



## **The Gateway**

**Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin**

**December 2010**

**Twenty-seventh Issue**

## Welcome

Speech Days, Sports Days, Walkathons, Cross Country and AGMs are the order of the day in our schools during the month of November. It is regarded as the busiest of many busy months in the year.

Christmas comes as a welcome break, hopefully for spirit, soul and body. Our Christmas holidays start on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December and we are back to school on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2011.

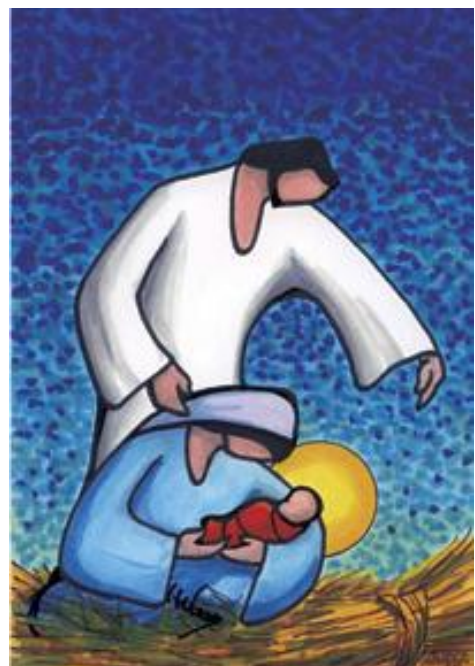


In this issue of The Gateway we feature Brother Hubert Pilz. He may not be that well known but for those who did know him his life sketch will bring back happy memories.

Our Oriental Flavour piece will give you a taste of something peculiar to Hong Kong. The Cross Border Students are often referred to as the CBS. What sacrifices parents make in order to secure a good education for their children!

In the months of September/October our Motherhouse called all Lasallians to pray for peace, so necessary in the world today. In the midst of the pre Christmas commercial frenzy, may we find time in our hearts and minds to welcome the Prince of Peace.

和平  
PEACE



## Brother of the Month Brother Hubert Pilz 1906 -1980



In the 1920's, a number of young German Brothers were sent on the missions to the Far East, to Ceylon, Burma, Manila, Hong Kong, Penang and Singapore. Many were to meet their sad fate at the Japanese Massacre in Manila in February 1945, but those who survived continued to make a very solid contribution to the Lasallian world of education. Among them was Brother Hubert Pilz.

He was born on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 1906 at Bung in Saxony. He was never a robust young man probably because of the hardships endured during the First World War (1914-1918). The disturbed state of the country meant that many in Germany were starving. Brother Hubert once recalled how the only food he could get was a handful of straw taken from the haggard, boiled, and given to him for breakfast before he went to school.

We are not sure what prompted him to join the Brothers but he made his Novitiate in 1923 and Scholasticate in 1924. He was earmarked for the missions in the East and so was first sent to the Brothers' Community in London to learn English and even did some teaching in the school. He learned fast. Despite his youth, he had no problems with class management. Indeed, if for some urgent reason, he had to absent himself from his class, the students would apply themselves to the work he had set, just as if he were with them.

At this early age he also showed signs of being attracted to the presence of God, a strong Lasallian trait. At Christmas and the great Feast-days of the Church he spared no pains in helping with the decoration of the chapel. He took delight in making the Christmas crib. He had a talent for craft and would make beautiful objects to adorn the chapel and statues of Our Lady.

In 1927 he was one of the first of the German groups to come out East. He was posted to Manila (then part of the District of Penang). He was a born teacher with a flair for organising, but never content to follow the stereotype approach. He constantly tried to construct some initiative, something new. In his short stay in Manila, 1927-1932, he made great personal impact on his pupils. Forty years after, they remembered him and on his visit at their invitation, he was presented with this plaque by his alumni.

