



**The Gateway**

**Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin**

**January 2011**

**Twenty-eight Issue**

## Welcome

Hard on the heels of the solar new year comes the lunar new year. We say goodbye to the Tiger and welcome the Rabbit, the fourth animal in the Chinese zodiac. By all accounts the rabbit is a clever, charming fellow and should put a pep in our step for 2011.



I don't know if Brother Patrick Toner was born in the year of the rabbit but he certainly had his share of intelligence and charm. It is heartening to find that he is still remembered with affection and gratitude after all these years.

The issue of human rights is ongoing in a number of countries, including China. Liu Xiaobo's last public statement will resonate in the hearts of many. That empty chair in Oslo remains a powerful image.

Some of our schools hold mid-term exams before Christmas while others are hard at it now. Much store is put on internal school exams especially since, as of next year, there will be no Hong Kong public exam until the final year of secondary school.



Here is a Lasallian touch to Chinese New Year.

The couplet is a typical form of Chinese blessing at this time. It conveys the wish for good luck, long life and good fortune.

A very happy Lunar New Year to our readers!

## Brother of the Month

Brother Patrick Toner 1892-1968



Francis Edward Toner was born on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1892 in County Armagh, Northern Ireland. In 1906, at the age of fourteen, he went to the Juniorate of the De La Salle Brothers, Castletown, County Laois, to begin his training with a view to becoming a De La Salle Brother. On the 30<sup>th</sup> August 1908 he took the habit of the Brothers and proceeded to further studies in the Scholasticate. At first he was known as Brother Joseph but later was called Patrick.

At this time a number of young Irish Brothers, on the completion of their Scholasticate, volunteered for service in the Far East. Among them was Brother Patrick. According to an early companion he “was an exemplary student in the Juniorate and later in the Scholasticate”. In September 1911 he was first sent to La Salle College, Waterford for a two year course in Teacher Training and then, at the age of 21, he left his native shores for the Far East.

He was assigned to Burma (Myanmar) where he continued his studies in the Brothers’ Community, with special emphasis on the study of English Literature. He taught English very successfully and wrote the language himself with ease and elegance. However, he did not confine himself to Literature, but taught Geography, Chemistry and Mathematics, also with marked success. As Supervisor of the classes he was most helpful to the young Brothers. “He would spend an hour at a time”, writes one of them, “apparently examining the boys but actually showing me how to teach”.

Burma was a far cry from where he was born. It was a land of maroon-clad Buddhists and splendid pagodas, and also of elephants, tigers, pythons, scorpions and large ants. The people had inherited a natural courtesy, appreciated education, and the students



FOOTBALL FIRST XI 1937  
with Rev. Brother Patrick and Mr. Paul Dick.

were keen. Small wonder that missionaries generally fell in love with the country and its people. Brother Patrick taught with much success in St Patrick's High School, Moulmein, and in St Paul's, Rangoon. In 1931 he began his career as a school Principal, first in St Paul's which had one of the largest school populations in the Institute. This lasted until 1942 when he was transferred as Principal to De La Salle Industrial School, Twante, a school that catered to the needs of the poor and of orphans. The Second World War caused some disruptions but overall the Twante community was left in peace.

He could have been forgiven for thinking that, after so many fruitful years in Burma, he would see out his educational career there. The authorities among the Brothers had other ideas. And so it was that, in October 1947, he was transferred to La Salle College, Kowloon, Hong Kong, taking charge of the school on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

In Kowloon, he and the whole school community could also have been forgiven for looking forward to a time of fair winds and smooth sailing after the disruptions of the War. They were in for a rude shock. On July 16th 1949, Brother Patrick was officially notified that the College would be requisitioned by the British Military for use as a hospital. And so began the school exodus to Perth Street, to temporary hutments erected by the army. The 'exile' was supposed to last eighteen months. In the event, it lasted 9 years.

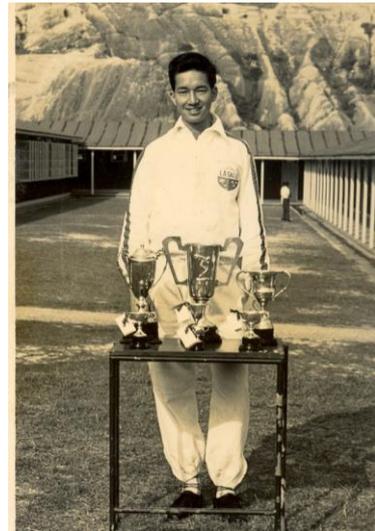
The material setting of the new campus may have been less than satisfactory but school spirit was not dampened.

