



The Gateway

Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin

April 2013

Forty Sixth Issue

Welcome



Habemus Papam. We have a smiling new Pope. As we say thank you to Pope Benedict we extend a warm welcome to Pope Francis... And God has surely forgiven the Cardinals for what they did!

The 3 days of the Rugby Sevens is a bubbling time in Hong Kong. The 40,000 seating capacity stadium is pretty well full on all 3 days and there is a carnival-like atmosphere. Mind you, there is some good action on the field too. In an unusual final pairing, Wales just fell short against Sevens 'veterans', Fiji, who hauled back an 18 points deficit.

Our Form 6 students are in the midst of their public examination, called the Diploma in Secondary Education (DSE). This pre-university exam has replaced the equivalent of O and A Levels.



Our Brother of the Month is quite a story. Brother Edmund John met a tragic end but nothing can take away from his noble life. There is a gap in his CV and some kind soul may be able to give us more information.

Oriental Flavour takes us into the story of the Romance of The Three Kingdoms, a story that is very well known to Chinese people all over the world.

Hong Kong is currently on high alert lest the dreaded H7N9 virus spreads. It has already killed over 20 people on the mainland and, although there is still no proof of human to human transmission, people are naturally fearful. Schools are taking precautions with general cleaning and disinfecting.

Since we are still in the Easter season, may we wish all our readers a very Happy Easter.



Brother of the Month Brother Edmund John Burke 1907-1958

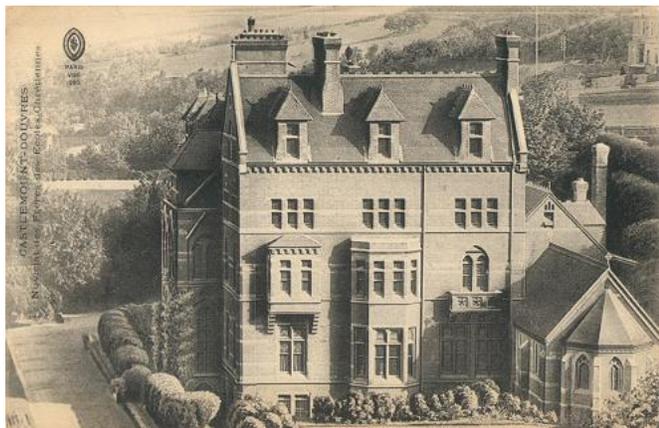


Alexander Burke was born at Folkestone, England, of Irish parentage of Dublin origin. The parents brought up their family with a strong religious spirit. One son, John, was ordained to the priesthood and served as Chaplain to the Brothers at St. Joseph's College, Beulah Hill, London. Alexander, however, decided he wanted a life dedicated to the educational needs of youth and in 1920 entered the Juniorate of the De La Salle Brothers at Les Vauxbelets, Guernsey. He took the Holy Habit of the Brothers on the Feast of the Holy Rosary 1923 at Castle-mont, Dover, England, receiving the name of Edmund John. Having volunteered for the Far East, he left Dover in 1925 to begin his missionary career which brought him first to Manila and then to Hong Kong and Burma.

We are fortunate that Brother Michael Curtin, a personal friend of Brother Edmund, has given us a first-hand account of their relationship.

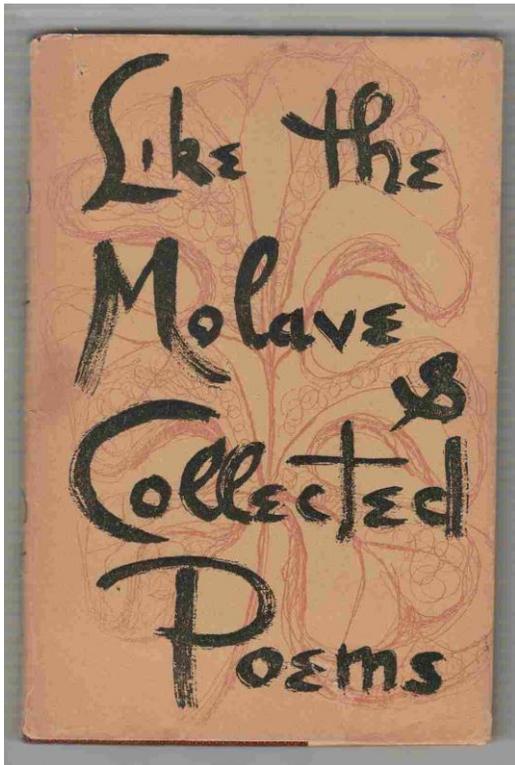
"I first met Brother Edmund in Les Vauxbelets, Guernsey, in 1922. Brother Leo Barrington and I had just arrived at the Juniorate and were being led around the dormitory where the Juniors were changing for football. The Recruiter introduced us to a smiling shock-haired Junior. 'This is one of our best boys, Alex Burke.' He had a winning personality and his efficiency, good humour and quick perception set him aside as a leader. He was 'chef de groupe' and I recall how tactfully he handled our recreation group in awkward situations. Half the Juniors were from England, half from France; with boys between the ages of 14-16, embarrassing misunderstandings could occur and only a leader with a personality could preserve the 'entente cordiale'.

