

# *The Gateway*



**Issue 95**  
**May 2022**



Golden Trumpet Trees, with the most intensely yellow flowers, bloom in their full glory in spring. The picture was taken in the Shamshuipo area.

**Gateway 95**  
**May 2022**

First published in 2008

**Published by**  
The Hong Kong Lasallian Family  
18, La Salle Road,  
Hong Kong

**Editors**  
Brother Patrick Tierney  
Mr. Paul K.K. Tam



## Welcome

The Gateway is edging closer to the 100<sup>th</sup> issue since publication.

How glad we are that school classes have resumed, on a face-to-face basis. We never thought we would be happy to see some traffic snarl-ups, but we are. Our teachers did a magnificent job with online teaching, but they will be the first to admit that face-to-face cannot be beaten. The summer holiday will be short, a price worth paying.

Our feature article takes us back a long way. The article was found in an old Catholic magazine and was written by J.P. Braga, a well-known old boy of St. Joseph's College. The Director at the time was Brother Christian Lennon and he obviously made an impact.

On top of that, we managed to unearth an old postcard addressed to Brother Christian, with a marvellous picture of students at the time. The picture would certainly reward further study or detective work and we will happily receive feedback.

Despite the pandemic restrictions, several activities were held, either online or face-to-face. One of the most pleasing was the renewal of vows by Brother Edmon and we wish him every blessing as he prepares for his final profession of vows later in the year.

In Catholic tradition, May is the month of Our Lady. We need all her love and compassion as we look out on our troubled world. Queen of Peace, pray for us.



## Brother Christian Lennon



We have gone back quite a distance for our feature article. We were fortunate to come across this article in an old, now extinct, Hong Kong Catholic magazine called 'The Rock.' The Brother concerned was a man called Christian and he was Christian by name and Christian in daily life. His love of decorating the chapel was one sign of this. At the time, St Joseph's College was located on Robinson Road in a fine campus building overlooking the Cathedral.

One innovation of Brother Christian that might ring alarm bells among students today was his introduction of monthly examinations! Yet, the results spoke for themselves.

The writer of the article, J.P. Braga, ran his own printing firm and was the first member of the Portuguese community appointed to the Legislative Council.

Herewith the article.

News was received in the Colony last week of the death of Brother Christian who, during the years 1908 to 1913, occupied the position of Director of St Joseph's College in Hong Kong. The sad event occurred in New York on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September. Past pupils and those parents who had the pleasure of Brother Christian's acquaintance will learn the news with much regret.



ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE - ROBINSON ROAD.

Writing of Brother Christian just reminds me of how I became acquainted with the one-time Chief of my Alma Mater. The Colony had been struck by a typhoon in the early autumn of 1908. It was probably Brother Christian's first experience of storms in these regions. The typhoon had spent its full force overnight but had left in its trail a good deal of destruction on the island. St Joseph's College building on Robinson Road did not escape its fury. Brother Christian

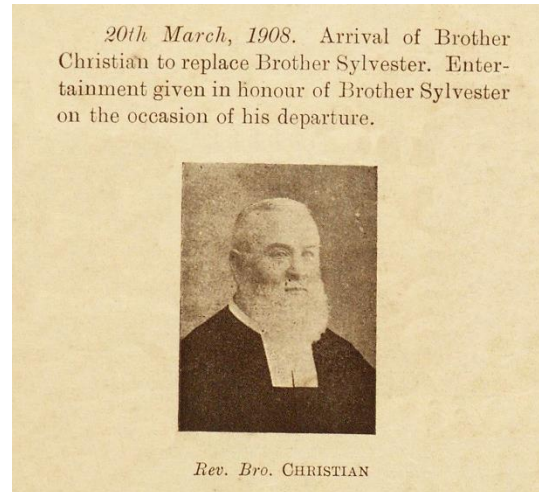
was out the following morning inspecting the damage to the building and was contemplating the havoc in Glenealy ravine when his towering figure and commanding presence attracted my attention on my way to the office.



I introduced myself as a former pupil of the College. Thence began an acquaintance of mutual sympathy and esteem which on the part of the pupil was added to by respect for one who deservedly earn the affection of those whose boys were placed under the safe guardianship of Brother Christian for the five years in which he guided the destinies of the leading Catholic educational institution for boys in Hong Kong.