**TESTIMONIAL OF RECOGNITION  
IS AWARDED TO  
REV. BROTHER HUBERT, F.S.C.**

**FOR HIS FORTY YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE YOUTH OF ASIA (PHILIPPINES, HONG KONG, INDIA, BURMA). WITH GREAT JOY IS THIS RECOGNITION GIVEN ON THE OCCASION OF BROTHER'S VISIT 'HOME' TO MANILA. WHERE, FORTY YEARS AGO, HE BEGAN HIS ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER. MABUHAY!**

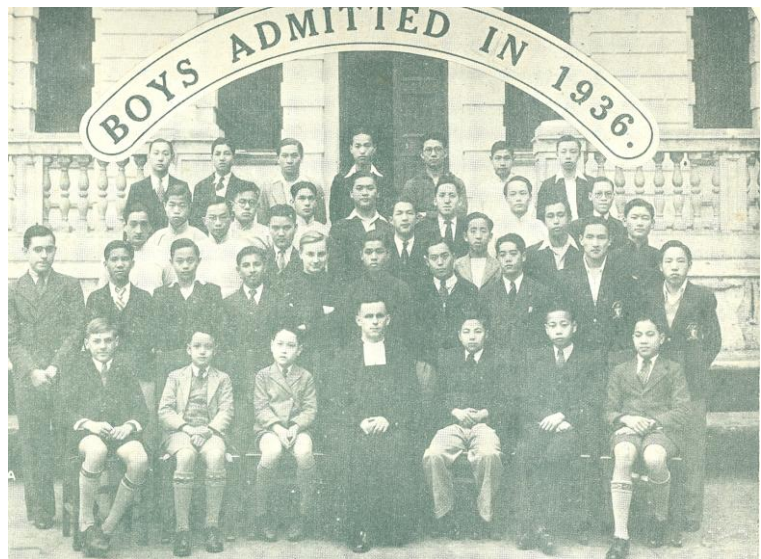
**THE ALUMNI**

**March, 5, 1967.**

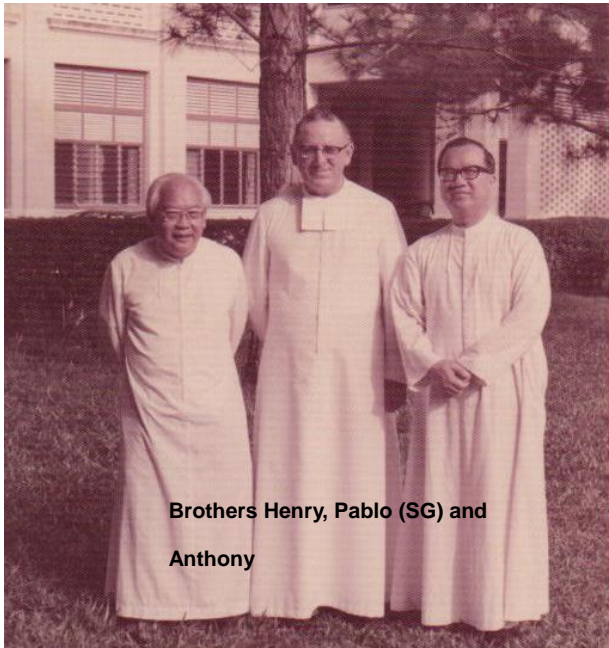
**signed: Rene L. Kahn**

His next tour of duty was in St Joseph's College, Hong Kong, where he taught and was prefect of boarders from 1932 to 1937. It was an exciting time, with preparation for and celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the College. One Brother who was with him at the time recalls:

“He was a gifted organist and on Sundays used to play in the Cathedral at High Mass and Benediction. He took great pains to make the Boarding Department distinctive. Most of the Boarders came from overseas: Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Indochina, and a few from Japan. The Boarding Department then was the main source of income. Teachers



were not paid by the Government, but by the College, and outside the low school fees charged, the Government gave a small capita grant. St Joseph's Boarding Department soon became attractive to parents: famous for its games facilities, clubroom with billiard table, concerts, choir of young boarders, musical sketches, plays during the year. The Y.M.C.A. held an Annual Basketball Tournament and Brother Hubert raised a team which won several Championships over the years.”



Brothers Henry, Pablo (SG) and  
Anthony

Brother Henry Pang was a student in St Joseph's at the time and wrote as follows:

“As a young Brother, Brother Hubert was versatile, capable and possessed boundless energy. As a result he was given a number of jobs which would have taxed a saint with the power of bi-location. He was Prefect of Boarders, Supervisor of the Lower School, Community Econome and Sportsmaster. In spite of the multiplicity and variety of activities occupying his attention, Brother Hubert's loyalty and love for the

Institute never made him lose sight of priorities. He showed a deep interest in local vocations even in those far off days. He found time every week to gather a number of promising boys in the Chapel before the Blessed Sacrament to speak to them about vocations.

