

The Gateway



Issue 90
April 2021



Spider trees, *crateva unilocularis*, that grow on both sides of La Salle Road Kowloon never fail to remind people of the coming of Spring. The flowers are in full bloom by late March every year. The spider tree withstands the wind and grows at any altitude.

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Welcome



We are well into Spring and, as you can see from the cover, the spider trees are back in bloom.

We issue Gateway 90 in the Year of St Joseph. We thank God for the arrival of the Brothers nearly 150 years ago and their naming of the school as St Joseph's College, an auspicious choice since St Joseph is the protector of children and the patron of the Institute of the La Salle Brothers.

We complete our look at St Brother Benilde with some interesting stories. Our other main feature takes a look at a well-known and long-standing teacher at La Salle College, still going strong at the age of 96.

Despite the pandemic restrictions, there have been some noteworthy Lasallian activities, some but not all online. We are currently heartened at the prospect of welcoming two-thirds of our students after the Easter break. We have missed the sounds

of school life.

One of our schools, Chong Gene Hang College, is celebrating its Golden Jubilee. The school is located at the east end of Hong Kong Island. An exciting development in its jubilee year is that it will begin turning co-educational as of September.

Another anniversary is that of our Lasallian East Asia District (LEAD) which is celebrating its 10th anniversary. We are happy to belong to this large Lasallian Family and wish the celebrations every success.

The beautiful season of Easter, the most important celebration of the church's year, is with us. May our Risen Lord lead us safely home.



Mr. Henry Lau Wing Long-Serving Devotion

Generations of old boys of La Salle College will remember a former teacher called Henry Lau Wing. They will remember not only because of his great length of service but also because of his good teaching and unfailing kindness.

What may not be so well known, is that Henry began his schooling in Diocesan Boys' Primary School, he was awarded Woo Hay Tong Scholarship from the school in 1935. For whatever reason, when it came to secondary schooling, he chose La Salle College. This was in 1936. During his secondary schooling, Henry had this to say:



“I have accidentally unearthed an old and blemished photo of Brother Gerfried who was my form teacher when I was a pupil in Class 2C (School Cert. Class) in 1940. The photo was taken in July 1940 after the CE Exams. Thought you might like to add it to your heritage collection. The skinny chap on Brother Gerfried's right was my humble self. On my right was Paul Sum, whose parents were kind enough to take me along to Shanghai with their son, Paul, to join St John's University in Shanghai in September 1940, where we both intended to do Medicine. We were in 2nd year pre-medical when the Pacific War started. I had to drop my

medical course as I was cut off from my family's financial support from Hong Kong. As Paul's family was in Shanghai, he continued to complete his course. After getting his MD in 1949, he emigrated to the USA to practise medicine.”

His daughter, Barbara, adds: “I don't know if you are aware, but his aspirations to becoming a doctor was thwarted when his dad (my granddad - who was a dentist with a practice in Gloucester Building) was taken prisoner by the Japanese. My uncle, Dad's eldest brother, worked for the British in BAAG, and the Japanese wanted to flush him out by imprisoning my grandfather. Funds therefore dried up, but Dad was able to remain at St. John's somehow because the Dean of the University in those days was apparently a Hong Kong guy who was very sympathetic towards the Hong Kong students.

Dad told me that in order to look as though he was paying for his tuition, the Dean got the boys to dig trenches around the University that probably served no purpose. He said in those days, he was very hungry, and the University provided only lunch, but no dinners. He would therefore take a lot of rice during lunch, which he would then hide under his quilt in his dorm to keep warm.”

Medicine's loss was La Salle's gain. After the war, when Brother Cassian Brigant, in particular, was sorting out the residual mess, he heard that Henry was back in Hong Kong. It did not take him long to persuade Henry to join the staff of the school. This was on the 1st April 1947.



It was an inspiring decision because Henry was capable of teaching a number of subjects. In his time, he was to teach Mathematics, English, Geography and Biblical Knowledge and he taught them well. Perhaps for this reason, he was given the leaving certificate examination classes for nearly all his teaching career.