During those five years Brother Christian established a record of progress and development in all the various departments of the activities of the College, especially so in its religious side, which called forth from the late Rector of the Cathedral (the Rev Fr. P. Galbardi) the remark on Brother Christian's departure, that "Christian, indeed, has been the administration of the departing director of the College!"

Soon after his arrival in Hong Kong Brother Christian became a 'persona gratissima' with the older boys of the school. By the keen interest he took in all sports – athletic and aquatic – he was a great favourite with the boys. It was he who introduced Swedish drill into the College, which provided such an excellent stimulus for the physical development of the boys.



*Bro. Sylvester and Bro. Lawrence with students 1903*

Within the cramped playground to the south of the school building the Director could find little room for physical exercises for his boys. He therefore conceived the idea of using the northern slope of the ground overlooking the Cathedral as a playground for the increasing number of scholars, who by this time had attained a total enrollment of 500.

Ways and means stood in the way of the scheme. A personal canvas of friends of the College, added to by receipts from performances and plays got up by the boys themselves, enabled Brother Christian to carry out his plan. The steel flagstaff erected within the ground was the gift of a past pupil, Mr. I. M. Xavier. The playing field was a very valuable acquisition to the College supplying as it did a need that was greatly felt. Cement tennis courts were laid out. Football medal competitions were inaugurated, and the inter-class monthly matches became a feature of the sporting life of the College. At no time did football receive such encouragement from the staff of teachers and with Brother Paul as the coach, assisted later by Brother Alphonsus, the football teams of the College excelled those of all other schools in friendly competition for the inter-school football trophies. It was in this College square that the Baden Powell Boy Scout Rally was held in the presence of Lady May, wife of the late Governor, and other distinguished guests.

In connection with the plays performed at the College, the late Brother Director trained the boys to public speaking; for he was a great believer in the art of elocution as an aid to clear enunciation and extempore speaking on the part of the boys of the higher standards.



It was Brother Christian, also, who founded the Apostleship of Study in Hong Kong. He took a special interest in the association of boys in this Apostleship, and it was principally through his efforts that considerable progress was made in this branch of the Apostleship of Prayer which later found so many exponents from among his old boys in the present membership of the Catholic Union.

Brother Christian took special pleasure in the decoration of the pretty little College chapel which was beautified with the addition of a life-size statue of Our Lord showing his Sacred Heart and a statue of St Aloysius, the patron of youth. The other additions to the chapel were two statuettes of cherubims. The three large College banners, which were seen in public procession at the St Margaret Mary celebrations on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, were ordered for the

College by Brother Christian.

Of the many improvements to St Joseph's College, begun or projected during Brother Christian's regime, was the new building for the accommodation of the senior classes which were taught with pre-eminent success by Brother Cornelius. The institution of monthly examinations and the award of class prizes for the first and second boys at the top of each class produced happy results. With the aid of Brother Cornelius, the College attained the acme of its success at the Oxford Local Examinations when in 1913 one hundred per cent of passes in a class of fifteen was secured in the stiff examination of the Senior division. Three of the students obtained honours and several others secured distinctions.

Brother Christian's keen interest in the Commercial Course led to instruction being given in double entry book-keeping, commercial arithmetic, shorthand and typewriting. Between the Chief and his right-hand man, Brother Cornelius, Brother Christian produced a group of students whose success in after years can be looked upon with pardonable pride.

By consent of Bishop Pozzoni, Brother Christian succeeded in raising the money for building the roadway between Robinson Road and the Church compound. This short-cut to the Cathedral is greatly appreciated by residents on the upper level.

It remains to be stated that when impaired health necessitated Brother Christian's transference to another climate, his old pupils assembled together in a farewell entertainment to bid him "Good-bye." I recall the occasion when Mr. J. M. Graca Ozorio, the speaker for his school fellows, spoke of the loss which they were about to sustain by the departure of Brother Christian. It was on that occasion that the idea was mooted for the formation of an Old Boys Association, an idea which has since become an accomplished fact.