I was fortunate enough to be one of those on whom he bestowed his attention in those days and I know at least of one other Brother who is in the Institute today and doing valuable work, who, after God, also owes his vocation to Brother Hubert.” The other Brother being referred to was Brother Anthony Cheung who responded as follows:

“Yes, Brother Henry, I am that one; and yes, under God and my father I owe my Lasallian vocation to good Brother Hubert.

It was in 1935 that I first became, with lots of boys my age, a great admirer of Brother Hubert. I am no sportsman, but it was Br Hubert's basketballers, relay runners, tennis players, athletes that made me and others look up to Br Hubert as well as his reputation as a Science Master and his job as Prefect of Boarders. I still remember how Br Matthias then Dtr of SJC HK and he and the winning inter-school relay team (basketball team, athletes) would come round the classes; and amid loud applause from us the lower forms kids, our heroes poured orange crush into the large trophy (Cup) and would share the drink in our presence. Also the motorcade honking all the way from Caroline Hill along Queen's Rd East and up Garden Rd to celebrate yet another Interschool victory! Br Matthias and Br Hubert made us love the School so! And so with Br Henry and other Catholic pupils we trooped into the Chapel or to the

Science room to hear our great Brother talk of winning races for God! And some of us were 'caught'! And we went to La Salle Juniorate! Thanks Be To God!"

Brother Felix Sheehan also recalled those far off days:

"I first enjoyed the company of Brother Hubert for about six months in 1937 before he left for the Second Novitiate. I had just come to Hong Kong and was very impressed by Brother Hubert both as a religious and a teacher. Held in high regard by his Superiors he performed with great efficiency the functions of Prefect of Boarders, Senior Science Master, Sportsmaster and Organist. Highly esteemed by Brothers, teachers, pupils and the public, he tempered the qualities of discipline and efficiency with humour and kindness. Towards us younger Brothers with whom he was charged, on rest days, to the Country House at Castle Peak, he showed great generosity and understanding."

In 1937 he was selected to do the Second Novitiate at Lembecq, Belgium, a sign that the Superiors thought highly of him and that he was expected to make a major contribution to the Lasallian mission. On its completion he was posted to Rangoon and he was to spend the next 28 years in Burma as teacher and Director of Lasallian schools in Rangoon, Mandalay and Maymyo. St Paul's High School, Rangoon, was the largest Lasallian school in the world at the time, catering to about 5,000 pupils.

One of his students, who was to become Brother James, remembers:

"It was in 1947 that I first met Brother Hubert. He was then the Director of St Paul's Rangoon. He was very kind and charitable to poor boys. It was because of his encouragement that I am a Brother today. I can never forget the advice he gave me as a boy. 'You want to be a Brother some day? Say your prayers well daily and go to the sacraments as often as you can.'"



Rev. Brothers & Teaching Staff of St Paul's High School Rangoon Burma c.1951

Brother Austin De Lemos takes up the story:

“It was in December 1950 that I first met Brother Hubert. He was then the Director of St Paul’s High School, Rangoon, Burma. He received me with open arms, a warm heart and a gracious, welcoming smile. That impression remained with me, and grew during the thirteen years that I was in Burma.

Brother Hubert’s community was a happy and well-integrated one. He not only directed his community, he led his Brothers. He was a kind, understanding and generous Director. One of his aims seemed to be to make community life happy. He was Director of St Paul’s for many years; but he also was the Director of St Peter’s High School, Mandalay, and of St Albert’s High School, Maymyo; and in each of these he directed and led a happy community.

Brother Hubert was a very efficient Director of a school. As administrator, disciplinarian, schoolman, and science teacher, he was quite up to the mark. Teachers and pupils knew well that what he wanted of them was application to their respective duties. His kindness and understanding were, generally, not taken advantage of; and, when it was necessary to do so, he did not hesitate to call the offending parties to order. Under his direction, progress in academics, sports and the school’s moral tone were maintained and heightened.



In April 1965, during the long vacation, like a bolt from the blue, came the news that all the schools had been taken over by the Government. Some eight or ten months before this, all the Irish and English Brothers were told to leave Burma. This, surely, was a hint of what was yet to come; but, in the meantime, things continued to

function normally, with only an occasional faint rumour of nationalisation. When the ‘Big Grab’ did occur and the Brothers lost their school buildings, furniture, books, science laboratories, music and band apparatus and practically all the money in hand, the shock was considerable and painful.” It was with a heavy heart that Brother Hubert had to say farewell to the land and the people he loved. The parting, in 1965, seemed like the end of the road.

