



**The Gateway**

**Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin**

**September 2018**

**Seventy-Sixth Issue**

## Welcome

The new scholastic year has kicked-off and we wish all our staff and students, especially the newcomers, the very best.

The year just passed was a strong celebratory one for both La Salle Primary School and St. Joseph's Primary School. La Salle celebrated its Diamond Jubilee while St. Joseph's is still celebrating its Golden. Both schools celebrated in style and great planning and attention to detail was evident.

The summer months brought forth school student allocation results as well as the public examination results for secondary school graduates. La Salle College was thrust into the limelight when the media discovered that one boy, not only attained the top scores, but also made history into the bargain. The media descended on the school. The boy concerned gave a good account of himself, stressing the importance of service for young people.

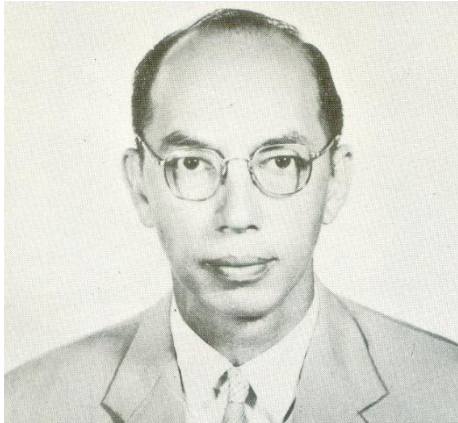
And speaking of service, a very fine example of such is featured in our main article, on one of our former school secretaries, Mr. Enrico Rosario. No request was too much for him and he was obliging to all.



Another form of educational service is now being performed by robots. As might be expected, Japan seems to be leading the way with robots set to operate in classrooms across the country. Where will it all end?!

Although we have received our fair share of the summer rains, we have not had many typhoons. A severe typhoon may necessitate closing schools, but it can be rather boring having to remain indoors.

**School Secretary Extraordinary**  
**Mr. Enrico Rosario (1923 – 1998)**  
**Student of St. Joseph's College: 1931-1939**  
**School Secretary: 1945 - 1993**



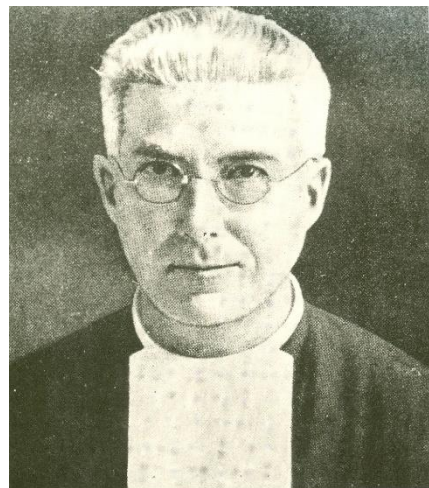
Perhaps students at the time in St. Joseph's College knew Mr. Rosario as the one who chased students around for school fees, and even had toilet paper available in case of need, but little did they know about the interesting and eventful life of one of the school's greatest assets.

Mr. Rosario joined St. Joseph's College as an eight-year-old student in 1931. He was excellent in his studies. He came first in the Hong Kong Matric Exam and was recommended to receive a LOBO scholarship that could guarantee him a place in the university. Unfortunately, his records were lost in the Sino-Japanese War.

Mr. Rosario was frugal and practised austerity since he was young. According to one of his best friends, he only spent 50 cents a week in his early years. After matriculating in 1939 at the age of 16, he began teaching Class 7D, an extra class specially picked out by the principal from the three existing divisions of Class 7. Class 7 was the equivalent of Primary 6.

However, his teaching career did not last long because in 1940, he took up a post in the Hong Kong Bank. Then came the Second World War, in which his house was burned down and he moved to Macau. Since he had nothing to do at that time, he attended the Matriculation Class of St. Luiz Gonzaga College opened and run by the Jesuit Fathers in Macau and did some teaching afterwards.

After World War II, Rev. Brother John Lynam, who was then Principal of St. Joseph's College, invited Mr. Rosario to get St. Joseph's back on its feet again. Mr. Rosario promptly gave up his bank work and went back to St. Joseph's. As secretary, he took over the running of the school office and remained in this post throughout his career, only retiring in ..... at the age of seventy. His son, Mark, was also a student at the College.