Brother Patrick's approach was effective and stimulating. He was regarded as a paragon of knowledge. He would frequently take the lessons of teachers on sick leave. No matter what the



subject, Science, Mathematics, Language, he would proceed with the lesson. He would probably have tried his hand at Chinese given half a chance!

The quiet, steady pair of hands paid dividends. School activities did not suffer much and academic results were kept at a high level. Sports flourished, led by the finest athlete in the territory at the time, Stephen Xavier. Despite the loss of the large chapel the religious life of the school was well catered for and there was much participation during the Marian Year of 1954.



“He was the most dedicated and diligently devoted Principal I have worked for. Very learned and always happy to share with us his bountiful knowledge,” Mr. Henry Lau, a veteran teacher recalled. “He was also a great disciplinarian. Teachers and students had to keep on high alert all the time. But he was also very generous when teachers approached him with all kinds of problems, even financial ones.”



Brother Patrick pursued a “hands-on” policy in everything. He expected nothing but the best from teachers and students. He conducted classroom inspection daily, sometimes doing three to four “rounds” a day, and carried out teacher evaluation himself. He would personally scrutinize the setting of all examination papers to make sure they were comprehensive and of high quality. Many a time he took on the marking of examination papers himself, especially in English and Mathematics. He enforced a strict policy on student promotion. He would also prepare notes on English Literature. For example, he wrote an essay for the upper form students on the popularity of Gray’s Elogy in a Country Churchyard. How nice it would be if we could retrieve that document. The 1958 school magazine prints a poem contributed by Brother Patrick entitled “How Rumour gets Around” and a witty piece of work it is.

He would sometimes change his shoes, which made too much noise, and wear sneakers, and then quietly do his rounds of the school. Though the boys' bush telephone would normally work, he could sometimes be right behind an unsuspecting pupil. His nickname, golden-hair cat (金絲貓), seems to have been well chosen.

The benevolent side of Brother Patrick was shown in different ways. One such had to do with academic awards. For some years the school had no Speech or Prize-giving Days. At the end of the year, just before the final examination, he would go around to all classes from Form 1 to 4 and personally give away his "prizes", exempting the top 5 students in each class from the final examination! This unique system of awards was never forgotten, especially by the recipients.



One of the students who happened to be in the junior forms at the time, and who was later to become a world-renowned iconic figure, was Bruce Lee. Bruce was hyper active, a veritable dynamo, a little dragon. The Head of the junior classes, Brother Henry Pang, did a pretty good job of reining in his exuberant spirits but occasionally Bruce became too much even for Brother Henry who would then send Bruce up to Brother Patrick's office for cooling down. Brother Patrick, a man of few words, would point to a chair and Bruce would sit there quietly until Brother Patrick considered he had cooled down sufficiently. He would then be sent back to class.

All through these years Brother Patrick was directly caught up in the efforts to wrest back the grand old school on Boundary Street from the British army. As late as 1956 we find him writing to the relevant Government department: "We feel we have a right

to expect from Government something more substantial, commodious and convenient than the flimsy structures we have had to work in during the past seven years.” He would, however, already be retired before his efforts bore fruit and would not witness the celebratory return to the old school.

Brother Patrick was a quiet, reserved, philosophical type of person but when he spoke he did so with authority. He commanded absolute obedience of the students who held him in awe. He liked animals, including cats, and some people said he moved like a cat! This kind of atmosphere was not conducive to indiscipline and so, by and large, the school ran like a well-oiled engine. A teacher recalls: “We used to call Brother Patrick ‘Gum See Mao’ because of his blond hair. Whenever we saw his golden head rising from his chair in the Principal’s Office or through the windows, everybody got down to work and behaved.”

As one of his students put it: “In the years he was with us as Principal, we never heard any speeches from him; he educated us simply by walking the corridors.”

After forty six years on the missions in the East, Brother Patrick returned to his native country in August 1957 to spend his remaining years. He was appointed to St. Patrick’s Community in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where he remained until his death in September, 1968. We are indebted to a Brother who lived with him during his retirement years for much of what follows.



Brother Patrick was not the man to sit back and enjoy a well-earned rest after devoted and arduous service in the Institute. Immediately at the start of the new year he took over part of the Office work dealing with the school accounts. His quiet and unobtrusive efficiency much endeared him to everyone on the staff. Nothing was too much trouble for Brother Patrick to attend to; his only desire was to oblige and render service to everyone. If some invoice didn’t seem to be in order or if there was some other such irregularity, he soon got it straightened out and with a charming smile explained the discrepancy to the particular individual concerned.

