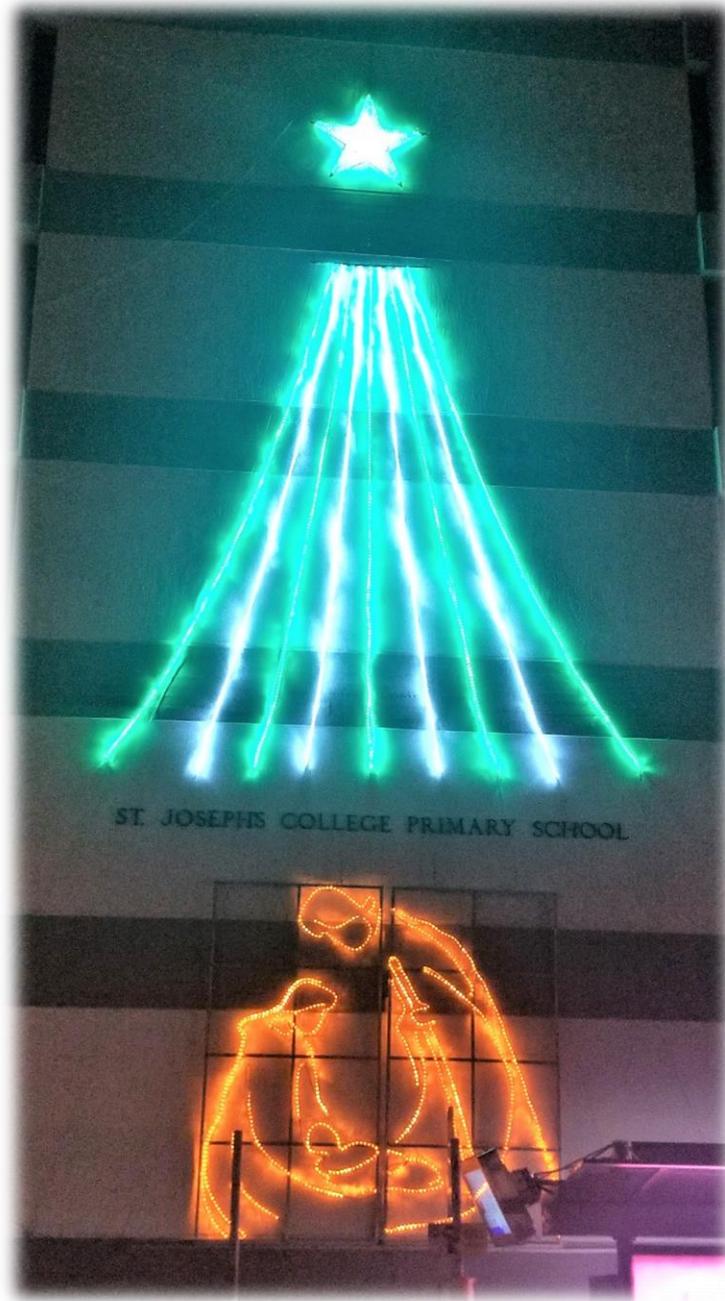
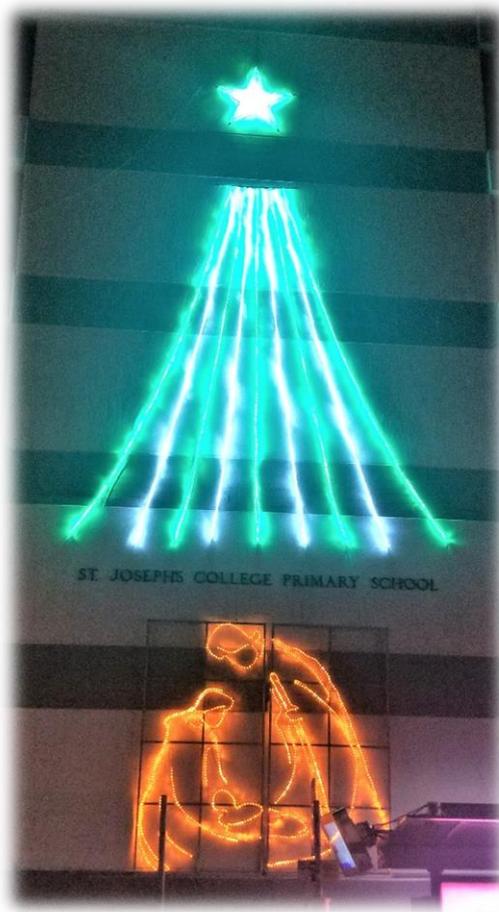