In 1923 I lost sight of Edmund for a year; he had begun his Novitiate in Dover. However, the following year, I was a Novice in Dover, and Edmund was studying in the Scholasticate. I then saw much of Edmund as Novices and Scholastics were intermingled in recreation groups and on the weekly walks. On the eve of his death, we spoke about those old Dover days, recalling old friends, amusing incidents. In the course of conversation he said, 'You know, I really think I made a good Novitiate. Brother Damian George was always harping on convictions. I think I did acquire a few which came in good stead at a critical period of my life. Dover was no place for mollycoddling.'



At the end of his Scholasticate year, Brother Edmund volunteered for the Far East but before his departure he taught English to our group for a month. (The week of his death he teasingly introduced me to the Archbishop of Mandalay, as one of his old pupils). All I remember of his English lessons is his reading of poetry; he had a clear resonant speaking voice which he used with great feeling and expression.

Leaving England and his Kentish home was not easy; under an exterior which some might have thought flippant or cynical, there beat a heart full of love of God, of his family and of his District. Brother Leo Barrington relates how a few days before he was to leave for his distant mission Brother Leo had been sent into the 'Salle des Professeur' to get some chalk. Under the impression that the room was untenanted, he burst in without knocking. There stood Brother Edmund by the window, looking towards Folkestone in the hills beyond Dover with tears coursing down his cheeks. An incident more eloquent than words indicating the great sacrifice Edmund was making, for he dearly loved his home at Folkestone.



Our paths were not to cross again until 1935. Edmund was transferred from Manila to Kowloon; I, to Manila from Kowloon. We crossed at sea like 'ships in the night'. The mantle of Edmund that descended upon me was rather voluminous. He was running a Debate Club, Oratorical Club; he had started a literary magazine, published a quarterly which was confined to literary topics, essays, poems, contributed by the students of La Salle. It was an undertaking out of the usual rut of school magazines and did much to foster and develop creative writers. Rafael Zulueta-da-Costa, who won international fame for his prize-winning epic "Strong grows the Molave," dedicated his published work to Brother Edmund with a handsome and grateful tribute, for the guidance and inspiration he had given to the author as a student.

Edmund in his short stay in Manila left an ineffaceable impression on his pupils as a teacher of English. He was not a mere transmitter of knowledge; his teaching was the joint enterprise of a group of friendly human beings who liked using their brains. He did much to create a nucleus of young enthusiastic Catholic writers of the Philippines.

Brother Edmund's brief sojourn in La Salle College, Kowloon, is still remembered with affection and appreciation by his old students. He made his mark by the force of his convictions, constant sincerity of thought, unflinching integrity of purpose and high ideal of his vocation and professional duties. Even at this distance in the years, his vigour and good humour are still remembered. Generations of La Salle students will keep his memory green when they sing the School Song which was composed by him."