Br John Lynam

Brother Patrick has this take on school secretaries:

"When I first started teaching in a secondary school in Hong Kong I came across a class of people called school secretaries. I had never heard of this class of person before. Back home, we had only come across school heads or principals who seemed to do everything. A secretary was someone in a big firm or factory.



I soon learned that school secretaries in Hong Kong were very important persons. I witnessed them doing a thousand and one jobs. They kept the books, they kept the files, they typed out documents, they liaised with the Education Department, they kept an eye on teachers' salaries, they looked after the janitors, they looked after the stationery and they had the key to the safe. One particular secretary I knew even distributed toilet paper! In a word, they were well-nigh indispensable."

A former school Principal put it this way:

"In addition to his work as Secretary, he is capable of undertaking such important work as setting out timetables for the classes and for examinations. His knowledge of the ability and inclination of each teacher on the staff and his familiarity with the customs of the College and the type of boys in the different classes enable him to get through this sort of work in a way that is at once truly amazing and at the same time satisfactory to all concerned.

He is thoroughly acquainted with all matters connected with the Education Department, with the contents of Circulars issued since 1946, with Salary Scales and with Auditing.

I believe I could leave the College at a moment's notice and have no worry about how my successor would carry on the administration till he got into the running of things as long as Mr. Rosario is there."

On one famous occasion, a new principal felt that his long-standing secretary had too much power. One day, when not in the best of moods, he dared to say: 'Who do you think is running this school, me or you?' The secretary just turned on his heels,



returned to his office, collected an armful of files and plonked them on the principal's desk. 'There,' he said, 'this is work that you, as Principal, should be doing, not me.' It did not take long for the principal to back down. The secretary in question was, of course, Mr. Rosario!

As school Principal, I saw Mr. Rosario as a rock of common sense. He could be relied upon to give sound advice or to get a job done quickly and efficiently. He never raised his voice. Looking back, I think he must have done the work of three or four people."

Despite a heavy workload, he found time to teach occasionally and substituted for teachers on sick leave. He was especially keen to teach Mathematics or Physics. He was so successful in his teaching that at least one old boy hailed him as the best Mathematics teacher. Mr. Rosario could teach almost any subject. His explanations were crystal clear and so logically put, particularly in Mathematics, that the students picked up more knowledge from him in one month than they might in a whole year.

In fact, he became a qualified teacher in 1972. Many people felt he could have given the course for new teachers himself!

One young boy who was seeking entrance to the school recalls:

"On the first day that I set foot in SJC for Class 7, I had to sit for an Entrance Exam. on 16th July 1951. It was conducted by Mr. E. Rosario. There were about 30 other candidates sitting for the same Exam.

He spoke very clearly and simply so that I could understand his instructions in English. It might seem a simple task today, but to a student who had learnt little more than the ABC for only 3 or 4 years in the Primary and had never heard English spoken in sentences it could be a frightening experience.

He wore white shorts, a white short-sleeved shirt, white long socks and a pair of white leather shoes too. It was a sight very difficult to forget."

That same young boy, later became a teacher in the College and became one of Mr. Rosario's closest friends. He adds:

"I used to call him dad because he was my teacher. But he was more than a teacher to me. He was my mentor. He taught me not just the ABC of everything but how to be a good person. Mr. Rosario was a perfect example of a gentleman. He always walked a straight line, very willing to offer help but would not bend any rules. When I speak here I think I can speak for many other old boys too. And if some of these senior old boys can come out to tell something, I am sure they can tell you much more. When Mr. Rosario called you a friend, he was really a great friend to you. "

One of the interesting aspects of Mr. Rosario's colourful life was his membership of the Hong Kong Regiment. In fact, he was the longest serving soldier in the Hong

Kong Regiment before he retired in December 1983, after serving for 32 years. In October 1951, the Hong Kong Government foresaw trouble and instability and so it recruited British subjects for the various armed forces and that was how Mr. Rosario entered the Regiment. He became a major, which is the highest possible rank attained by a volunteer.



Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Force Shooting Team [circa 1948]

Roccoco Rozario | Reggie Remedios | Gussie Noronha | Henry Sousa

*Courtesy; Augusto "Gussy" Noronha | collection*

As member and major in the Regiment, Mr. Rosario came across many interesting and at times somewhat scary situations. One such was during the riots in 1956-57, Mr. Rosario was one of six men whose duty it was to shoot to kill had the situation got out of police control. Luckily, the situation never got so bad and thus he was spared the unenviable task.