# *The Gateway*



Issue 88  
December 2020



For the first time in over 50 years, St. Joseph's Primary School decided to light up the school at night with the scene of the birth of our Lord, hoping to bring joy and warmth to Hong Kong, especially during this very difficult time.

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**Concept by**  
Brother Patrick Tierney  
Paul K.K. Tam

## Welcome

Welcome to the Christmas issue of the Gateway, Gateway No 88, a very auspicious number in the Chinese tradition.

We certainly hope the New Year will be an auspicious one after the travails of this past year. Covid 19 virus has left a trail of destruction worldwide and the sooner we see the end of it the better. We will be forever grateful to all who have battled bravely and especially our frontline healthcare workers. They are an inspiration.

For our feature article we travel well back in time to our Hong Kong world of 1908 to 1928. We are able to take a closer look at this period because we are in possession of a diary written by Brother Wilfred More, a French Brother who spent long periods of his life in St. Joseph's College and later in La Salle College. By all accounts he was a pretty strict teacher, in keeping perhaps with the norms of times. We are grateful to him for recording his "youthful memories."

Despite the restrictions imposed by Covid and by the government the Brothers and our schools managed to organise and hold some activities. Our family updates show both determination and creativity. We were particularly consoled that we could hold ceremonies in November to remember our departed loved ones.

We are entering the Year of St. Joseph as declared by Pope Francis. Just as he took such good care of the child Jesus, we will call on him to protect us in these troublesome times.

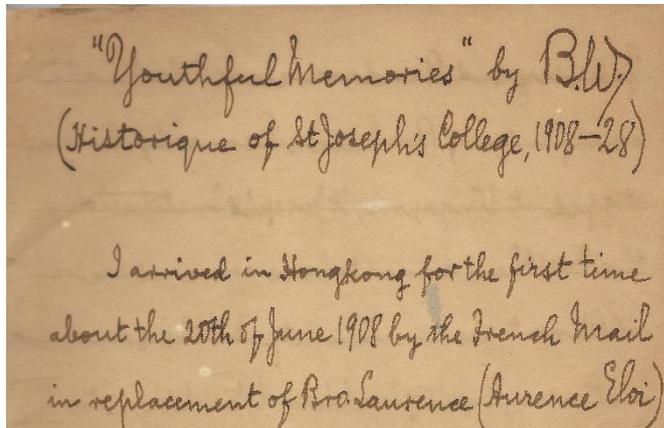
St. Joseph, Patron of our Lasallian Institute, guide and protect us.

May the child Jesus and his Blessed Mother bring us peace and joy.



## Youthful Memories by Br Wilfrid More

(Historique of St Joseph's College, 1908-28)



I arrived in Hong Kong for the first time about the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1908 by the French Mail in replacement of Br Laurence of Standard 3 who had applied for a change. The Director was Br Christian who had in the previous March exchanged with Br Dotto Sylvester his directorship of Colombo.

By the next French Mail there arrived Br Dosithee Regis, a young Brother from Guernsey, a companion of Br Cassian-Bernard, who had stopped at St Joseph's Institution, Singapore. Br Dositheus seemed to have come as an addition to the community. In the same week, Br Stephen Edward, teaching Standard 7 left by the English Mail on home leave and was to return later. Br Cornelius was teaching Standard 6 with Br Denis, Br Cyprian Standard 5, Br Calixtus Standard 4. Br Henry Standard 2, Br Paul Standard 1A, Br Joseph Standard 1B (the Primary Class), Br Felix, Standard 3 Chinese, Br Cairnan Standard 2 Chinese, with one or two Chinese masters teaching the lowest Chinese classes, as well as the Chinese Language in the Chinese School. We had no other secular masters until later years. Every class had only one division, altogether a little over 400 pupils.