He was full of fun and thoroughly enjoyed a witty joke or literary pun. A serene gait was one of his outstanding traits. The writer lived with Brother Patrick for about ten years and never in all that time had he seen him in a bad mood or heard from him the slightest criticism of any person or detail of community life.



He was a deeply religious man. For him there was no formalism or externality of religion. Living religious life was something to be truly happy about. His regularity at all the spiritual exercises was something, I am sure, every young scholastic passing through the Community must have admired and benefited from. Right up to the last few months before his death Brother Patrick was to be seen making his way feebly along the corridor to the Oratory or community room for one or other of the Community exercises. I think it was with no little difficulty that the Director was able to persuade him, towards the end, to make his exercises and prayers where and whenever he was able.

Reading was Brother Patrick's pastime; and when he suffered from a stroke in 1963 its cruelest effect was its depriving him of this facility during his leisure hours. He was an extremely well-read man, but if some wag in the Community tried to draw him into argument, Brother Patrick always countered with a few gentle words and a pleasant smile.

Another of his amiable characteristics was his great fondness for animals. When he took his stroll around the grounds of an evening, as was his wont, the school dog watched for him and scampered off before him leaping and bouncing with delight. Even the farmyard cats, almost a dozen of them, rather wild and completely undomesticated outdoor creatures, rushed along the path to meet him at the very sound of his footsteps. Of course Brother Patrick always had some little tit-bit for them.

Brother Patrick made a wonderful recovery after a serious stroke in the summer of 1963. But a year or two later he began to get somewhat feeble. Nevertheless he tried to keep up an outward appearance of fitness and cheerfulness and never complained or sought the slightest extra attention. When some members of the Community

offered him some little service or other, the usual reply was, "Oh! That will be alright, don't trouble, you are too busy. I'll manage alright".

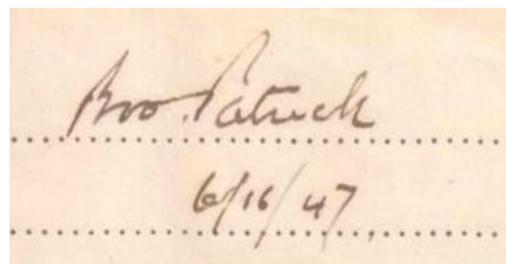
During the Summer of 1968 Brother Patrick's health deteriorated a good deal and he was obliged to keep to his bed. The Bon Secours Sisters and the Brothers gave him constant attention, but all the while there was never a complaint or request for anything special. He accepted his infirmities with the serenity and gentleness that characterized his active years.

The end came at 11:45 pm on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1968. Brother Patrick just slipped away peacefully. The Community had been in and out of the sick room most of the evening, and all were around the bedside when he departed this life to the Heavenly reward awaiting him.

The 1968/69 La Salle College, Kowloon, school magazine paid Brother Patrick this tribute:

"He was a man of great affability of character, with a quick and ready wit, a keen mind and a fine sense of humour; a man of great intelligence, a first class teacher and a strict but fair disciplinarian. He made himself a scholar of no mean order. Reserved and calm, he was held in the highest respect by both pupils and parents."

Life's work well done  
Life's race well run  
Life's crown well won  
Then cometh rest.



Bro Patrick  
6/16/47

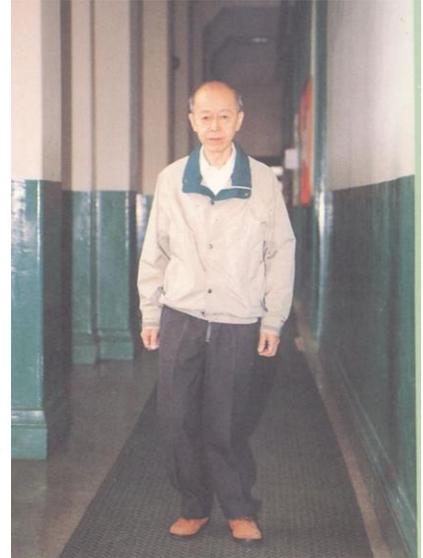
### **Bro Patrick Toner's Curriculum Vitae**

1906-1908	Castletown Juniorate
1906-1908	Castletown Novitiate
1909-1910	Castletown Scholasticate
1911-1913	La Salle College Waterford, Teacher's Training
1913-1917	St Patrick's High School, Moulmein, Teaching
1918-1930	St Paul's English High School, Rangoon, Teaching
1931-1942	St Paul's English High School, Rangoon, Principal
1942-1946	De La Salle Industrial School, Twante, Principal
1947-1956	La Salle College, Kowloon, Hong Kong, Principal
1956-1968	St Patrick's Belfast, Northern Ireland, Retired

## Family Updates

### Prayers requested for

We extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to the family of the late Mr. John Chan (陳惠耀), faithful servant of St Joseph's College, who passed away peacefully on the 31<sup>st</sup> November 2010. John was an institution in St. Joseph's, serving there for about 60 years in a beautifully quiet and unobtrusive way. This was particularly appreciated in the days when school fees were collected publicly. The wake was held on Sunday 12 December 2010 at the Hong Kong Funeral Parlour and was well attended by staff and old boys of St. Joseph's College.