The regular routines and duties of the Regiment included four days of regular training every month and each year the Regiment was put in charge of the manning the border with mainland China for one week. If there were riots or serious trouble members were to get attached to the regular army helping them with language problems and with knowledge of the local terrain because most army personnel did not know Chinese and they were not well acquainted with street names in Hong Kong.

Mr. Rosario strongly advised the boys to join the junior squads of the Regiment. There would be military training every Sunday which included training in self-control, discipline, giving and taking orders, and the ability to take care of oneself. Although there were not many special requirements, full attendance was regarded as of the

utmost importance and there was a fine imposed on absentees.

As a major in the Regiment, you might have already guessed that Mr Rosario was a good marksman. In truth he was a brilliant marksman. He was on the shooting team in the Regiment and won the Championship four times. Moreover, he won many prizes in local competitions and also represented Hong Kong in the 1972 Asian Games as well as in the 1974 Commonwealth Games held in New Zealand. To give some idea of his skills, he could regularly hit a ten-cent coin from a distance of 50 yards. In one competition, a target of 16 inches in diameter popped out at a variable spot on a line 400 yards away for 4 seconds only, and he was able to hit the target twice in that short space of time.

His marksmanship told even in small things. Brother Patrick recalls how “Mr Rosario, when the occasion demanded, used to ball up a piece of paper in the school office and throw it into the bin some distance away. He never missed! This used to intrigue me!”



Mr. Rosario worked very hard throughout his life and did not retire until he was 70. Upon retirement, he immigrated with his wife to Canada, finding the vast tracts of Canada a huge contrast to the crowded conditions of Hong Kong. It is interesting to note that Mr. Rosario’s wife, Janet, was also a teacher in St. Joseph’s, concentrating on the younger pupils. She used to say that her husband was married to St. Joseph's not to her! In addition, their son, Mark, was an Old Boy of the school so it can be said that the Josephian blood ran through the family.

Mr. Rosario came back from Canada in 1998, intending to see all of his friends. He had a tight schedule. He thought he had plenty of time. Unfortunately, he did not. In the afternoon of 10th February 1998, Mr. Rosario passed away peacefully in Ruttonjee Hospital, at the age of 75.

There goes a great teacher and an unforgettable friend. All I can say now is: May his soul rest in peace and may God be with him!”

## Historic Building



On 3rd September 2018, students of St. Joseph's College took an historic step into their recently acquired campus at 26 Kennedy Road, directly opposite the main school campus at 7 Kennedy Road. Number 26 consists of a delightful old colonial style building, built in the mid-thirties. The main building was erected as a Japanese primary school to accommodate about 300 students. The building became Government property following the Second World War and was declared a historic building on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010.

After the war, the building was respectively occupied by the Queen's College between 1947 and 1950, the Government Vernacular Senior Middle School (now known as the Clementi Secondary School) between 1946 and 1961, the Kennedy Road Junior School between 1961 and 1991, the Hong Kong International School between 1991 and 1999, the St. Paul's Co-Educational (Kennedy Road) Primary School between 1999 and 2011. St. Joseph's College is the latest occupant and looks set for the long haul.







Actually, St. Joseph's has had a connection with No. 26. Starting during the war when the Principal, Brother John Lynam, found some common interest with the Principal of the Japanese School and they visited each other. Later on, when the south wing of the College (the German Club) was being demolished and new block rising, St. Joseph's held some classes at No. 26.



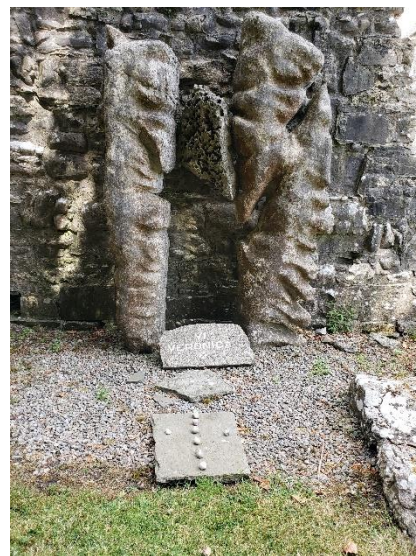
Some of the special features include a small open playground area cum courtyard with another playground at higher level. The retaining wall between the upper and lower playgrounds features a shrine with altar, Japanese style palisading, and a nature-spirit camphorwood tree in a semi-circular planter at lower playground level. Other architectural features include numerous arches and columns forming colonnades and galleries. The gateway and entrance are in arch form. A rising sun motif emblem is in the form of a stylized wreath, and further Japanese style features are the parapets and roofs and ornamental gateways. There is also some panelled doors, antique ironmongery, ornamental staircases and a charming ornamental fireplace.

