is always the centre of a band. He sets the beat, the rhythm and provides the driving force. No good music could come about without the drummer and I really wanted to become a professional drummer in a band back then. I think I annoyed the hell out of people when I started knocking around in kitchens.

When the war was over in 1945 we moved back to Hong Kong. The place was exactly like what you'd expect from a city after a war. There was simply no work to be found. I was very lucky though. I got a job at Stanley Prison, looking after prisoners as wardens. We were never short of food as civilians, we were given a fixed amount of canned food as some sort of rationing and normally, the amount given was always too much for our stomachs to handle. Therefore, we would sell them in the Stanley Market nearby to get some money in return.

My father told me I was not going to have any future working at a prison. He asked me to join him and work at the bank. He was working at The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. I did join him in the end but with all due respect I have to say the work was extremely boring.



While I was working at the bank, music was still my dream profession. I formed a trio with a couple of friends and we played in the evening at various clubs and bars in Kowloon. That was

the kind of life I was looking for really, and I eventually quit my job at the bank.

**I:** That's a really amazing story, but your journey did not end there right?

**R:** The trio did not last long and in any case we were only amateurs at performing. I eventually applied for a job at Cable Radio. I was interviewed by Frank Harris. He was a really decent man. The first question he asked me was "Why do you want to work for us?" I told him of my love for music and work at the radio and I got the job. The job paid 700 dollars a month and back then that was a lot of money! I started as a scriptwriter at Cable Radio and began slowly moving up the chains.

**I:** Is there anything with that job that is interesting and stuck in your memory?

**R:** Oh yes. I have always liked jazz and wanted to host my own jazz programme. I was eventually promoted to become the DJ of a jazz programme called *Progressive Jazz*. That was a very important and at the same time emotional time for me.

When I was working at Cable Radio we had a visitor from Switzerland. He was from the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation. I was responsible for his reception so I took him around listening to local bands. I think he was really impressed by a small quartet band that used to play at 'Blue Heaven' in Central.

**I:** So how did you end up working for RTHK?

**R:** Ah I was just going to tell you that. Back in ... I think it was 1960, RTHK was looking for a light-music producer. There were 14 other applicants who wanted the same job, but I was the only one with 11 years of experience in the field, so I got the job.

**I:** It was during your time with RTHK that you got to meet the Beatles right? I think most of us would like to hear more about your encounters!



**R:** No problem. In 1964 RTHK sent me to the BBC for three months on business. I would have two weeks of free time in between. To be frank I was a little bit scared as that was my first time in London.

I didn't know London well so I didn't have a clear idea about what to do in my two weeks of free time. I finally decided while I was in London that I might as well interview some musicians. So I went to EMI's office in London.

I was received by Stan Stern. He asked me whom did I want to interview and I replied without thinking, "The Beatles." Looking back that was pretty daring of me, a kid from Hong Kong with nothing but a pen and a camera, wanting to interview the famed rock stars. (laughs) But he really called the manager of the Beatles and very fortunately they had spare time for me so the interview was set.

**I:** Amazing! The Beatles must have been like the Holy Grail of the rock scene. How did the interview go?

**R:** I bought a magazine that featured the Beatles before I went to the interview. The whole interview went rather well. They were nothing



like the haughty rock stars I had supposed them to be. They were actually really nice and easy to get along with. When the interview was over I handed my magazine to them and asked if I could have their autographs. To my surprise, Paul McCartney said "sure" straight away and signed on my magazine. John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr followed suit. They even left a note apart from the autographs and it was like this:

*To Ray, Best wishes*

*Paul McCartney, John Lennon,  
George Harrison, Ringo Starr*





**I:** Most fans would be overjoyed if they could get their hands on one of the members' autographs, but you got four! Do you still have that magazine now?

**R:** Sadly, I don't. I do have another magazine with their autographs but the collection wasn't complete on that one. Well, back to the magazine we were talking about. I was so thrilled after the interview and I immediately kept the magazine under lock. I kept it for 40 years and it has been one of my most prized possessions. But well you can't take stuff away from this world when you die so I thought I might as well let some other Beatles fan enjoy it. I took it to Christie's and had it valued and they told me that it was worth approximately 12,000–16,000 pounds. I eventually had it sold.

**I:** That is a real pity ... By the way, we read that you have interviewed the Beatles three times. On what other occasions did you meet them?

**R:** There was another Beatles conference in London, just after my first interview. I went to the conference and got the chance to interview them again. I interviewed the Beatles twice in a week! I don't think many people have managed that.

**I:** Indeed! How about the third encounter?

**R:** Well at the Beatles conference Paul McCartney recognized my face and told me that they were going to go to Hong Kong, and asked me to tell them about the place. I met them in Hong Kong but sadly they had a substitute drummer at the time because Ringo Starr wasn't available. I have interviewed them three times in a short period of time. I think it is fair to say that that year was a milestone in my career.