We also extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to the family of the late Mr. Keshab Sharma, another faithful servant of St Joseph's College from 1968 to the 1990s, who passed away peacefully on 26th December 2010. During his 30 years teaching career at St. Joseph's, Mr. Sharma taught English and was the Panel Head for History. However, Josephians will remember him in particular as a kind and caring tutor, always offering invaluable advice to students especially in his capacity as Careers Master.

Brother Alphonsus Breen was hospitalized on Christmas Day 2010 and on the following day a 4-hour operation was performed on three sections of his spine. Thank God he has made a speedy recovery and is now undergoing physiotherapy. We hope he will be discharged from hospital very soon.



Kindly keep these three good men in your prayers.

## Chong Gene Hang College Celebrates



The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations continue apace. December 10<sup>th</sup> 2010 was the official Grand Open Day and a bracing, sunny day it was. Mrs. Rita Fan, former President of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, was the guest of honour. Guests were treated to a visual history synopsis of the school, to the opening ceremony itself and to a colourful march-past of the Red Cross, Scouts and Road Safety Patrol uniformed groups. The new roof garden was showcased as well as various school exhibits. It was heartening to see so many alumni present, especially those from the very first years of the College. Well done the Organising Committee.



## Long and Loving Service

On December 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010, Tommy Chiu retired as first clerk and personal secretary to the Principal of La Salle College. Tommy had begun his association with the school when he was admitted in 1962 and has pretty well been with the school since then, an almost 50 years connection. Throughout, he has endeared himself to the school community with the faithful carrying out of his duties. He did so in his own very modest fashion. If any problem or query arose, people would say 'go to Tommy'. We realize that nobody is indispensable but Tommy comes close. We wish him many happy and fruitful years in retirement.



## Brothers' Retreat/Assembly



From the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> December, Brothers Thomas Lavin, Thomas Favier, David Liao, Jeffrey Chan and Patrick Tierney from the Hong Kong sector were privileged to attend a pre Christmas Retreat and Assembly in the state of Johor Bahru, Malaysia. Brothers from Malaysia and Singapore also attended, making a grand total of 37. The location, far from towns and cities, was ideal for a

period of peace and quiet. There was time to “be still” in the presence of our God.

## Profession of Solemn Perpetual Vows

After the Retreat/Assembly, many Brothers made their way to St Patrick’s School, Singapore, to witness the professing of perpetual vows by Brother Kelvin Tan. This young man, in the presence of his family and a large congregation, pronounced the vows of association for the service of the poor through education, chastity, poverty, obedience, and stability in the Institute. As the formula of vows puts it: “I promise to keep these vows faithfully all my life.”

Congratulations to Brother Kelvin and may God be always at his side.



## **VISITOR NAMED FOR NEW LASALLIAN EAST ASIA DISTRICT (LEAD)**

Brother Edmundo Fernandez has been appointed Visitor of the Lasallian East Asia District (LEAD) by the Superior General, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez.



The new District will be inaugurated on May 15 in Singapore and is part of the Pacific-Asia Regional Conference (PARC). LEAD will include Japan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Singapore. Brother Edmundo has been a Brother for 21 years and is currently Visitor of the Philippines District which has a network of 17 schools and universities.

We extend our heartiest congratulations to Brother Edmundo and look forward to welcoming him to Hong Kong.

### **Brother Janaka Visits**



Brother Janaka who hails from Sri Lanka, paid us a visit from 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2011. He is currently pursuing a degree course in Australia. As you can see from the picture he was dressed for the cold weather which has occasionally dipped under 10C.

### **Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council (HKLEC)**

Our Lasallian Education Council's most recent meeting was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2011. A powerpoint on the origins of our Hong Kong Lasallian schools was well received. Preparations for school incorporated management committees formed a major part of the agenda.