His old stomping ground, Hong Kong, came to the rescue and received him warmly. In 1966 he was assigned to De La Salle Secondary School in the New Territories, a school close to the border with mainland China and which had just opened its doors the year before. Here he would spend 13 years as teacher, Director and school Supervisor.

As usual he endeared himself to both staff and students. One endearing trait as Supervisor was to announce occasional half days out of the blue. It soon became apparent that these half days tended to be on Fridays. Brother Hubert would then retire to the Brother's house, enjoy a whiskey before lunch, followed by siesta. The staff and students did not object in the least! As Brother Felix remarked, 'he made life happy by his wit, and droll humour and many a prank.'



All his life Brother Hubert had never shirked work. After his so-called 'retirement' he was still doing a tremendous full day job in Fanling, teaching Chemistry and Music. He also took care of the catering and keeping the accounts of the Community. So it must have caused him some stress when he found his general health deteriorating. He

had no physical infirmity or pain but became a bit slow on the legs. He could hobble around on a stick and tried to remain his normal, cheerful self.

In May, 1979, he was relieved of his duties and responsibilities in De La Salle, Fanling, and, together with Brother Paul O'Connell, took up residence in the new La Salle College Community, Kowloon. With up-to-date accommodation, Chapel, Refectory, Lounge, and Library, all on the flat, he was very happy.

His months of retirement were pleasant. He could amble around without difficulty with a walking stick. God was good, his eyesight was not impaired, and he could watch T.V. and read. He had a mixed batch of books on his desk: "The Wise Men From The West", "The Honourable School Boy", "Live Your Vocation". He had a word and a smile for all and was determined to cause the least amount of trouble.

He had no severe pain, was never in bed sick, and was up every morning faithfully for the Chapel exercises at 5:45 a.m. Six days before his actual death, he did not appear in the Chapel for morning-prayer. Brother Director paid him a visit and was a bit alarmed. Brother Hubert seemed to have a heavy flu with heavy breathing. The



doctor was called and he diagnosed heart trouble. He was placed in the intensive care ward in St Teresa's Hospital. The chest condition quickly cleared up and the doctor thought his condition had so much improved that he could go to the ordinary ward. A doctor visited him very early in the morning on 4<sup>th</sup> March and found him much improved, but at 9:25 a.m. the poor man's heart stopped beating. His death was peaceful but its suddenness came as a shock to the Community.

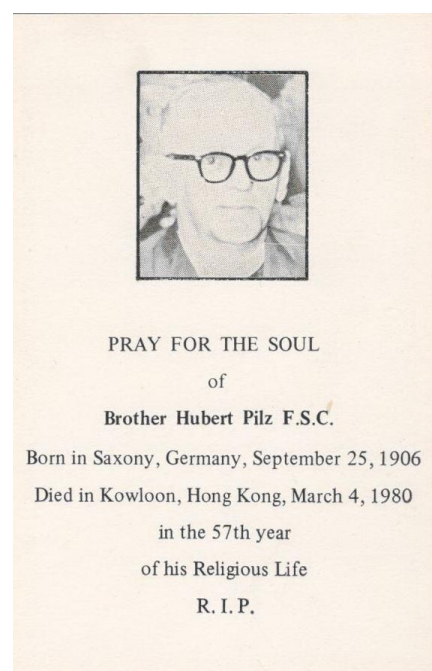


“I was very much surprised at the turn-out at the graveside,” wrote Brother Michael Curtin. “He had no connection with La Salle College, never taught here. Old Boys, Teachers, pupils did not know him. Even his connections with St. Joseph's was way back in 1932, forty-eighty years ago. But the cemetery in Happy Valley was crowded with priests, nuns, the elderly, old-timers, Burmese doctors, business men and of course, pupils and staff from De La Salle, Fanling.”

Brother Hubert was a very sincere man, a man of very solid religious conviction. Though not very talkative he was very genial; he would listen to your jokes and laugh, and remember amusing incidents of by-gone days in Hong Kong, the Philippines and Burma. Always a charitable man, he never gossiped. He was a mature man, never grouchy or over-sensitive, or sorry for himself. He believed in Community life and the sharing of kindness.