On his way through to America Brother Christian was accorded a very warm reception by the Brothers' "boys" resident at Shanghai, most of whom had been pupils of St Joseph's College at one time or another. Now that he has gone to his rest, nothing but grateful memories can be recalled of one who, in more ways than one, had molded the character of the boys placed under his care along Christian lines. Brother Christian's life, faithful to the precepts of the Master, was lived so as to exemplify to the youths for whom he had devoted his life the teachings of a greater Leader who had called Brother Christian to His fold for all time. May his soul rest in peace.



J.P. Braga.

From "The Rock", a Catholic Magazine of Hong Kong, November 1920.



## Family Updates

### Sector Conversation

The 3<sup>rd</sup> LEAD Mission Assembly is scheduled for September 2022. In prevailing conditions, it is likely to be online.

The Assembly is an excellent opportunity to reflect on where we are at, evaluate and look forward to the future.

In order to play our part in this exercise, Br Dennis Magbanua set up an organizing team to prepare for a Hong Kong Sector Conversation. Participants would come from the various bodies associated with the Lasallian mission in Hong Kong namely, the Brothers, the Lasallian Education Council (LEC), the Principals Conference, the LEAD Animation and Formation Team (LAFT), School Managers and Staff, the Alumni, and the Lasallian Youth.

After detailed preparations, the first part of the Conversation was held on 5<sup>th</sup> March with a pleasing turnout of 76 participants. Brother Jeffrey Chan was the master of ceremonies.

An appropriate opening prayer was led by our young Brothers. Br Patrick followed with a summary of the propositions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> LEAD Mission Assembly. Br Thomas then explained the aims of the group sharing and introduced the two questions to be addressed. The group sharing was seen to be the highlight of the event and it turned out to be so. The 8 group reports were delivered concisely and to the point. Br Thomas made a synthesis of the reports and then we had our closing prayer.

The reports and synthesis were collated by the writing team and a final follow-up meeting was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Again, there was a marvelous turnout and refinements made to the synthesis. We hope to be in a position to submit a worthwhile report to the Br Visitor and District Council, well in time for the LEAD District Mission Assembly and for the District Chapter.





## Meeting the Bishop

On 6<sup>th</sup> of April, all the Brothers in Hong Kong were invited to a meeting with the recently installed Bishop Stephen Chow, together with his Auxiliary Bishop, Joseph Ha, three Vicars General and the Procurator.

We met at Caritas Centre adjacent to the Cathedral and we were able to share our mutual realities of mission as well as possible directions for the future.

After self-introductions, the Bishop was pleased to note that we have managed to attract some new blood. We introduced our LEAD District and then moved on to our educational mission in Hong Kong.

We touched on the areas of lay partner formation, succession planning, the Catholic and Lasallian life of the schools, relationship with the parishes, local vocations, religious studies teachers, alumni support and any concerns about the longer-term future.

The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere and the Brothers much appreciated this opportunity of sharing.