This picture was taken on 20 October 1908 at the Robinson Road campus. Brother Wilfrid is the Brother on the left hand side with a black beard.



Brother Christian Lennon and Father Spada and a group of students of different nationalities. The Cathedral is in the background

After the final exams, every Brother on the English side of the school was promoted with his successful pupils, except Br Joseph. Br Dositheus was given Standard 1A. Br Cornelius took up the teaching of Shorthand and Typewriting, so far taught, I think, by Br Stephen, along with the English lessons in Standard 7, with Br Denis teaching Maths in Standard 7 and 6 and acting as Sub-Director. There had been no titled Sub-Director for years.

When I came to Hong Kong the College was under the management of the Italian Mission who thus received the yearly Government grants and paid the Brothers and teachers. The Brothers' salary was \$20.- a month. If we did not starve it was because we kept 40 or 50 Boarders who paid good money. This state of affairs lasted until February 1909 when a new contract was signed with the Mission by Br Kieran, Assistant Visitor, giving the management of the school over to Br Director, and the money too.

By the way it may be interesting to record that up to that year (1909) inclusive, the annual retreats were given in February or March at the time of Br Visitors' canonical visitation; school was run as usual, and the instructions were given in the free time after four and before eight thirty a.m. Again, it may be of interest that up to Br Aimar's time, in 1914 or 1915, we had only two short half-days every week, on Wednesday and Saturday, the morning sessions on those two days, the same as the other days were long enough to reckon them as full days for the awarding of the yearly grant. Again, about the grant: the method of awarding the grant-in-aid money was according to the old way (before September 1941), a yearly sum of money was paid to the school for every boy putting in 200 days during the year; the grants were of three grades according to upper, middle or lower classes, and each grade again was divided in three according to the first-, second- or third-class efficiency in each set of classes. Bonuses for each pass in the official upper classes examinations were also awarded to the school. Teachers'

salaries were settled by Headmasters. This method was continued until September 1941 when the present system of paying salaries was to be introduced. (Of the teachers' salaries which had to be paid monthly by Government, not a cent had yet been received at the time of the declaration of war by Japan in December 1941. After the war, however, everything was made good, all salaries were paid up from September 1941 throughout the war years until the reopening of schools in September 1946).

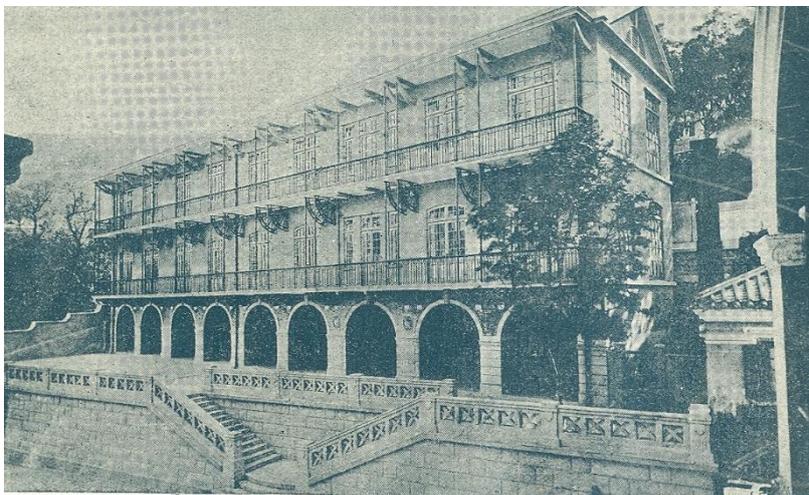


Br Stephen returned with the obedience of Sub-Director and he did some of his old work in Standards 7 and 6. After a few months he was transferred to St Joseph's Singapore as Sub-Director, and shortly after he was promoted Director, which position he kept for years, being only occasionally appointed elsewhere to break up his periods of Directorship in Singapore.