This type of building is becoming quite rare in Hong Kong today.

## Ballintubber Abbey

In the West of Ireland there is a rather famous Abbey in a townland called Ballintubber. Part of the Abbey's claim to fame stems from the fact that it managed to survive all the persecutions and despoiling of abbeys and monasteries down through the centuries. For this reason, it is sometimes referred to as the Abbey "that refused to die." Mass has been said there since its foundation in 1216 A.D.

The Abbey has a Lasallian connection because Brother Joseph McNally was born nearby. Besides, Brother was a sculptor and he contributed to a somewhat unique Stations of the Cross in the Abbey grounds. Stones of various shapes and sizes were collected from the Abbey grounds and from nearby fields and arranged to form the stations. Some of the more striking ones are as follows:



In Hong Kong, we are fortunate to have one of Brother Joseph's sculptures. It is called "The Counsellor" and is in the lobby of La Salle Primary School. Brother Joseph himself brought it with him from Singapore.

## **Small Town – Big Memory**

While on a short home visit, Brother Patrick visited a small town in the West of Ireland and was amazed to come across a number of sculptures along the streets of the town. First and foremost, perhaps, was one of a famous poet who was born nearby. His name was Antony Raftery and he wrote in the Irish language. He was blinded by smallpox as a child and became a wandering poet and fiddle player. One of his famous poems runs as follows:

***I am Raftery, the poet,  
full of hope and love  
With eyes without light,  
silence without torment.***

***Going back on my journey,  
with the light of my heart  
Weak and tired,  
until the end of my way.***

***Look at me now  
my back to the wall,  
playing music  
to empty pockets.***

The last two lines in particular show how the poet fell on hard times.

Further along the street is a sculpture of a man in the 1960s, leaning against a wall and reading a newspaper. In those days the national as well as local papers were eagerly awaited and provided much material for conversation and debate.



Across the road is a sculpture of a young man striding along and carrying a suitcase. The suitcase is light because it was the era of large scale immigration and many young men had to leave the country for foreign parts to find work. They did not carry many belongings.



The small town also boasts of a small but interesting sculpture park. At the entrance to the park is a sculpture of two men and a dog relaxing by the roadside. It recalls the charms of the leisurely lifestyle of bygone days.

Among the sculptures in the park itself is one of a railway station master. The railway and railway station, now closed, brought much life to the town and the station master was always an imposing figure. There is much attention to detail in this sculpture.



It may be a small town but it knows how to celebrate its heritage.

Kiltimagh is a picturesque little town in the heart of County Mayo in the West of Ireland. An appealing 19th century artisan village theme is evident in the shop facades, the Market Square and along the streets. The town prides itself on its high quality of personal service where Irish friendship and hospitality can be seen at its best.

## Rooftop Schools



Many people in Hong Kong can still remember the era of “Rooftop Schools.” In the 1950s Hong Kong experienced rapid population growth partly due to an influx of mainland immigrants, and the number of students requiring education rose to more than 100,000.

On top of that, the Shek Kip Mei Fire in 1953, galvanized the Government to clear slums and build public housing estates to improve living conditions. A certain Reverend Russell Mills suggested to the Government that primary schools could be accommodated on the rooftops of slab type public housing

blocks (‘slab blocks’), thus the era of ‘rooftop primary schools’ began.

Unlike public schools, these schools were often founded by religious bodies and charitable organisations. Rooftop schools were situated on the top floor of the ‘slab block’. At either end of the roof, a few classrooms would be erected with a small, fenced-off playground in the middle.

The small classrooms on the roof could accommodate very few students and it was obvious that rooftop schools would not be a good long-term solution for education. There were further concerns and challenges. Students and teachers had to use the shared toilet on the 7th floor and which was shared with other residents. Hygiene conditions were poor. Learning was easily affected by weather. Students had to share the staircase with residents and this could be a safety issue. The teachers taught well despite the challenging environment.

A rooftop school alumna recalls: “We had to walk up 7 flights of stairs, not easy for a 6-year-old boy in the hot and humid months of a Hong Kong summer. But we saw our teachers doing the same and that helped. Those same teachers, despite all the drawbacks, taught us well and with a sense of vocation. Even graduation ceremonies were not neglected and, weather permitting, would be held in the playground. Our graduating class happened to be in 1967, the year of the riots, and the riots had a direct bearing on the ceremony.