### Curriculum Vitae of Brother Hubert Pilz

1923	Received Holy Habit
1923-1927	Studies
1927-1931	La Salle College, Manila
1932-1937	St. Joseph's College, Hong Kong
1938-1965	St. Paul's, Rangoon
1966-1979	De La Salle Secondary School, NT, Hong Kong
1979-1980	La Salle College, Hong Kong



## Family Updates

### Visit of Bro John D’Cruz



Bro John continues to follow up with a group of teachers for Lasallian formation. This time the concentration was on the Educational Philosophy of St. La Salle. Some schools also availed of the opportunity to request Bro John to give staff or student presentations.

### Speech Days

Three of our schools held their Speech and Prize-Giving Days in November. First off the mark was La Salle College and the Guest of Honour was Brother Pat Lynch who gave a rousing speech. Brother Pat is the CEO of all New Zealand Catholic Schools. Among other things, he reminded the students that their attitude determines their altitude! Next up was Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College who invited Professor Timothy Tong, President of the Polytechnic University, as their Guest of Honour. La Salle Primary completed the trio and Brother Steve Hogan, Principal of La Salle College, did the honours there. By tradition, Speech Days are regarded as the most important dates on the school calendar and demand immense preparation.



## Birthday Boys



Brother Lawrence Blake began his missionary life way back nearly 60 years ago and has not looked back since. He served in both Malaysia and Singapore but Hong Kong claimed him for most of his life. In comparison, Brother Patrick Tierney is a young chap, starting out as a missionary 46 years ago. He has spent all his missionary life in Hong Kong. Recently they celebrated their

birthdays and thanked God for his providential care.

## The Cork Connection

On the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1929, a young Brother called Matthias arrived in Hong Kong to serve in St Joseph's College. He was to take over its direction the following year. 71 years later, his great grandnephew, Rudi Lyne, paid us a visit. He and his wife, Fong Fong, are tracing the footsteps of Brother Matthias, through Malaysia, Singapore and now Hong Kong. They are understandably intrigued and excited by their discoveries to date. We wish them luck as they continue their quest.



## ***School Humour: Some parental excuses for children's absence from school and taking liberties with the English language in the process.***

- 1. My son is under the doctor's care and should not take P.E. today. Please execute him.*
- 2. Please excuse Mary for being absent. She was sick and I had her shot.*
- 3. Dear School: Please excuse John being absent on Jan.28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and also 33.*
- 4. Please excuse Harriet for missing school yesterday. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off the porch, and when we found it Monday, we thought it was Sunday.*

## Peace Prayers

In response to the Institute's call for Prayer days of Peace, St Joseph's College students and teachers recited prayers composed by their fellow students and staff. Here are some examples.

**"Lord please help everyone in the world stay away from evil, especially discrimination and bullying. May your peace be with all your people, especially those who are mentally and physically sick.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis."**

--- Terence CHOY (Form 4E)

**"We pray for peace between China and Japan. May both countries refrain from violence and solve their conflicts through dialogue."**