In addition, he was often called upon to act as MC for important school functions, from Speech Days to Sports Days. His competence was recognized when he became the Vice Principal for administration.

He survived 7 principals! They were Brothers Cassian Brigant, Patrick Toner, Felix Sheehan, Casimir Husarik, Raphael Egan, Alphonsus Chee, not forgetting Brother Henry Pang of the Primary school.

When retirement eventually came, in 1990, Henry generously substituted for teachers on sick leave. He had been teaching without a break for 43 years and may have set some kind of record in the school.

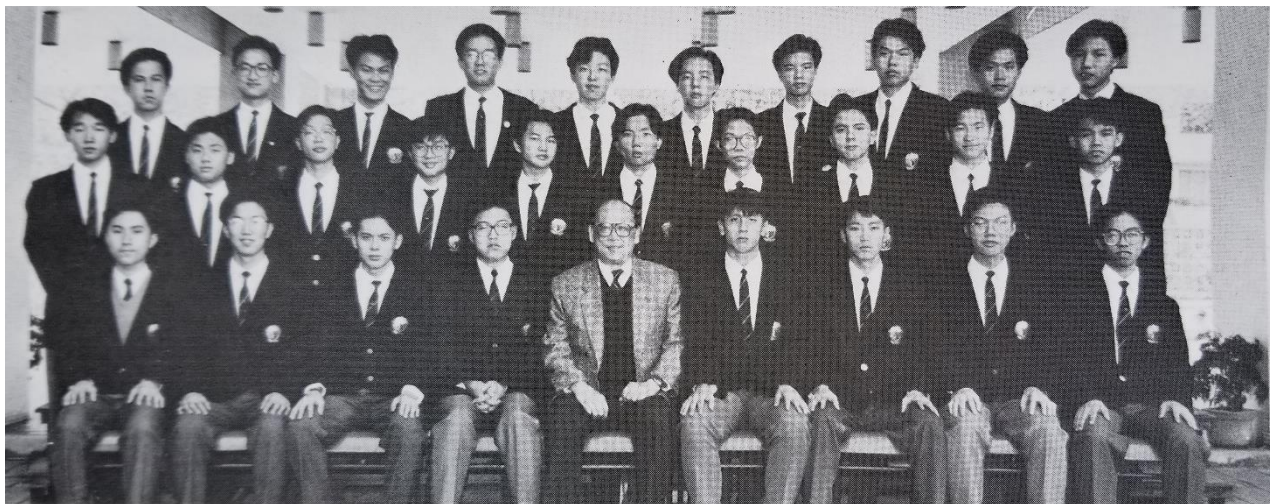
On one memorable occasion, he accompanied Brothers David Liao and Patrick Tierney on a trip to mainland China. A meeting had been arranged with government officials. The

opportunity was also taken to visit the head of the Marist Brothers, as well as visiting Shanghai and Hangzhao.

Henry's health had always been pretty good. Only in recent times has he suffered from some dementia. Even so, he has sung the school song and occasionally chides his carer for not getting him up earlier as he was going to 'run late' for school.