La Salle College School Song
 KEY: B FLAT MAJOR
 LYRIC: AND RIGHT BY: REV. BRO. AIMAR

5 2 / 1 2 2 3 / 3 1 - 1 2 / 6 4 3 2 /
 Boys of cou- rage, boys of da- ving, Full of man- li- ness and
 There are fa- nous schools in plen-ty, With their he-ros by the
 From her lof- ly sta-tion point-ing, Do the sky's no- gem- lin
 Come what e- ver kind of wea- ther, Come the stor-ry days a-

3 - 5 2 / 1 2 2 3 / 3 1 - 1 2 / 6 4 3 2 /
 will: Spi-rit naught for dan-ger on- ring, Hearts to con-quer a-very
 ceere, And they flow-riah high and nigh- ty, But LaSalle is some-thing
 deen. She would have us e- ver sin- ding, That a-bow is our true
 long; When the old boys get to- go- ther, They will always sing this

1 - 1 2 / 6 6 6 3 6 4 3 2 / 1 - 6 7 / 1 1 2 3 /
 ill. We are sons of La Salle e-very one, And no mat-ter where we
 here.
 here.
 here.

3 - 3 4 2 / 3 4 2 3 6 1 / 7 - 6 / 5 1 3 2 /
 go. High e- lect her flag we will hold, And strive that her fame may

1 -
 grow.

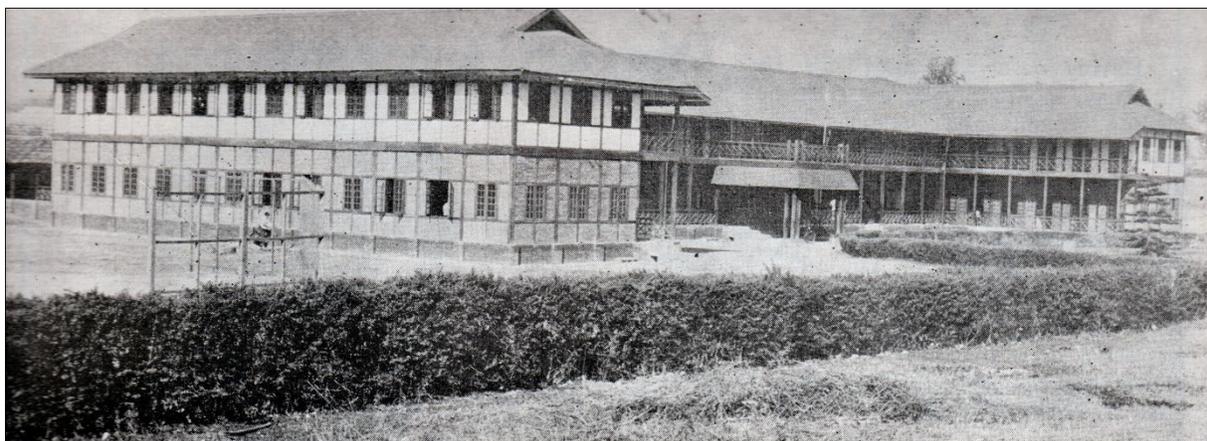
The thorny question of who wrote the lyrics of the beloved school song of La Salle College has been debated for decades. Some say it was composed by Brother Aimar, some say by Brother Marcian, some...the jury is still out. But it seems that Brother Michael had no doubts that Brother Edmund was the composer.

Brother Michael takes up the story again.

“During these years an intermittent stream of correspondence passed between us which abruptly ceased when War crashed into our smooth existence and swept us apart. After the war he returned to England and taught for two years in Kintbury. We were neighbours and saw a good deal of each other for we had many sympathies in common and had been in the same places, Manila, Hong Kong, Burma. He spent two years of study at Cambridge where, at the age of more than forty, he successfully passed his B.A. Honours.

Edmund would have preferred to stay in England but at the end of his studies he was appointed Director of St. Albert's High School, Maymyo, (now called Pyin Oo Lwin) in Burma. He quipped to me "Rome has spoken, the case is closed." Amidst a thousand difficulties, lack of funds, lack of personnel, he built a handsome concrete structure to house the Brothers and Boarding Department. He set the highest standards and tone and remarkably, within a few years of its existence, St. Albert's became outstanding for its results in the public examinations. To him St. Albert's owes a lasting debt which will grow as the school reaps the fruits of his ardent pioneer labours.

Six years later, he was Director of St. Paul's, Rangoon, one of the best known schools in the country. His task was an immense one. There were 2,900 boys in the school and incessant demands for places. But he was determined to maintain high standards.