(Br Stephen was, however, to return to Hong Kong 24 or 25 years later, in the mid 30's, this time as Director. But the call of Singapore was so loud that he asked to be released of his Hong Kong Directorship after a short time. He died in his retreat in Ireland the day he learnt of the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in 1942).

At that time, as already mentioned, we had 40 or 50 Boarders, from Manila, Macao, Amoy, Indochina and Hong Kong. Brothers Cornelius, Cyprian and Andrew took their rounds as chief prefects. On Sundays and holidays the other Brothers helped and reigned more or less gloriously. Br Cairnan helped me in teaching Catechism and working for the conversion of the Manila and Amoy Chinese.

Br Christian planned to increase the number of pupils in the College. He had therefore to build. Between Robinson Road and the College playground there was a slope free of buildings crossed by a path used by the public, passing through the College between Robinson Road and the Cathedral. On the Western side of the path, a two-room building was put up to house the Senior and Junior classes respectively. This allowed two more classrooms in the main building for a second division of Standards 1 and 2.



This building was later extended in 1916 or 1917 by Br Aimar into 6 or 8 classrooms and was called the Annexe. After being used for the best part of one year to accommodate the lower classes while the German Club premises were being put in shape after the earthquake of 1918, the ground and building were returned to the Mission, and it became one of the earliest premises of the pre-Jesuit

Wah Yan College, later of the Jesuit Wah Yan and now (1959) for the last few years, one of the Bishop's Primary Schools.



There was no promotion among the staff for a few years. In 1998-09 or 1909-10 the appellation "Standard" was changed by Government into "Class". The Oxford Senior became Class 1, the Oxford Junior Class 2, the Oxford Preliminary Class 3, Standard 5 Class 4, Standard 4 Class 5, Standard 3 Class 6, Standard 2 Class 7, Standard 1A Class 8A, Standard 1B Class 8B.

In the late 40's, these were to be changed again into the following appellations: Class 8 became Primary 5, Class 7 Primary 6, Class 6 Form 1, Class 5 Form 2, Class 4 Form 3, Class 3 Form 4, Class 2 Form 5 (School Leaving Certificate Class), Class 1 Form 6 (Matriculation Class).

De La Salle Manila having opened in June 1911, and my name being on the list of the founding staff through my own application, an obedience was sent. But Br Director waited for my substitute before handing me my obedience, and it was only in January 1912 that my substitute, Br Alphonse Henri, arrived. I left for my new community and reached it on my birthday January 28<sup>th</sup>.

I was to return to Hong Kong in May 1914. In the meantime, dramatic changes had taken place. Br Director Christian in August 13<sup>th</sup> returned to America. Br Edmund Adrian was sent, and he helped found the Boy Scout Movement in Hong Kong. In March 1914 he was replaced by Br Peter Chrysologus who died shortly after.

After Br Peter's demise, his friends, the founders of the Scouts, old pupils of the College, wished to perpetuate his memory. They collected and/or subscribed a certain sum of money which, placed in the Bank, would produce interest to become yearly monetary prizes to be

awarded to the two or three best essays on Empire Day or appointed kindred topics written by the boys of the College upper classes. Thus, every year St Joseph's was made to shine in the intellectual field of Hong Kong.

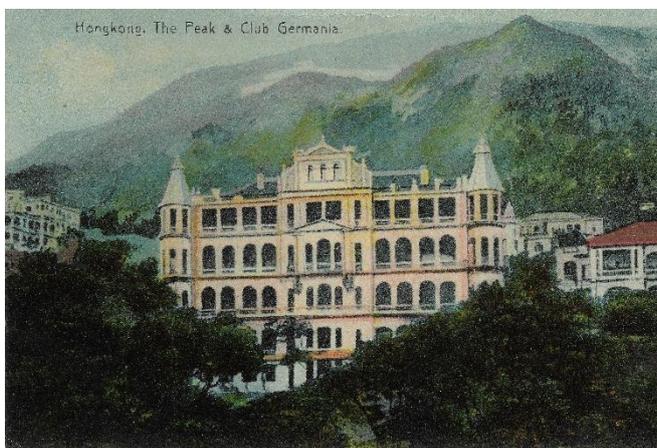
Br Aimar, Director of Moulmein, Burma, was sent in May 1914 to take up the Directorship.