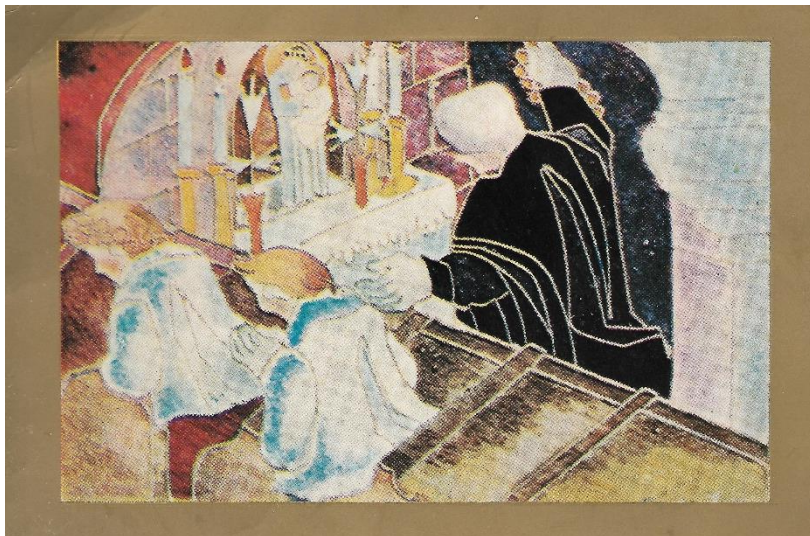
Class in Perth Street Days in the 50s



F. 5B 1989-1990, last class taught

Stories of Brother Benilde Part II

The Best Lesson of All



Brother Benilde saw his duty as doing everything in his power to help his pupils grow into good Catholics and good men. Two customs of his Congregation helped him immensely in this task. One was the daily 'Reflection' which consisted of a few words of encouragement or a short "Reflection" inspiring the boys to be good human beings. The second was the Catechism lesson which

always started with prayer. He would then begin with words like: "Let's see: what did you learn yesterday?" The Catechism lesson attracted the boys not only because of the content but because of the lively eyes, eloquent tone and facial expressions of Brother Benilde.

His explanations were illustrated by one or two interesting stories taken especially from the Scriptures and the Lives of the Saints. He was a master of the art of storytelling and was visibly moved when telling the story of the Passion of Our Lord. He was truly an apostle of the Catechism.

Hungry Boys

The boys may have been hungry for the gospel truth, but Brother Benilde also noticed that some were hungry for food. Some had hardly enough to eat or enough clothes to wear. Brother Benilde would discreetly send an old robe or gown to their mothers and was rewarded when he saw them used as patches. To the very poorest, he did not hesitate to give all school requisites free, and also food and bread.

Sometimes the Municipal Council held banquets in the school to honour distinguished guests. Brother Benilde had no hesitation in collecting the leftovers, especially the breadrolls, often in prime condition, and distributed them to the poor.

One day the parents of a twenty-one-year-old deaf and almost dumb boy asked Brother Benilde to help prepare him to receive his First Communion. Seeing the need, he learned the sign-language himself and taught the young man to read before preparing him for his First Communion.

Light in the Darkness

Every so often, young Brothers were sent to Brother Benilde' Community and he took special care of them, including helping them to prepare for relevant examinations.

One day, two of them had to go to Le Puy for an examination, and because of the fast-falling snow, the stagecoach had been cancelled. Nothing daunted, the two young Brothers decided to set out on foot. Brother Benilde made sure they had proper clothing and a good supply of food and agreed with them on their date of return.

“You won't be able to get back before dark”, he said, “and you know how hard it is to find your way when all the roads are covered with snow. So, to guide you, I *will light some candles and put them in the window on the first floor so that you can see them a long way off. Bon voyage and God keep you from every danger.*”

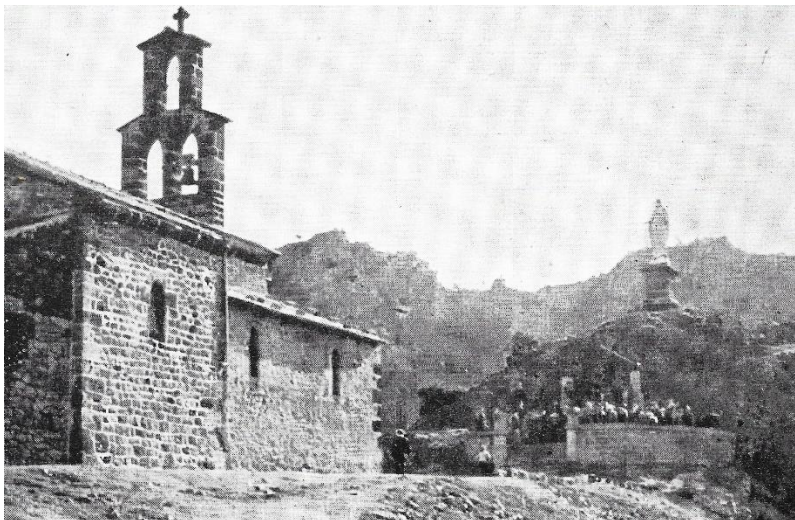
The two young Brothers finished their examination successfully; then they set out on their return journey to Saugues. But the blizzard was so strong that they would have been mad to start off on a 25 mile journey through the mountains. Just in case, Brother Benilde stayed up all night keeping the candles alight and had a hot meal waiting for the Brothers.