**I:** I am just curious. Were the Beatles your favourite band?

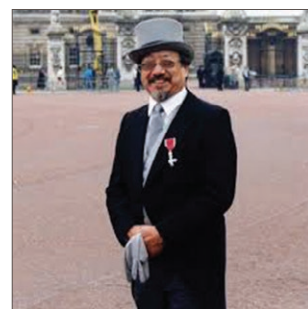
**R:** Well I like them but my favourite is Elvis Presley. Sadly, I never had the chance to interview him. That was my only regret.

I started hosting my show *All the way with Ray* in 1970. From 10pm to midnight I would play pop music like the Beatles and Elvis Presley. From midnight onwards I would play older songs like those of Doris Day. That's a ritual I have developed and my audience liked it because in the night when not much is happening, listening to oldies makes more sense.

I have adhered closely to this system but one night in 1977 I thought to myself, "why shouldn't I play Elvis' songs after midnight? He has songs that suit the mood." So I did play a few of his songs on the radio that night. The next morning, I woke up and found out that Elvis had died. It was a spooky moment really, but nevertheless I was curious, heartbroken and sad to hear the news.

I went to Elvis' hometown on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. A lot of fans were there as well and they held a candle vigil in memory of him. It was a really touching scene I have to tell you. We had a big dinner party afterwards and about 300 presidents of Elvis Presley fan clubs from all over the world were present.

During the party I was presented a placard that commemorates my contribution to Elvis Presley. I was so touched that I nearly cried. Now I often joke about how I got an MBE from her Majesty the Queen, and a placard from the King (Elvis Presley). (laughs)



**I:** That's a really nice gesture.

**R:** Yeah, and I treasure that placard a lot.

**I:** Would you mind telling us a bit more about work as a DJ?

**R:** Of course. The work of a DJ back then was very different from what it is now. We had to follow a script. We weren't allowed to speak freely on air. Nowadays of course it is more



flexible and relaxed. RTHK's programmes are now uploaded onto the internet, so my audience is no longer limited to people in Hong Kong. My programme can be heard by people all over the world and sometimes I receive emails from fans in other countries. Internet is really a wonderful thing.

**I:** Uncle Ray you have the honour of being 'The World's Most Durable DJ'. What kept you interested in the business for so long?

**R:** I just love what I'm doing. Before you settle down you have to try out different things. Try and explore different opportunities before you stop. When you can finally make a choice, choose and stick to it. Loyalty is very important and you will be much happier that way.

**I:** I believe most Josephians would find this piece of advice very useful. Now would you mind letting us know more about the Guinness Record? I think this is something that a lot of Josephians are interested in.

**R:** No problem. I myself am very excited about the Guinness World Record as well. A young fellow wrote to Guinness' office, and got a reply asking him to provide proof. So we gave them my employment records. They verified them and I entered the World Records list. My name is on



the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Guinness Book of World Records! That's seven years after getting my certificate though. I grew up with music and music has become quite literally a part of my life. I am really grateful and looking back I have few regrets. Choose what you like to do best and stick to it, that's my motto.

**I:** Uncle Ray thank you so much for your time. I believe Josephians will find this interview very interesting and insightful.



*From the editor's desk:*

*RTHK was called Radio Hong Kong (RHK) from 1948 to 1976. The name was changed to Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) in 1976.*





# Family Updates

## Christian Brothers' Schools Exchange 2017

The aims of the Christian Brothers' Schools Exchange Programme have always been to cherish our common Lasallian legacy, to enhance communication, to understand different heritage cultures amongst our schools, to learn from one another, to appreciate the strengths as well as accomplishments of each participating school and to identify with our Lasallian Family as a whole. Selected

Form 4 students from all five of our secondary schools were assigned different schools for the week the 8<sup>th</sup> of May to the 13<sup>th</sup>. They attended regular classes, had campus tours, games and presentations, attended a Mass in honour of St. La Salle, visited the Brothers' residence and rounded everything off with a barbecue. It is always a pleasure seeing our schools move closer together.





# Brothers Retreat 2017

Nineteen Brothers made the annual retreat in the St. Paul's House of Prayer, Sheung Shui, from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of April. The venue is very suitable for retreats being quiet and peaceful. There is also a pleasant and spacious garden where nature abounds. Instead of having a Retreat Director we had four Brother presenters in Mike Venezuela, Armin Luistro, David Liao and Thomas Lavin. Their presentations were indeed enlightening and stimulating. Father Nonie took care of the liturgical services. We had two interesting 'breaks' during the Retreat. We watched the film *Silence* and we had a 'Tai Chi' session led by the Principal of De La Salle Secondary School, Mr. Simon Tso. We thank the Sisters of St. Paul for their kindness in providing the venue.



## Tag Rugby

For quite a number of years, our school in the country, De La Salle Secondary School, has participated actively in rugby competitions. Both boys and girls take part. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May, the junior girls team became champions, even though they had to compete against senior teams. Meanwhile, the senior boys team attained first runner-up position while the junior boys managed to come in third. A great boost all round.