On my return to Hong Kong from Manila in May 1914 I took the place of the Brother teaching Class 3. I helped Br Aimar in preparing, typing, printing, and presiding more or less the exams of the middle and lower classes – a job he entrusted to me for years along with the other tasks I had to do, including my own class which was Class 2, or some commercial class.

As soon as he was appointed Director in 1914, Br Aimar made it his duty to see to the health of his Brothers. During the 1914 Summer the Brothers spent their vacations in a rented house near a stream in Taipo. Shortly after, through the good offices of the French Procurator he bought a country house not far from the Fathers of the Nazareth Printing Press in Pokfulam.

In mid May 1914 when Br Aimar took up the Directorship, Brothers Cornelius and Alphonsus were teaching the Senior and Junior respectively.



Shortly after the building of the extended Annexe, an earthquake in 1918 so shook the main structure of St Joseph's Building that we had to evacuate part of it immediately whilst looking for new quarters. The mortgaged German Club and adjacent grounds were acquired from the Canton Insurance Society. The Club building was partitioned off into rooms for the Brothers' quarters, Boarders accommodation and the upper and middle classes. Building plans were immediately put into execution. The part of the College

parallel to the Club was the first carried out. The lower classes, from Class 5 down, were taught in the Annexe. Four times a day, the Boarders attending those classes had to walk the distance under the leadership of Br George, until the new building near the Peak Tram Lower Station was ready for occupation.

In 1924-25, further additions to the German Club were erected by Br Aimar—the covered playground, the hall, the two Labs and the Chapel completed the College.

It was about this time (1918-19) that Br Aimar asked me to prepare the compilation of a school prayer book. The original compilation was called something like "A Collection of Prayers and Devotions for Schools."



## Family Updates

### Chan Sui KI (La Salle) College welcoming new students

On 23<sup>rd</sup> September, S1 students finally met their new peers and teachers at Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College for the first time since this academic year. A welcome gift called “TOV Treasure” (“TOV” is a Hebrew word that means “good”), which is a lollipop attached to a unique blessing card handwritten by our staff members, has been presented to each S1 student. These little gifts symbolize our school’s wishes for a “TOV” and sweet start to their new chapter in life.



### Chong Gene Hang College Visual Art Exhibit



Despite the restrictions arising from the Covid pandemic, students of Chong Gene Hang College participated actively in two joint-schools’ visual arts exhibitions in October and November. Besides the traditional ways of presentation, their students tried to explore the creative use of audio, video and animation IT techniques in their art works. The school strongly encourages the creative talents of its students.

## Speech Day

The successful holding of any school function is almost seen as a victory in the current pandemic situation. It was therefore with a sense of relief and happiness that the school community of La Salle College, Kowloon, welcomed the successful conclusion of its annual Speech Day, held on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Brother Visitor, Armin, had originally been earmarked as Guest of Honour but he is under travel restrictions in the Philippines. Brother Dennis Magbanua, Director of the La Salle Brothers Community, kindly consented to take on the role. He gave an interesting and enlightening reflection on loving tenderly, acting justly and walking humbly with God. Because of social-distancing rules, only one parent per graduate could attend and this was much appreciated. Nearly all the Class of 2019 are now studying at tertiary level and we wish them the very best as they move forward in life.



## In Remembrance

The Old Boys Association of La Salle College organised a Mass of remembrance on 28<sup>th</sup> November for all our deceased Brothers, staff, students, parents and old boys. It was an appropriate religious activity for the month of the Holy Souls. The celebrant was old boy Fr. Marciano Baptista, S.J. He reminded the congregation that St. La Salle founded schools for the poor and needy and so we should never forget the disadvantaged in society. Since the season of Advent was about to begin, the Recessional hymn was 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel.'