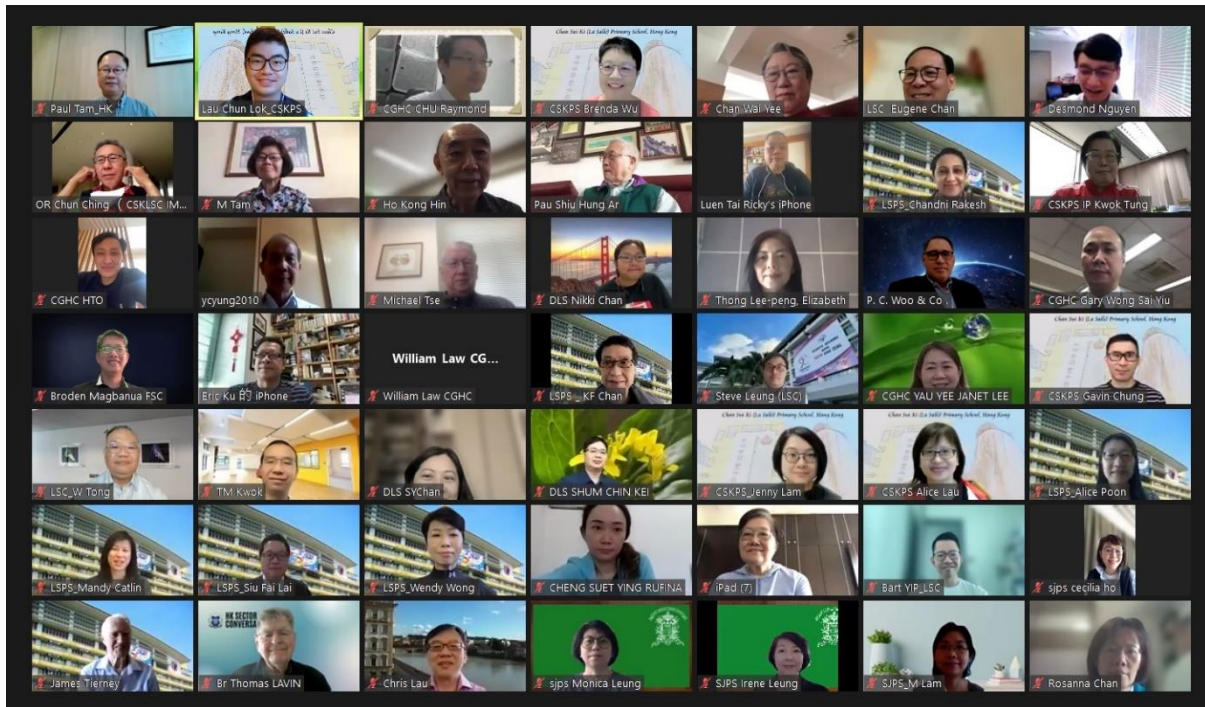
## Managers All

The managers of our eight schools in Hong Kong came together online on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2022 for a professional development programme. The programme was organised by the Sponsoring Body of our schools with the organising team composed of Ms Brenda Wu, Principal of Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School and her colleagues.

Two speakers were invited to address the gathering. The first presenter was Doctor Desmond Nguyen, an old boy of St Joseph's College and Primary and who is currently the Chief Executive of the Kwai Chung Hospital. He is a qualified psychiatrist. His topic was the 'Well-being of our staff and students.' Desmond offered many insights into working with psychiatric patients, especially in the time of the Covid crisis. Insights were obtained into the handling of change, the handling of success and the handling of failure. He also reminded us that we are not facing the Covid pandemic alone.

Our second presenter was Mr Lester Huang, an old boy of La Salle College and Primary and who is currently a Partner and Co-Chairman of a solicitor's firm, Chair of the City University Council, and legal adviser to the Lasallian Family in Hong Kong. His topic was "Risk management in the school context." Lester left us with many points to ponder and gave us a number of areas which require annual and ongoing school review in relation to managing risk. This is very useful for school administrators because it falls under their legal responsibilities. Brother Dennis presented certificates of appreciation to the presenters while Brother Patrick gave some closing remarks.

The programme lasted three hours and was time well spent.



Mr. Lester Huang



Dr. Desmond Nguyen



## Eric Yip Poetry Award



Eric Yip, an old boy of La Salle College, Kowloon, and a first-year undergraduate at the University of Cambridge studying Economics is just 19 years old and has become the youngest ever winner of the National Poetry Competition. Judges Fiona Benson, David Constantine and Rachel Long selected the winning poem from 16,729 poems entered into the competition from 7,012 poets in 100 countries. All the poems were read anonymously by the

judges. Eric wins 5,000 pounds for his First Prize poem.

‘Fricatives’ is a poem that makes its way ‘through the murky and treacherous waters of language, race, migration, and of being heard when “Nobody wants to listen/ to a spectacled boy with a Hong Kong accent.”

Eric said of the win: “It’s possibly the most surprising thing to ever happen to me. I’ve never had anything published before in a journal, let alone win any competition, so I feel very grateful to have my poem recognised in such an inconceivable way. I’m also honoured to contribute a small part to the growing literary space of Hong Kong poetry, which was carved out piece by piece through the wondrous efforts of many Hong Kong poets I admire.”



## Annual Vows Renewal

On 17<sup>th</sup> April 2022, at a simple ceremony held in the Brothers’ Chapel at La Salle College, Brother Edmon Viroomal renewed his annual vows as a La Salle Brother.