That night he waited in vain. The Following night Bother Benilde was at his post again. Meanwhile, the two travellers found it hard going in the snow. At last, however, they saw a few dim lights in the distance.

“We can't be far off now,” they said, with just enough strength for the last lap. When they did arrive, they were worn out, but before they could knock, the door opened and Brother Benilde welcomed them with open arms.

“Quick,” he said, “off with your wet boots and put on these dry slippers; then come along and have a nice hot meal.” Then he went to put a hot-water bottle in their beds.

A Big, Strong Brother



One day, Brother Benilde himself found occasion to visit Le Puy and he told Brother Nabor, the bursar, what time he expected to be back.

“I shall come and meet you on horseback, because you will be tired, and you can ride on the way home” suggested Brother Nabor.

The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Estours, where St. Benildus loved to go with his community.

Brother Benilde agreed, and on the appointed day, Br Nabor was there with the horse, and Brother Benilde started on the return journey.

The road was dangerous; on one side was the deep gorge of the River Allier. Suddenly, two sheepdogs rushed on to the road, barking furiously. The horse took fright and shied, and its hind legs slipped off the road putting it and its rider in danger of toppling over the cliff. Fortunately, the powerful Brother Nabor managed to get hold of the bridle and pulled so hard that the horse was able to find its footing on the road. If he had failed to do so, Brother Benilde would have fallen to his death. He thanked God for saving him through the strength of Brother Nabor.

Ecce Quam Bonum!



These are the first Latin words of the Psalm which the Brothers sing after the ceremony of the Vows. “How good and how pleasant it is, Brothers dwelling in unity!”

The Community of Brothers in Saugues, under the benign Directorship of Brother Benilde, put the ‘ecce quam bonum’ into practice. They prayed together, took their meals together, took

recreation together. Thursdays of every week was set aside for the weekly walk which further strengthened Community bonding.

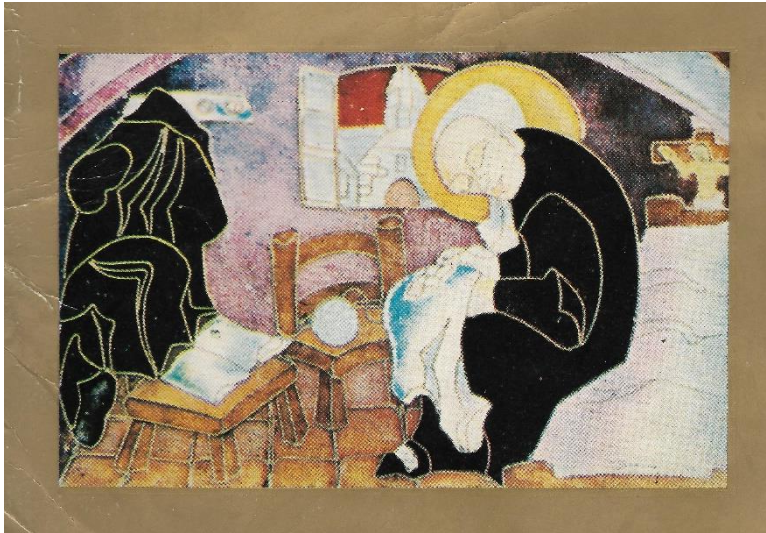
Brother Benilde also used this time to learn some songs for he was fond of singing and he wanted the Brothers to teach the boys a selection that was varied, wide and in good taste.