# Singapore Visitors



St. Joseph's Institution, Junior, is a main feeder primary school for St. Joseph's Institution, a well-known Lasallian school in Singapore. It is an independent school, somewhat along the lines of the DSS mode in Hong Kong. Fifteen St. Joseph's Junior students, accompanied by four teachers, were hosted by La Salle Primary School towards the end of May. They followed regular lessons and were taken to places of special interest and enjoyed their visit a lot. It is good to see Lasallian schools interacting like this.

## Lasallian Forum

Each year, La Salle College invites a well-known person to give a presentation. This year, new ground was broken because it was the first time a person in religion was the guest speaker. In fact, it was a former teacher, Mr. Xavier Wong, who had joined the seminary and is now ordained Deacon. He will be ordained a Priest in July of this year. His talk, entitled "My Calling," gave the students a fascinating insight into the story of his vocation, the joys and struggles involved and the people who encouraged him to persevere. There was time for some questions and answers at the end ranging from the question of married priests to how to set goals in life. Altogether, a time well spent and we offer our best wishes to Deacon Xavier as he prepares for ordination.





# Badminton Grand Slam



Winning the Grand Slam does not come easily in any sport at Inter-school level. The La Salle Badminton players did just that by clinching the Under 14 championship against Diocesan Boys School on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2017. The La Salle boys followed in the footsteps of their seniors who had already won the Under 16 and Under 20 finals. Credit for all this must go to the coach, teacher-in-charge, supporters and of course the players themselves. The players trained hard and regularly and were highly motivated and received the reward of their efforts. Who knows ... there may be a future Lin Dan or Lee Cheong Wei in their midst!

# Archery Champions

The La Salle College archers have been dominating the inter-school archery scene in Hong Kong for many years. Once again, they refused to relinquish their crown, emerging overall champions for the year 2017. On top of that, one of their members set a new Hong Kong Youth Record of 290 points in the Under 16 category. The archery team practices with quiet and effective determination and their efforts have been well rewarded.





# Musical Drama

Our Lasallian school, Chong Gene Hang College, produces a musical drama every year, in English. It has become a tradition. The driving force is the school's native English teacher, Stuart Mead. Representatives from our eight Lasallian schools as well as students and teachers from nearby schools are invited. Every year, without fail, the musical drama lives up to expectations. This year it was entitled "The Show" and it was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> of May and played to full houses. There was plenty to keep the audience entertained — action, jokes, music, dancing, surprises and some real danger. The show must go on.





# Story-telling

Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School has the good practice of organising various activities for its students at lunch time. There is something for everyone, on a voluntary basis. One such activity is 'Story-time'. Students who wish can go to the Library and listen to a story read by a teacher or by a guest speaker. It was the turn of Brother Sockie De La Rosa on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May and he chose a story about two kittens, one good and one bad, who came together happily at the end. The audience lapped it up and Brother became somewhat of a celebrity, even to the point of giving autographs. A worthwhile activity all round.





# Brothers

On Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, the Brothers of St. Joseph's College and of La Salle College got together, a timely gathering close to the feast of St. John Baptist de La Salle. It is rare enough to have all the Brothers together at one time, especially since Brother Visitor, Edmundo, needs to travel a lot. The two eldest Brothers, Lawrence and Alphonsus, were in good form and enjoyed the occasion. We thank Brother Jeffrey Chan who was host for the evening. It would gladden all our hearts if some young men from Hong Kong would come forward to join the Brotherhood.



# Family Fun Day

The 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2017 turned out to be a glorious early summer's day, just right for a Family Fun Day. St. Joseph's Primary School made the best use of the day. The Theme of the fun day was "Relax" which, in the very competitive Hong Kong context, was appropriate. The Guest of Honour was the Principal of St. Joseph's College, Mr. Ching King Bor, who emphasized the close relationship between the College and the Primary. One of the highlights of the day was the Laughter Yoga exercise. The facilitator lightened the whole atmosphere and got the audience to laugh and relax. All in all, a fun-day.





# Educational Outreach

The 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2017 was a red-letter day for those involved in the educational outreach programme to the disadvantaged. It marked the completion of the English Enhancement Programme run by the Hong Kong Lasallian Family for newly-arrived students from China. Our volunteer teachers had faithfully taught about 20 such students over the past three months.

The final gathering took the form of an opening prayer and reflection followed by the distribution of certificates to the students. The students themselves then took over, each one giving a short sharing on his/her experience of the programme. There were many moving tributes.

The students then treated the teachers to a lovely supper. Most of the food was prepared by themselves. At the same time, they had gifts prepared for each teacher, each gift individually prepared and presented. The student's appreciation of the efforts of



the teachers was very touching and made the whole exercise feel worthwhile. We believe that we have raised the confidence of the students, most of whom were afraid to speak any English at the beginning of the programme.

After evaluation, the next step in our service to the disadvantaged will be decided. ■



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