## Paying Respects

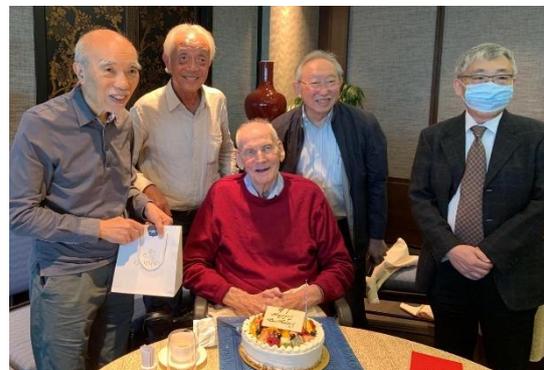


In the Catholic tradition we are in the month of the Holy Souls. The Brothers of St. Joseph's College and La Salle College chose the 15<sup>th</sup> November to visit the gravesite of deceased Brothers whose remains rest in St. Michael's cemetery, Happy Valley. A prayer service included the sharing of insights, especially on the three Brothers most recently deceased, Alphonsus Chee, Alphonsus Breen and Thomas Favier. There was a prayer for vocations asking our heavenly Father to help us continue the work of those who went before. Our Hong Kong deceased affiliated

members were not forgotten, including the most recently deceased, Mr. Arnaldo D'Oliveira Sales. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.

## Happy Birthdays

In November/December we celebrated the birthdays of Brothers Michael Cua, Lawrence Blake and Patrick Tierney. Brother Mikey wears a number of hats, not least in that he is the Secretary of the LEAD District. On top of that, he does some teaching and pastoral work at both Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College and Primary schools. Brother Lawrence is wheel-chair bound and is hospitalized in St. Teresa's but was taken out by his old boys for a birthday celebration. Brother Patrick says he is getting too close to 80 for comfort! Many happy returns, Brothers.



## **Crises and Uncertainty**

The Lasallian East Asia District (LEAD) recently requested Brother Patrick Tierney to give a webinar presentation on the crises and uncertainty affecting Hong Kong over the past year or so. The presentation was meant to be an overview. Brother Patrick addressed 3 areas of crises and uncertainty.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Crisis: Violent Social Unrest**

#### **The Scenario:**

Violent street demonstrations, accompanied by vandalism, erupted in the summer of 2019. Many young people, including university students and high school students got caught up in the movement. The movement caused disruption to school life with chanting of slogans, human chains and sit-in demonstrations.

Police have made arrests, conducted investigations and court cases are ongoing. The whole violence movement caused division within HK society. Even families were divided.

#### **Moving Forward:**

While our schools understood the feelings of many students and teachers, they stressed the importance of not resorting to violence but rather encouraged moves towards some form of peaceful resolution.

In our schools, students were allowed to express their feelings and opinions in a peaceful manner. The purpose of this was to show that many voices can be heard while still respecting individual opinions.

In moving forward, we will try to train our students to become men and women of integrity, ready to build up rather than destroy, to stand up for what is right without resorting to violence.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Crisis: Covid 19 Pandemic**



#### **The Scenario:**

In the midst of the social unrest, the Covid 19 pandemic struck. Not only was school closed off and on, but nearly all extra-curricular activities could not take place including face to face Lasallian Family meetings.

The pandemic posed special problems in one of our schools in particular. A sizable number of students from De La Salle Secondary School come from mainland China, so that, even when face to face lessons were resumed, they could not cross the border to attend lessons.

### Moving Forward:

During the pandemic, we continue to move forward by holding Lasallian Education Council meetings, Principals Conference meetings and APLEC meeting online as encouragement and support. Despite the crisis and uncertainty, Hong Kong continues to refine its project on the Viability and Vitality of our schools. The main aim of this project is to ensure that all our schools remain fully committed to quality Lasallian education.

An example of creativity in our mission is the response of De La Salle Secondary School. It does not forget those who cannot attend lessons. To reach out to them, each lesson is recorded in real time so that the students in mainland China can follow.