The Brothers could clearly see that Brother Benilde lived every moment in the presence of God. God was real to him. He thought of everything in relation to God. As a friend said of him, he adored God while he was planting cabbages as devotedly as he did while he was in Church.

A Harvest of Reapers

Brother Benilde considered the vocation of the Brothers to be so necessary and beautiful that he asked God every day to send many generous souls to his Institute. Sometimes he devoted his Reflection or a Catechism lesson to the subject.

But it was by his good example more than his words that so impressed the boys and several of them asked if they could join the Brothers. He advised and encouraged them and if everything was in order he brought them to the Brother’s Novitiate in Le Puy.



It was astonishing the number of Brothers who came from the school at Saugues while he was Director there. Seven years after his death, there were in the Institute 245 Brothers from the area around Saugues, almost all of whom were former pupils of his. He not only encouraged vocations to the Brothers but also to the priesthood and to other Congregations. It was a harvest for heaven.

Brother Benilde had spent 20 years in the La Salle school at Saugues. Time was catching up on him. Rheumatism and arthritis paralysed his left shoulder. He eventually succumbed to cancer on 13th August 1862. At his funeral, people were already calling him a Saint.

Too Ordinary

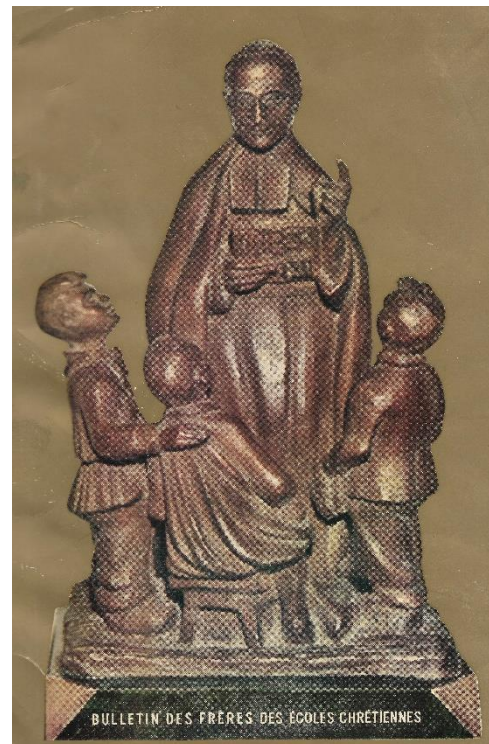
When it came to the process for Beatification and later Canonisation, the biggest ‘obstacle’ seemed to be that Brother Benilde was too ordinary, that he had never done anything extraordinary, that he lived a modest life doing his everyday duties. He had not made learned speeches or produced learned publications. You might say there was nothing special about him.

Pope Pius XI came to the rescue. He it was who realised that a person could display heroic virtue simply by fulfilling perfectly one’s daily duties. “Here then is the great lesson this humble Servant of God brings to us: holiness is not attached to extraordinary acts, but rather to common, everyday acts performed in an uncommon way.”

Br Benilde was declared a Saint on 29th October 1967.

Prayer

Lord, you set before us the example of Saint Benilde. Through his intercession may we grow in awareness of your presence, and live joyfully in your love each day. Inspire us to transform ordinary lives, and bring out the best in those you entrust to us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Family Updates

Online Learning Workshop

The pandemic has brought about a number of ‘firsts.’ One such was held in Hong Kong on the 12th March when Vice-Principals and selected IT teachers from all our eight schools came together for a Zoom workshop. The impetus came from the Brothers and the Lasallian Education Council who wished to have feedback on the effects of online learning on both staff and students. There had been some alarming rumours in society that there were high levels of stress. The IT teachers, together with our school Principals, addressed good practices in particular, with a view to sharing with the wider Lasallian community. Break-out groups were divided into secondary and primary school teachers and the concluding feedback was rich and practical. We look forward to continued networking, in the spirit of generosity and solidarity and in enhancing a culture of sharing resources.