Not too far away, the police had to use tear gas to disperse rioters. While the graduation ceremony was in progress, the wind wafted the gas towards our rooftop school. Tears began to stream down the faces of the students and they began to start choking.

The ceremony had to be abandoned. No graduation photograph could be taken. Probably neither the police nor the rioters were aware of what was happening.”

The rooftop schools filled a void until such time as stand-alone primary schools became the norm.

## Robots in the Classroom

The education ministry in Japan plans a US\$227,000 project across some 500 classrooms to improve students' weak oral and written English

English-speaking artificial intelligence (AI) robots will be helping out in some 500 Japanese classrooms from next year as the country seeks to improve its English skills.

"AI robots already on the market have various functions. For example, they can check the pronunciation of each student's English, which is difficult for teachers to do," said the official in charge of international education.

AI robots "are just one example of the trial and we are planning other measures" such as using tablet apps and having online lessons with native speakers, he said.

The move comes ahead of a change in the national curriculum in two years that will require children from the age of 10 to learn English. Japanese schools struggle to find qualified teachers for English classes and generally lack the cash to hire trained language assistants.

English classes are currently compulsory for Japanese students aged between 12 and 15, but the starting age will be lowered to primary schoolchildren in 2020.

Some educational institutions in Singapore and London are among those to have Japanese robots offer learning support.

Norway has deployed its AV1 robot to Scandinavian schools to help kids with long-term illnesses stay in touch with friends and with the classroom. The robot is remotely controlled by the child via an app on a mobile phone or tablet. It's also equipped with a Wi-Fi wireless network and mobile networks, and runs on batteries so it can join classmates in schoolyards.

In Poland, there is a small wheeled robot that teaches young children to code.

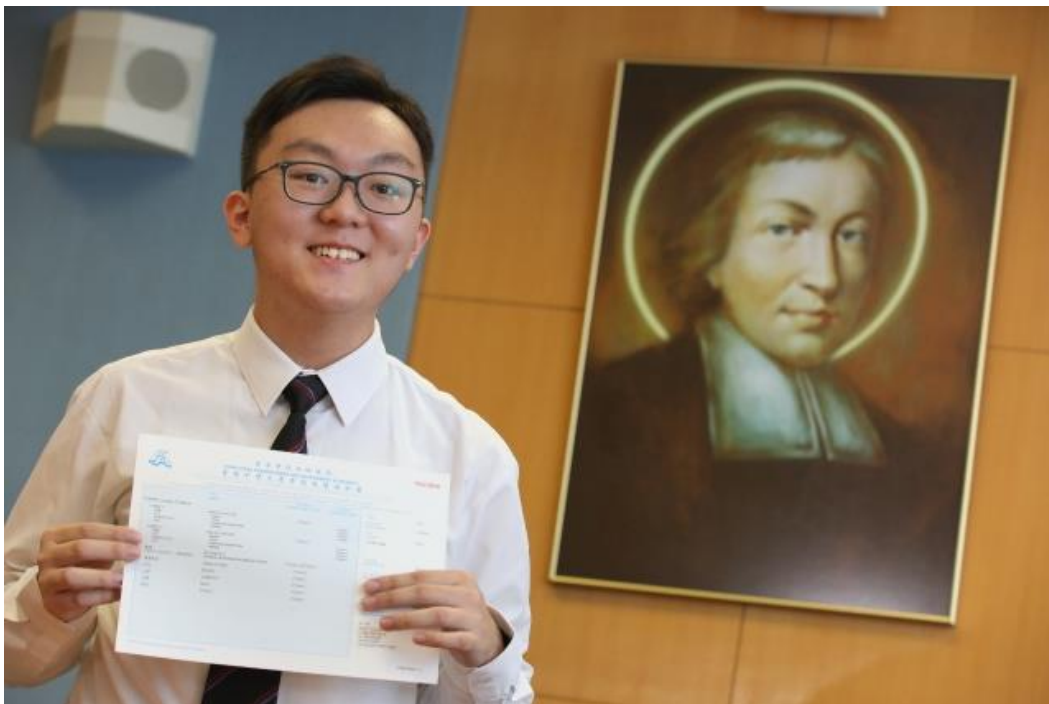
Despite the increased use of robots in the classroom, it will take some convincing that they can replace teachers. Instead, the use of robots could be regarded as teacher support measures.