## **Oriental Flavour : "I have no enemies: my final statement"**

**Liu Xiaobo's empty chair at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo, Norway, was a powerful symbol of the universal desire for freedom. Liu is serving an 11 year sentence for sedition after co-authoring Charter 08, a bold appeal for human rights and multiparty democracy in China.**



**Actress, Liv Ullman, read out selected passages from Liu's last public speech on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 when he was in a Beijing court prior to sentencing. Here is an excerpt from that speech.**

In the course of my life, for more than half a century, June 1989 was the major turning point. Up to that point, I was a member of the first class to enter university when college entrance examinations were reinstated following the Cultural Revolution (Class of '77). From BA to MA and on to PhD, my academic career was all smooth sailing. Upon receiving my degrees, I stayed on to teach at Beijing Normal University. As a teacher, I was well received by the students. At the same time, I was a public intellectual, writing articles and books that created quite a stir during the 1980s, frequently receiving invitations to give talks around the country, and going abroad as a visiting scholar upon invitation from Europe and America. What I demanded of myself was this: whether as a person or as a writer, I would lead a life of honesty, responsibility, and dignity. After that, because I had returned from the U.S. to take part in the 1989 Movement, I was thrown into prison for "the crime of counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement." I also lost my beloved lectern and could no longer publish essays or give talks in China. Merely for publishing different political views and taking part in a peaceful democracy movement, a teacher lost his lectern, a writer lost his right to publish, and a public intellectual lost the opportunity to give talks publicly. This is a tragedy, both for me personally and for a China that has already seen thirty years of Reform and Opening Up.

When I think about it, my most dramatic experiences after June Fourth have been, surprisingly, associated with courts: My two opportunities to address the public have

both been provided by trial sessions at the Beijing Municipal Intermediate People's Court, once in January 1991, and again today. Although the crimes I have been charged with on the two occasions are different in name, their real substance is basically the same—both are speech crimes.

Twenty years have passed, but the ghosts of June Fourth have not yet been laid to rest. Upon release from Qincheng Prison in 1991, I, who had been led onto the path of political dissent by the psychological chains of June Fourth, lost the right to speak publicly in my own country and could only speak through the foreign media. Because of this, I was subjected to year-round monitoring, kept under residential surveillance

寬恕

FORGIVENESS

The symbols for heart, mouth and woman are combined in this character to inspire us "to speak and act in accordance with one's higher nature" — the essence of forgiveness.

(May 1995 to January 1996) and sent to Reeducation-Through-Labor (October 1996 to October 1999). And now I have been once again shoved into the dock by the enemy mentality of the regime. But I still want to say to this regime, which is depriving me of my freedom, that I stand by the convictions I expressed in my "June Second Hunger Strike Declaration" twenty years ago—*I have no enemies and no hatred. None of the police who monitored, arrested, and interrogated me, none of the prosecutors who indicted me, and none of the judges who judged me are my enemies. Although there is no way I can accept your monitoring, arrests, indictments, and verdicts, I respect your professions and your integrity, including those of the two prosecutors, Zhang Rongge and Pan Xueqing, who are now bringing charges against me on behalf of*

*the prosecution. During interrogation on December 3, I could sense your respect and your good faith.*

*Hatred can rot away at a person's intelligence and conscience. Enemy mentality will poison the spirit of a nation, incite cruel mortal struggles, destroy a society's tolerance and humanity, and hinder a nation's progress toward freedom and democracy. That is why I hope to be able to transcend my personal experiences as I*

*look upon our nation's development and social change, to counter the regime's hostility with utmost goodwill, and to dispel hatred with love.*

I look forward to [the day] when my country is a land with freedom of expression, where the speech of every citizen will be treated equally well; where different values, ideas, beliefs, and political views . . . can both compete with each other and peacefully coexist; where both majority and minority views will be equally guaranteed, and where the political views that differ from those currently in power, in particular, will be fully respected and protected; where all political views will spread out under the sun for people to choose from, where every citizen can state political views without fear, and where no one can under any circumstances suffer political persecution for voicing divergent political views. I hope that I will be the last victim of China's endless literary inquisitions and that from now on no one will be incriminated because of speech.

Freedom of expression is the foundation of human rights, the source of humanity, and the mother of truth. To strangle freedom of speech is to trample on human rights, stifle humanity, and suppress truth.

In order to exercise the right to freedom of speech conferred by the Constitution, one should fulfill the social responsibility of a Chinese citizen. There is nothing criminal in anything I have done. [But] if charges are brought against me because of this, I have no complaints.

Thank you, everyone.



**Liu's statement is a striking expression of his passion for his country, his unflinching commitment to fundamental human rights, his literary prowess and, above all, his heart of forgiveness.**