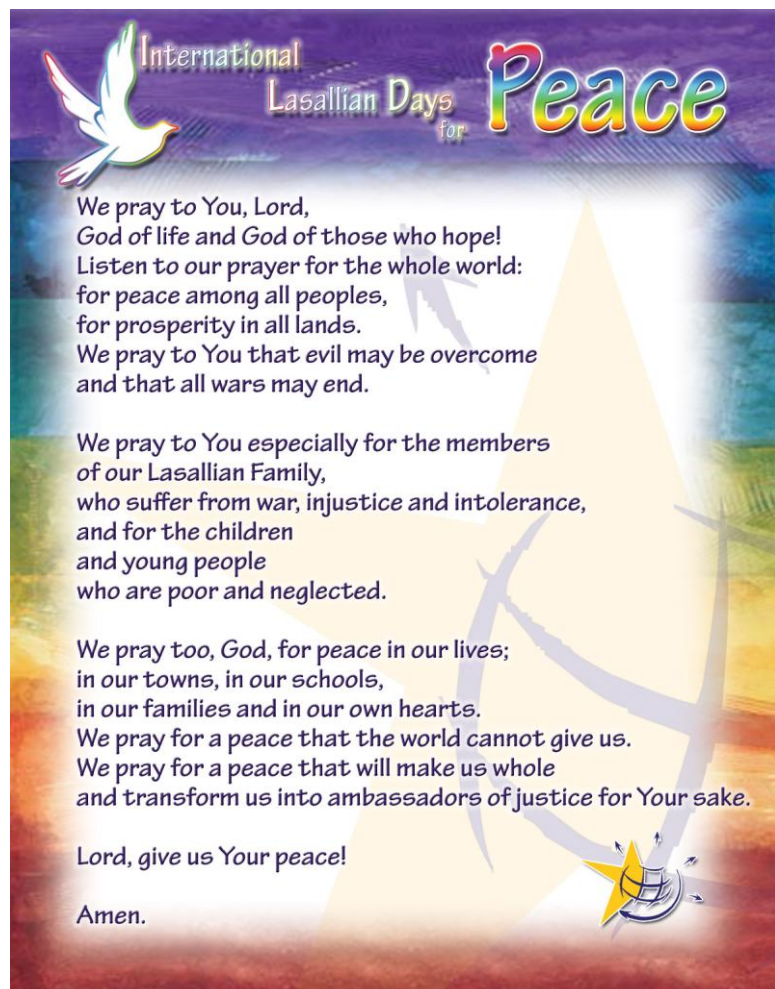
--- Zackary YUEN (Form 3C)

**"We pray for inner peace of all citizens of the earth. Let them be filled with blessing, not anger. May we raise our children well so that they will create a better world."**

--- Mr. Benson KWAN (Staff)

**"Lord, we pray for courage, wisdom and the will to be peace-makers. May we reconcile with people around us so as to build your Kingdom of harmony, justice and peace."**

--- Mr. Christopher LO (Staff)



## Oriental Flavour Thirsting for Knowledge



Chun Yu, a Form 3 boy, starts his days at 5:30 am. Chun Yu lives in the Lo Wu District in Shenzhen, China. Unlike other students in his village who usually walk to school, Chun Yu takes a local bus to Lo Wu Control Point, the main border check point between the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone of China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is one of the busiest border crossings in the world with almost four hundred thousand commuters per day.

The Control Point opens at 6:30 am. Chun Yu usually meets his classmate Han and other schoolmates there. After clearing immigration procedures on the China side, he and his friends need to cross a bridge on foot to the Hong Kong Immigration counters. This time they use their Hong Kong Identity Cards like all other Hong Kong citizens. They can then take the East Rail Line train to Sheung Shui and from there, get to their school by mini-bus or taxi. The whole journey takes about two hours.

Chun Yu and Han's classmates, Catherine, Suzie and Ivy are luckier. Instead of making such a tiring journey every day, their families rent a place for them in the small town centre near the school. They only return to their families on Sundays and holidays.



Chun Yu and his classmates are among the 79 'Cross Border Students' at De La Salle Secondary School, a spacious and beautiful school in Sheung Shui, New Territories, Hong Kong. It is located a few kilometers from the mainland China border. According to the Principal, Mr. Eric Ku, the school started to enroll a small number of 'Cross Border Students' 6 years ago and now about 13% of the

students in the school cross the border daily.

Most of the 'Cross Border Students' encounter certain difficulties when they start their schooling in Hong Kong. Many of them are not fluent in Cantonese, the medium of instruction dialect used in most Hong Kong schools, and their English is usually below standard. This language barrier sometimes causes tension and leads to teasing. The daily journey across the border is tiring and very expensive. Many students cannot stay after school for extra-curricular activities or supplementary lessons and this to a certain extent affects their study and social development.

At De La Salle, the staff, alumni and students of the school have worked closely to help the students in need. Traffic subsidies, English tuition, social service participation, personal counseling etc. are provided to meet individual needs. Mr. Fung, teacher in charge of counseling, reflects that the positive learning attitude of the Cross Border Students has a good influence on the local students and that he is happy to see that they study harmoniously together. The Lasallian spirit of community is taught and practised in this way.



Chun Yu and his schoolmates in De La Salle are among the approximately ten thousand children who live in China but come to Hong Kong for schooling. Believe it or not, at this point in time, 2681 of them are actually kindergarten students. Some of them are hardly able to see over the immigration counters. Their daily journey is a part of the unique history of Hong Kong. Under the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle, children with Hong Kong parents are entitled to 12 years of free education.