St. Albert's School: begun in 1947, completed in 1952

From youth Edmund had that mould and ideal of manhood which we would all like our pupils to aspire to and if possible attain. His great gifts of character were enriched and developed by his early training and constant self-discipline through life. The Chinese philosopher, Lin Yutang, says somewhere that the cultured man is not necessarily one who is well read or learned, but one who likes and dislikes the right thing; that is, he has taste. Edmund was a well-read man.

Moreover, he had taste, the capacity for thinking things through to the bottom, and independence of judgment and unwillingness to be bulldozed by any form of humbug. He was the soul of integrity. Utility as the only basis of morality was an ethical doctrine that he never accepted. He may not have been popular with some but he was respected



St. Albert's First Football XI, Championship Shield Winners in 1954, with Brother Director Edmund and Brother Gabriel.

by all who came in contact with him.

Whatever task he engaged in was carried out with energy and efficiency but with good humour and consideration for others' feelings. He excelled as a conversationalist; his witty comments, stories, anecdotes enlivened the recreations. Everyone who has spoken to me, or written to me about Edmund, has emphasised three things: his cheerful humour, his vitality, and his integrity.

At the end of March, this year, Brother Edmund remained in Rangoon for a few days to complete the promotions for the scholastic year. He was eager to rejoin his community up in the Shan Hills. The Kalaw country house had been reopened and he was busy planning improvements for he wanted his community to enjoy a pleasant holiday. I was impressed by the warm reception given to him wherever he went; he seemed to enrich the lives of all who knew him.

We returned to Rangoon and on the 10th of April he came to bid me farewell at the airport at 1.30 a.m. The plane was delayed but Edmund, the perfect host, insisted on staying until 4.30a.m. when the plane finally flew off. In the early hours of the morning of the 11th of April Brother Edmund was stabbed to death by a hireling. The overturned furniture, the shambles of the room, and the sheer number of stab wounds bore testimony to the tremendous and heroic fight he made in death. May his gallant soul sleep in peace and may his courage and fortitude be an inspiration to us."



It came as a huge shock when news of the murder spread. The police arrested a 19 year old youth who admitted to the heinous crime saying that Brother Edmund had refused to take a bribe to reinstate him, or a friend's son, in school. The assassin was sentenced and spent a term in jail. While in jail he was visited by the parish priest of the Cathedral who assured him that he was forgiven by the Brothers and by the Church. On release from prison he was employed around the Cathedral but later contacted rabies and had to be confined to a cellar in a hospital where he died.

Brother Edmund was an excellent teacher. He was also a strict disciplinarian, expecting the students to study hard and behave well. His dedication saw the academic and extracurricular results of the school rise to new heights. In many ways his story is

a lesson in doing what is right and the high price that can sometimes be paid for doing so, the price of integrity.

Postings of Brother Edmund John

Les Vauxbelets, Guernsey	Juniorate	1920-1923
Castlemount, Dover, England	Novitiate	1923-1924
Castlemount, Dover, England	Scholasticate	1924-1925
De La Salle College, Manila	Teaching	1925-1934
La Salle College, Kowloon, Hong Kong	Teaching	1934-1937
St John's College, Kintbury, England	Teaching	1945-1947
Cambridge, England	University Studies	1947-1950
St Albert's High School, Maymyo, Burma	Principal	1950-1956
St Paul's High School, Rangoon, Burma	Principal	1956-1958

Paying the Price

He came:

**At dead of night he softly came,
Plans A and B inside his head;
Inside his shirt a trusty blade,
The blade that would a life's blood shed.**

He stood:

**A while outside the door he stood,
And then slipped soft into the room;
A silence filled the open space,
A silence like an earthly tomb.**

He saw:

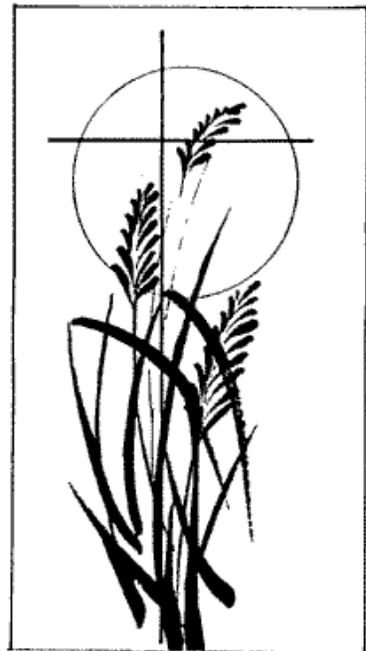
**The figure in the bed he saw,
The one who could his favour grant;
The one who had the power supreme,
The one who could say can or can't.**