Passing away of Mr. Peng Shilu 彭士祿, Father of China’s Nuclear Submarines

Mr. Peng Shilu, renowned as “Father of China’s Nuclear Submarines”, passed away on 22 March 2021 in Beijing at the age of 96.

Mr. Peng was Brother Henry Pang’s cousin. He was the second son of Peng Pai 彭湃, a pioneer of the Chinese agrarian movement and peasants’ right activist. Peng Pai was secretly killed by the then KMT government in Shanghai in 1929.

As an orphan, Mr. Peng was brought to Hong Kong and studied at St. Joseph’s College, at Primary five and six levels, from 1936 to 1938.

Mr. Peng made significant achievements in National Science and Technology. Not only was he the first chief designer of China’s nuclear submarine project, but he was also an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

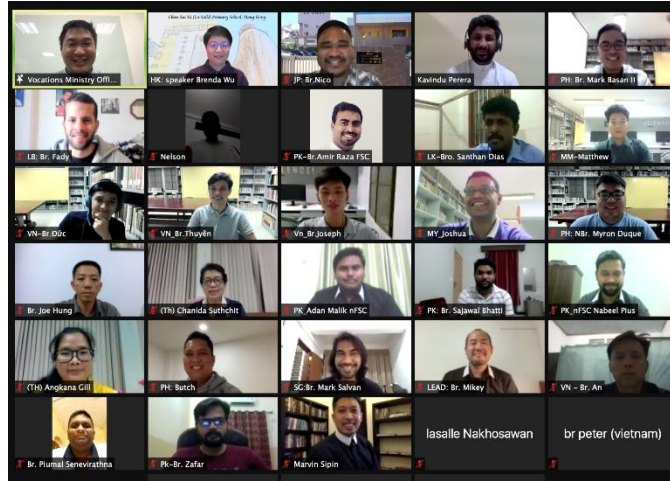


Brothers' Time to Study

The Young Brothers of PARC have recently begun a conversation which they entitle 'Brothers' Time to Study'. The aim is to provide an activity that responds to the recognized need to enhance teaching and to discover creative ways of evangelizing. In its most recent webinar of 27th March 2021, there were 3 speakers, one of whom was Miss Brenda Wu, Principal of Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School. Her topic was '21st Century Education'.

Brenda spoke for about 1 hour, sharing her views by means of the philosophy, pedagogy and extra-curricular activities developed in her school. She emphasized the importance of

- a. Knowledge
- b. Generic skills
- c. Attitudes
- d. Personal Qualities



Brenda believes we need to nurture our students to be motivated, self-directed and life-long learners, cultivating good human qualities. Her conclusion, on the role of Lasallian educators, was that “we shape our students to shape our future. It is a role that technology cannot replace. Let us uphold the Lasallian spirit of Faith, Zeal and Community. Let us count on love to touch the hearts of our students.”

Welcoming Visitors

On the morning of 22nd of March 2021, six administrators from Maryknoll Convent Foundation, Secondary and Primary Schools, paid Brother Patrick a friendly visit. The main purpose of the visit was to understand how we implement the Catholic and Lasallian ethos in our schools. The visitors viewed a power-point presentation, asked questions and shared thoughts and feelings. They professed themselves to be well satisfied with the morning's work. After the presentation, they were taken on a short tour to the Archives and to the Brothers and School Chapels. Maryknoll Convent School is our neighbour and it is a pleasure to maintain friendly relations.



Big Bang Room



La Salle Primary School has recently completed installing facilities in its very modern Big Bang Room. Funded by the Government's Quality Education Fund and the school's Diamond Jubilee Fund, the Big Bang Room on the first floor is now in full operation. Because of the pandemic restraints, the school recently held a virtual opening ceremony.

The School is keen to keep up with changes in technology, with the Internet of Things, with the virtual world. This is the new paradigm of education in the transmission of information. The Big Bang room contains a robot, named 'Temi' who can be called upon for help. There is

also a 3D printer, laser cutter, drones, and a 360 camera among other things. All in all, the students are in for a wonderful learning experience in our technological age, with a view to improving their own lives and the lives of other people.