## Family Updates

### Top Notch

Thomas Wong Tsz Hang of La Salle College made history by scoring the top mark of nine 5\*\* in all subjects he sat for the city's recent secondary school graduation examination, the first student to score all 5\*\* in nine subjects territory wide. He was among 50,447 full-day school candidates. Thomas has revealed plans for a career in medicine and said he would not become "conceited", to stay humble and keep striving, despite his never before achieved feat. "I feel that I cannot get conceited with these grades and they do not guarantee I will be very successful in life. I will continue to work hard," said Thomas. The musically-talented Wong, who plays the piano and cello, said he would remain in the city to work after graduating. "I really like Hong Kong and I am born and bred here. I will stay in Hong Kong and serve this society."



### Singapore International Band Festival 2018

La Salle College Wind Orchestra was awarded a Gold Prize in the 6<sup>th</sup> Singapore International Band Festival Division One Competition held on 27<sup>th</sup> July in Singapore. It is one of the best known music festivals in the Asia-Pacific with competitors from Australia, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. There is nothing to beat being up against the best, in this case the world champions from Thailand.



## Viability and Vitality

As required for all the Lasallian Missions in the Lasallian East Asia District (LEAD), the Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council (LEC) has directed that a thorough and critical review of the current position and future development of the eight Hong Kong Lasallian schools should be undertaken with a view to enhancing their long term viability and vitality. To this end, a central Review Coordination Team was established as well as School Review Teams for each of the eight schools. Many meetings have been held both by the Coordination and the School Teams and the final report is currently taking shape.



Front row from left: Mr. Nicholas Ng, Brother Thomas Lavin, Brother Patrick Tierney. Back row: Mr. Eric Ku, Mr. Peter Choy, Mr. Chris Lau

## 17 years wait

The first ordination of a Spiritan priest in 17 years took place on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July in Dublin. The Spiritans religious congregation, also known as the Holy Ghost Fathers, had not ordained a new priest in Ireland since 2001. The congregation run five high profile schools; Blackrock College, St Mary's College, Templeogue College, and St Michael's College in Dublin, and Rockwell College in Co Tipperary. The newly ordained priest is Samson Mann and he hails from Hong Kong and was a graduate of St. Joseph's Primary School and College. We wish Father Samson every joy and blessing in the Lord's service.





## 5-a-side Blitz

It has become quite a tradition for St. Joseph's Primary School to host a 5 a side tournament for the different generations of its old boys. This year the event was held on 1<sup>st</sup> September and, despite the inclement weather, there was a fine turn out. The oldest generation on view was the class 1976 and the youngest that of 2010. The staff, too, managed to field a team. With so many year groups participating, the tournament had to start early in the morning and went on all day. A great time was had by all.



## Christian Brothers Cup – Basketball

The Christian Brothers Cup Basketball Tournament has become an annual fixture on the sporting calendar. Four of our Hong Kong Lasallian secondary schools competed for honours. This year the tournament was held on the 9<sup>th</sup> September in the Gymnasium of La Salle College. The old boys demonstrated that they have not lost the touch and we were treated to excellent games and moves. The final pitted St. Joseph's against Chan Sui Ki (La Salle). It was a very exciting game, with many fantastic three-pointers, and St. Joseph's edging it at the end.



## New Teachers Induction

The practice in Hong Kong is to hold a New Teachers Lasallian Induction programme for all our eight schools every three years. October 13<sup>th</sup> will be just such an Induction Day and over 100 new teachers are expected to participate. We are fortunate to have secured the services of Brother Dennis Magbanua as our keynote speaker. Besides, we will be blessed with the presence of three or four other Brothers from overseas, on top of the local Brothers. The Theme of the Induction will look at what defines a Lasallian teacher, Brother Dennis taking the angle of "From Career to Calling." The Preparatory Committee consists of all our school Vice Principals, 16 in all, and they are doing a fine job.



## Old Boys Concert

The Old Boys Concert of La Salle College was held in the Academic Community Hall of Baptist University on the 8<sup>th</sup> September. The concert played to a large audience and lived up to high expectations. The Wind Orchestra, the Choir, the Chinese Orchestra and the Symphony Orchestra all delivered beautiful pieces. Jeremy Lee of the Class of 2014 was guest conductor while Cheng Yan Ho, Class of 2010, was a Cello Soloist. The passion for music transcends generations and it was a pleasure to notice how the generations merged so seamlessly. The organisers of the Old Boys Concert should take a bow.