Another creative response is our Lasallian Educational Outreach programme which tries to address the disadvantaged students, especially newly arrived immigrants and those from low-income families. Face to face lessons with these students is of particular importance because at least some of them are not equipped with necessary IT devices and accessibility for online learning.

### 3rd Crisis: New National Security Law



#### The Scenario:

Largely as a result of the social unrest and the violence and vandalism connected with it, as well as China's perception of foreign interference, a National Security Bill was introduced and enacted in July 2020.

Whether we like it or not, it had an immediate effect in stopping the violence. Unfortunately, it has also developed a culture of reporting apparent non-

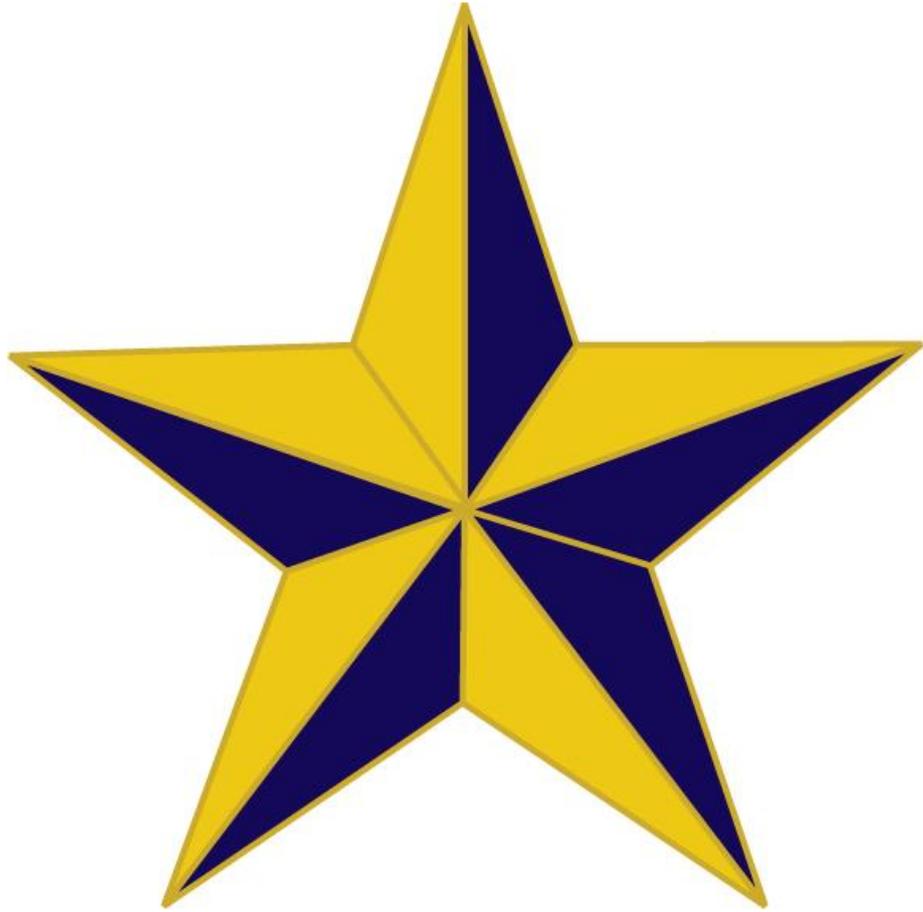
compliance. This has added a lot of pressure to school administrators and teachers. They have to be very careful about what they say and do both in school and in the social media. An outcome of the Security Law is the emerging trend of student emigration to foreign countries, especially among the upper and middle-class families.

### Moving Forward:

An atmosphere of caution is prevalent. On the other hand, we do not wish to move forward into a self-censoring mode nor into watering down of critical thinking.

Since our schools and school personnel have to live with the new law, we think our moving forward should involve studying its implications and devising the best possible outcomes for the future of our Lasallian mission and vision here in HK.

While these are early days, the Brothers together with the Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council and Principals Conference will need to monitor developments in regard to both the Church and the Lasallian Mission in HK.



Great Things Are Possible



We are one, and we are many.....