He took:

**The knife into his hand he took,
And made his will abundant clear;
The man refused to bend his will,
And knew his nay would cost him dear.**

The man:

**The man put up a valiant fight,
Ere stabbings took their grisly toll;
He knew he could have saved his life,
But paid the price to save his soul.**



Lenten Activities



The Season of Lent



*Remember man thou art dust
and to dust thou shalt return*

The season of Lent gave our students a chance to reflect, pray and serve the larger community. Thank God there is still the culture of respect for the elderly. Judging from the pictures, there does not seem to be a wide gap between the generations. The old folks really appreciate visits from the young.

Priests and Brothers were on hand for the more traditional Lenten Prayer/Reconciliation Services and for Masses.

The Lenten collection boxes did the rounds in our schools and the proceeds went to good causes.



Family Updates

Music Bonanza

The Month of March 2013 has been a bumper month for the musicians and singers of La Salle College. The College Wind Orchestra, Chinese Orchestra, Treble Choir and Senior Choir have all won the Championship title in their various sections in this year's Hong Kong Music Festival. The Treble Choir also went on to win the 'best of the best' contest. The boys have been up against highly renowned school orchestras and choirs. One adjudicator remarked that music as an art is about communication and the boys managed to do that and more. They were "a pleasure to listen to." Congratulations to the boys, teachers and coaches.



Life wide learning

The students of St. Joseph's Primary School were introduced to a new experience recently. To help them to understand and be sensitive to the handicaps of life, they were asked to eat lunch blindfolded. The students were introduced to different forms of visual impairment from partial to total. Volunteers from ORBIS were on hand to guide the students through the exercise. Judging from the feedback, the students found the whole experience very instructive and enlightening.



Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School 40th Anniversary

40th Anniversary Mass



We were pleasantly surprised when Cardinal John Tong accepted our invitation to celebrate the 40th anniversary Thanksgiving Mass for Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School despite the many calls on his time. The Mass took place in the school Hall, full of teachers, students and parents. The Cardinal reminded everyone to imitate the virtues of St La Salle so that knowledge will be joined with wisdom. The students sang sweetly and were

engagingly devout during the Mass. There was also a special intercessory prayer for the school founder, Brother Herman Fenton.

Open Day at Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School

One of the highlights to mark the 40th anniversary of Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School was an Open Day held on the 13th April 2013. After two weeks of gloomy, rainy weather, the sun shone bright on the 13th and made for a warm atmosphere in the school campus. The exhibitions on display were of a high order, well arranged and artistically presented. Of particular note was the planting area, where organic vegetables could be bought on the spot. The school chapel, a little gem, was welcoming in itself. Fast-forward to the golden jubilee in 10 years time!



Farewell to Dympna

Dympna Garcia has been the cook for the Brothers at La Salle College for the last 16 years and has given loyal and faithful service. I guess all cooks have their strong points. For Dympna it was the soup. It was a study to see her every day sitting at the kitchen table, hand-cutting the various ingredients for the soup of the day. The main, and much appreciated ingredient, was a variety of vegetables. You can't go far wrong there. We wish Dympna all that is good on her retirement to the Philippines.



CBS Exchange Programme 2013

The week from April 15-19 saw students from the five Lasallian schools inter-change and attend each other's schools as part of the Lasallian Schools Exchange – Hong Kong. The programme began with Principals and Supervisors attending the launch at Chong Gene Hang College, Chai Wan, on Saturday 13th April. During the week students attend classes at another Lasallian school. On Tuesday 16th all participants will be hosted by La Salle College for an afternoon tea and campus tour. On Wednesday 17th all participants will be hosted by St. Joseph's College for an afternoon tea and campus tour. The programme finishes at De La Salle Secondary School on Friday 19th April.