Appropriately, it was Easter Sunday. The Mass was said by Father Joseph Haw, S.J. an old boy of De La Salle University, Manila. In his homily, he reminded us to do our best to keep our promises.

Brother Dennis Magbanua received the vows on behalf of Brother Armin Luistro, Visitor of the Lasallian East Asia District and in the presence of all the Brothers in Hong Kong.

Brother Edmon is currently preparing to profess his final vows in the summer. Congratulations to Brother Edmon!

## Principals Conference



The location of the Principals Conference this time was in the Conference Room of the recently acquired campus of St. Joseph's College at 26 Kennedy Road, which is a listed heritage building. Topics discussed included intellectual property of our schools, safeguarding and well-being of our students, risk management etc. After the meeting, the Principals were given a tour of the heritage building as well as the innovation hubs at 7 Kennedy Road. It is hoped that future Principals Conferences can be hosted in turn by our 8 schools.



## LEC Meets

The Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council (LEC) met on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2022 in the Conference Room of La Salle College. The LEC is the official body designated to advise on policy and direction of our educational mission. At this meeting, much time was spent on the annual review of the Viability and Vitality of our schools. A follow-up in this connection will be a review of the management constitutions of all our schools. Other topics included the Intellectual Property of our schools, the Lasallian Mission Fund, the annual Raffle, the Catholic ethos of our schools, and the Christian Brothers Games Day to raise funds for the projected new Lasallian school in Thailand. The next meeting has been scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 at St. Joseph's College.





## Hong Kong has failed its children

Is school closure the best tool to control the spread of Covid and at what cost?

This was the question posted by the South China Morning Post recently. It reads: “There is little debate about society’s role in protecting children in Hong Kong. Before they become fully developed and are old enough to make their own decisions, it is generally accepted that we have a moral obligation to look out and provide for them, as their carers, educators and policymakers, and as society as a whole. The most obvious, of course, is the government’s continuous assault on children’s right to an education; to go to school and learn.”



Form 6 students in Hong Kong have just finished their public examination in early May. The result of this examination will determine whether they can continue their studies in university. Unfortunately, this group of candidates did not have the chance of normal school education in the last three years, because of the on and off closure of schools.

One of our Lasallian schools in Hong Kong cater to some students who cross the border from China to attend school every day. Because of the border lockdown between Hong Kong and China, most of them have never stepped into their school and only know the faces of their classmates and the teachers in a virtual way, via distance learning. Nobody can foresee when the restriction will be lifted.

Schools in Hong Kong are allowed to resume face to face lessons in May under very strict conditions: all students and teachers must take the Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) every morning and results shown before they can enter the school premises. For the resumption of whole day schooling and to conduct extra-curricular activities, the schools need to prove 90% of their students have been vaccinated, which is a target very hard to reach.

Despite all these hurdles, most parents feel relieved that schooling has restarted, especially parents of children from low- income families. Their children are the ones who suffer most when schools are suspended, and lessons are all online. They do not have enough support, like suitable learning devices, connectivity and a quiet learning environment.

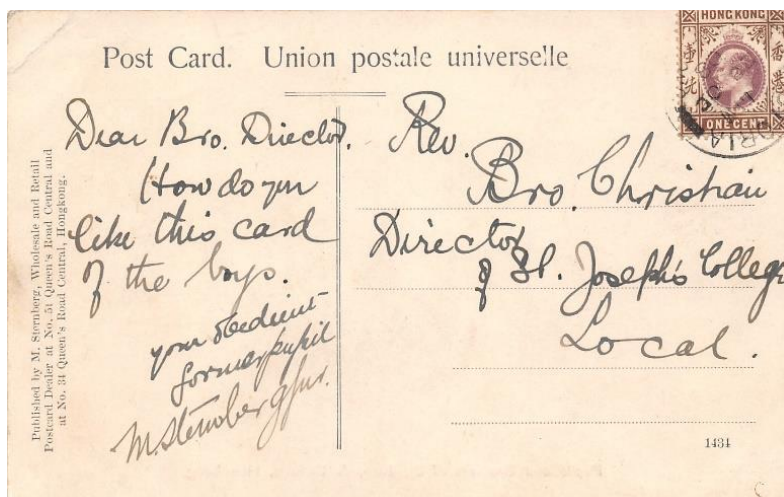
Policy makers in Hong Kong need to pay great respect to the rights of our children – our future!