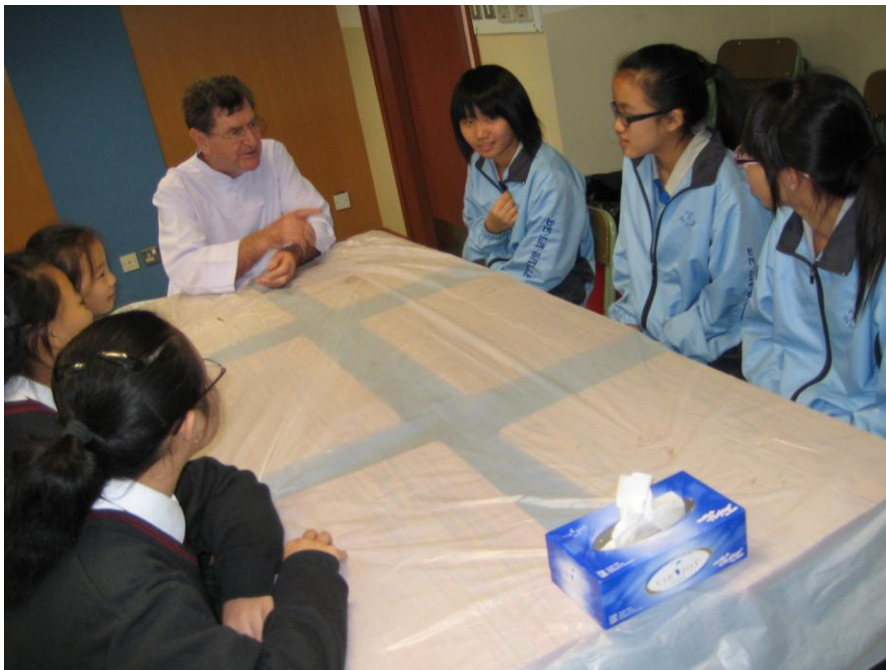
Cross border marriage is quite common. While the Hong Kong based fathers earn the family salaries, the mothers and children stay in China where the mothers can take advantage of lower living costs. Most of the mothers are waiting for a one way permit, the document issued by the China authorities permitting a person to leave the mainland and enter Hong Kong. The parents send their children to Hong Kong schools in advance so that there will be

fewer discrimination and adaptability problems when the whole family moves to Hong Kong.

With the increasing socio-economic linkages between Hong Kong and the Mainland, more people from Hong Kong choose to live in Shenzhen and other parts of mainland China because the housing is cheaper and more spacious. However, they prefer Hong Kong when it comes to their children's education. They send their children to schools in Hong Kong to enhance their study skills, career potential and cultural adaptability. Parents believe that all such inconveniences and effort are worthwhile for the sake of a better future for their children.



Chun Yu and his friends hardly knew anything about De La Salle School, much less about the Lasallian spirit, when they were allocated there 3 years ago. They have now become quite familiar with Lasallian language and values instilled by the school, including the three pillars of Faith, Zeal and Community. Hopefully, one day, they will act as ambassadors, promoting Lasallian values in Mainland China.



Don't be fooled. Not all the Cross Border Students are girls.

## Blast from the Past “The P&O Canton”

Up until the 1960's nearly all missionaries to the East came and returned by ship. In pre-war days the voyage could be long and arduous, made more so because the missionaries were expected to wear their full regalia. In the case of the De La Salle Brothers this meant either black robes or black suits which attracted the blistering sun. The passage by ship then was long, hot and steamy.

Conditions gradually improved after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Here is a postcard of the ship in which Brother Paul O'Connell sailed for home leave in 1951. The ship, S.S.Canton, belonged to the P&O Line, that is, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, London. Brother Paul had arrived in Hong Kong in 1907 and must have taken a few ships in his time.



The Canton was the last passenger ship to join the P&O fleet before the outbreak of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. During the War she had perhaps the most arduous service of any of the P&O liners. After a full overhaul and refurbishment in 1946 she had the honour of re-establishing passenger services to the Far East in October 1947.

The route that Brother Paul would have taken from London was via Southampton, Gibraltar, Marseille, Naples, Port Said, Suez Canal, Aden, Bombay, Colombo, Penang, Singapore, Hong Kong.

The Canton continued in service for a number of years before being retired in 1962 and sold for scrapping in Hong Kong.