St. Joseph's Primary School Family Fun Day 2013



The Family Fun Day of St. Joseph's Primary School was held on 28th of April 2013. The chief Guest of Honour was Mr. Paul Shieh, an Old Boy and currently Chairman of the Bar Association of Hong Kong. Besides speaking to the theme of 'Responsible Josephians', he recalled his days as a student with vividness and humour. The Fun Day attracted quite a large number of parents and Old Boys and they did not go away empty-handed.

L to R: Paul Shieh, Guest of Honour; Br Thomas Lavin, Auxiliary Visitor and John Chan, Chairman of PTA

Talented Little Writer

A primary six boy in La Salle Primary School, Chan Chak Fu, amazed his teachers with an outstanding performance in a very competitive writing competition held recently by the Hong Kong Education Bureau, Gifted Education section. Indeed the adjudicators liked him so much that they kept interviewing him after the competition, trying to find out more about him. His teacher was really pleased with the boy's attitude, being modest and humble, yet full of confidence.

The competitors had to pass a quiz on Chinese culture and give a short talk on either: "Name one book that can represent you." or "As a student representative, make a speech at the school's 10th anniversary." Lastly, they were assigned one of the characters in a movie and had to create a conversation to replace the soundtrack of the film clip.



Oriental Flavour Romance of the Three Kingdoms 三國演義



An illustration from a Ming Dynasty printed edition of the novel from 1591, collection of the Beijing University.

The Romance of The Three Kingdoms, written by Lo Guanzhong in the 14th century, is among the most beloved works of literature in Asia. The story is part historical, part legend and part myth, retelling of the events attending the fall of the Han Dynasty in 220 A.D., which was one of the most tumultuous and fascinating periods in Chinese history.

For the last four hundred years in Asia, the book is considered as the greatest novel ever written. It is an epic saga of brotherhood and rivalry, of loyalty and treachery, of power and subtlety, of chivalry, of brilliant military strategies and of greed for power. The literate of China read and reread it; those who cannot read learn it from story tellers, through drama and by word of mouth.

The Romance of the Three Kingdoms has an important influence on Chinese culture; its stories are depicted in art, paintings, presented in plays and they have inspired movies. Some of the characters such as Guan Yu 關羽, and Hua Tuo 華陀 are worshiped as deities and many Guan Yu Temples can be found in China and in overseas Chinese communities.



Three Heroes of the Three Kingdoms, silk painting by Sekkan Sakurai (1715-1790), depicting Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei. This painting is sometimes hung in the offices of businessmen and police stations, to show that they are trustworthy, just as the brothers were to each other

The book begins with a poem, a poem that is well known and well liked by Chinese people all over the world. It goes like this:

**On and on the Great River rolls, racing east.
Of proud and gallant heroes its white-tops leave no trace,
As right and wrong, pride and fall turn all at once unreal.
Yet ever the green hills stay,
To blaze in the west-waning day.**

**Fishers and woodsmen comb the river isles.
White-crowned,
They've seen enough of spring and autumn tide
To make good company over the wine jar,
Where many a famed event
Provides the merriment.**



臨江仙
楊慎
滾滾長江東逝水
浪花淘盡英雄
是非成敗轉頭空
青山依舊在
幾度夕陽紅
白髮漁樵江渚上
慣看秋月春風
一壺濁酒喜相逢
古今多少事
都付笑談中

Since the book is largely concerned with war, strife and death, we might well wonder why it is called a 'romance'. Placing the poem at the beginning of the book holds the key. Chinese people, taking their cue from the poem, view the comings and goings of war heroes and villains as passing, like the waters of the mighty Yangzi River. Whatever life holds, the poet, with the people, know that the mountains will still stand, the river will flow and the sun will shine.

Blast from the Past

This programme may well be the equivalent of the first Speech and Prize-giving Day of a Lasallian school in Hong Kong.

One of the unusual features is that it was held just 2 days after Christmas.

The Governor at the time was Sir George Bowen and the school Director was Brother Louis Gaubert, often referred to as "good Brother Louis."

Classes were called Standards. Standard 1 would equate with our Form 6, Standard II with Form 5 and so on.

The names of the student performers indicate that the school was still strongly associated with persons of Portuguese descent. However, the 'Dialogue in Different Languages' probably indicates that the school had a fair share of different nationalities.

The playing and/or singing of God Save the Queen at the end leaves no doubt that we are talking about colonial times.