Blast from the Past: Staff of La Salle College December 1947

This iconic staff picture, when La Salle College had managed to get back into shape after the depredations of the war, was taken in December 1947. It will surely bring back memories to the older generation of old boys.

The editors would be happy to receive feedback, including the filling in of name gaps. We think we have done rather well with the front row, but quite a few gaps appear in the 2nd and 3rd rows. We can be reached at hklasallianfamilyoffice@gmail.com



1st Row from left:

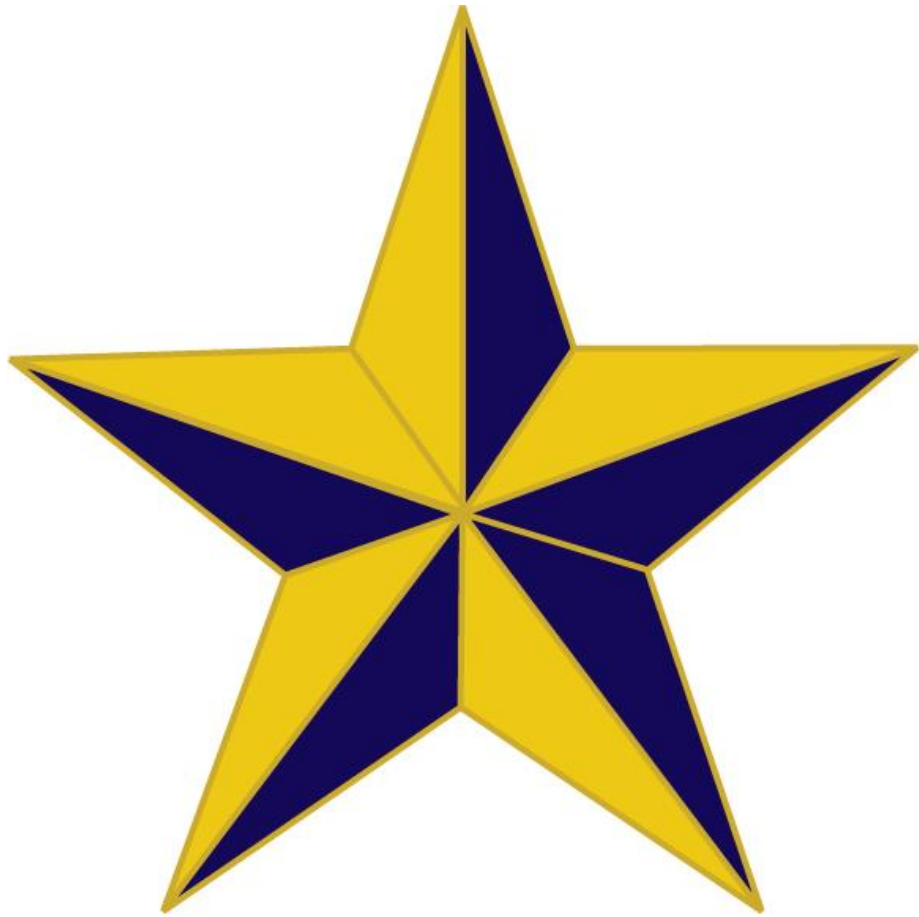
Mr. Ip Wing Lam	Mr. Charles Dragon	Br Raphael Egan	Br Wilfrid More
Br Patrick Toner	Br Cassian Brigant	Fr Bruzzone	Br Herman Fenton
Mr. Benedict Lim	Mr. Yuen Wing Bing	Mr. Francis X Loo	

2nd Row from left:

			Mr. Henry Lau
			Mr. Kwok Ming Chin
Mr. Yan		Mr. Kwok	

3rd Row from left:

Mr. Au	Mr. Lee	Mr. Lo	
	Mr. Wong Bo Ting	Mr. James Wong	
Mr. Liu			



Great Things Are Possible



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