## Blast from the past



Pupils and Brothers of St. Joseph's College, Hongkong.

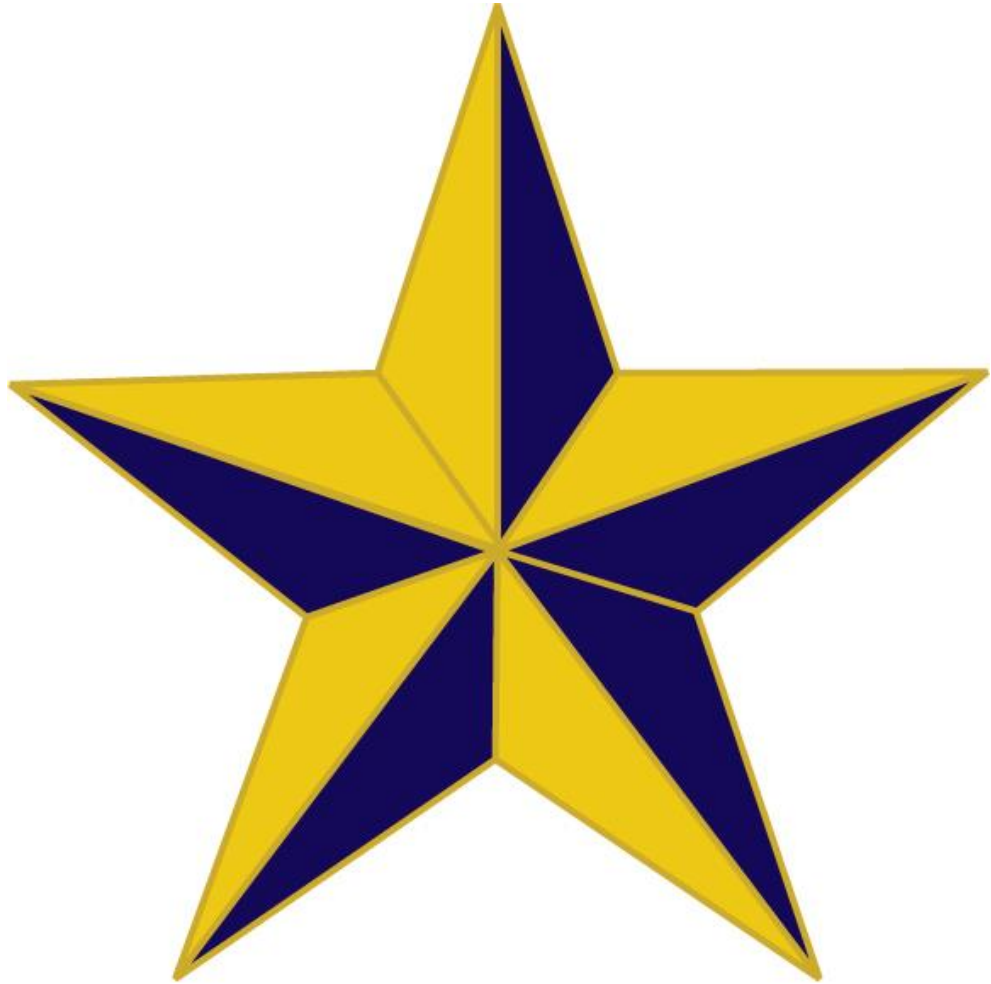
This marvellous postcard picture was sent to Brother Christian, Director of St. Joseph's College, in October 1908. The location was at the Robinson Road campus, overlooking the Cathedral. There are 9 Brothers depicted here. We know at least one of them, Brother Paul O'Connell. There is a mix of races among the students. Some of them are wearing traditional Chinese dress.



The postcard came from an old boy called M Sternberg who was the largest postcard publisher at the time. It is also noteworthy that the stamp is for one cent and shows a profile of the head of King Edward VII.

The postcard came up for auction in 2017 and was obtained at a price of HKD 5500 by an old boy of St. Joseph's College, who donated the postcard to the school.





Great Things Are Possible



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