

The

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gateway



LASALLIAN EAST ASIA DISTRICT

issue

56

HONG KONG LASALLIAN FAMILY BULLETIN

February 2015



(Cover) This statue of St. John Baptist de La Salle is a carving mounted on the corridor wall of the Brothers' residence in La Salle College.

The gateway

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Concept by

Brother Patrick Tierney
Mr. Paul K. K. Tam

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**The Gateway
Hong Kong
Lasallian Family
Bulletin
February 2015
Fifty Sixth Issue**

Welcome

The second school term is in full swing. Mid-term examinations have come and gone and report cards distributed.

The Gateway 56 comes to you with Chinese New Year peeping round the corner. It falls later than usual this year but is as welcome a break as ever. All of China seems to be on the move, as people head back to their ancestral homes for family reunions.



The Year of the Horse is about to end and we usher in the Year of the Goat. The goat ranks 8th in the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac. The goat is generally associated with dependability and calmness. We sure can do with those two traits in the modern world. The goat is also associated with sheep. At the beginning of this new year, the Catholic Church usually reminds us to be like good shepherds, looking out for the weak and mild.

Anniversaries are in the air. Three of our Lasallian schools are celebrating. The oldest, St. Joseph's College, is 140 years old; De La Salle Secondary School, N.T. is 50 years old and Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) is 45 years old. May our Heavenly Father pour his blessings on all three schools and on all those connected with them.

Feedback from readers is always welcome. We can surely improve when we receive your comments.

Kung Hei Fat Choi!! ■

恭 喜 發 財

Kung Hei Fat Choi!

Wishing you a Prosperous Chinese New Year!

Our Pathways

La Salle College

From Dome to Quad

The 60's witnessed major Lasallian mission developments such as the opening of La Salle College Evening School in 1964, a sister school, De La Salle Secondary School, N.T. in 1965, St. Joseph's Primary School in 1968 and Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College in 1969, a hectic pace of development by any standards.

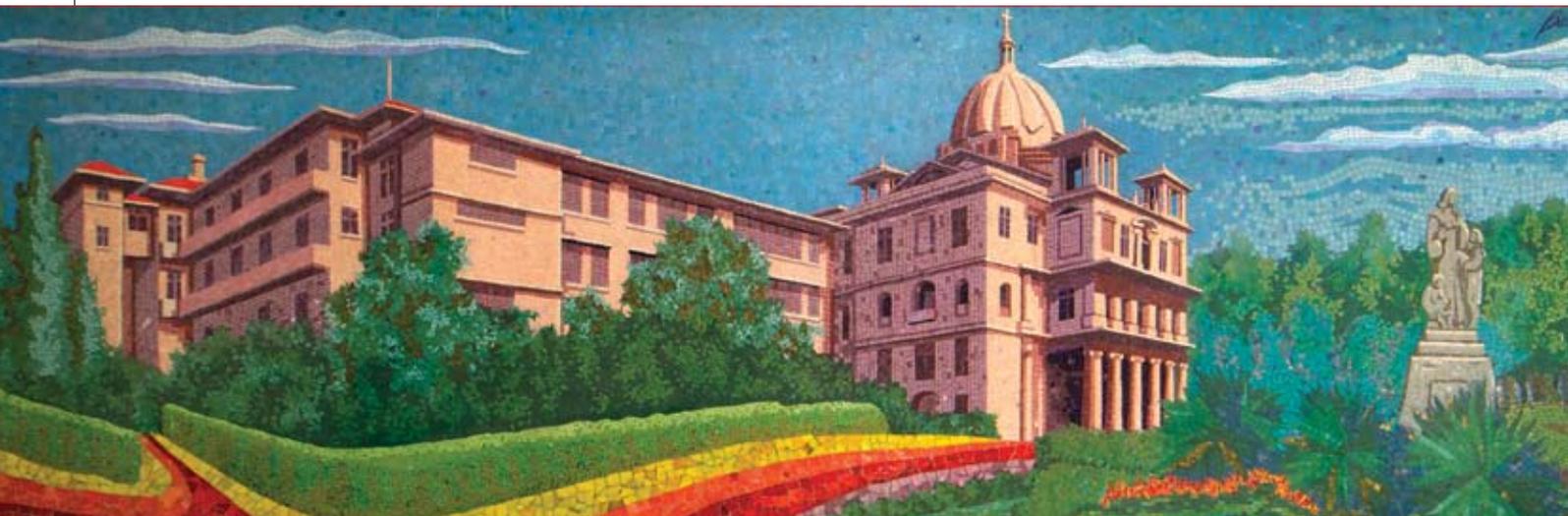


Of particular importance for La Salle was the return of the mortal remains of the founder, Brother Aimar Sauron. His remains were returned from Vietnam to Hong Kong and interned in the College courtyard.

A highlight of the 70's was the celebration, in 1975, of the Centenary of the arrival of the Brothers in Hong Kong.

And then came the second upheaval for La Salle College. After all the long and passionate pleas for the return of the old school building from the hands of the British Army, news now spread that the building was going to be demolished! At first, people thought it was a mere rumour. When the truth dawned it was greeted with shock, amazement and not a little disbelief especially by the old boys of the school. Their beloved school, dome and all, was going to be flattened.

From about the mid 70's onwards, the Brothers had been thinking long and hard about the future of the College building. Brother Raphael Egan was the first to sound the alarm. He had become





acutely aware of the need for more modern facilities. The grand old school was creaking from wear and tear, aggravated by the years under both Japanese and British army occupation. Every conceivable option at the time was considered, from total renovation, to renovation and extension, to complete demolition. Despite a natural reluctance, the demolition option gradually came to be seen as the fittest for purpose.

The final decision to demolish and build anew was one of the toughest for the Brothers in Hong Kong Lasallian history. It took many meetings and arguments for and against before the final decision was made. Brother Raphael was the 'front-man' and had to carry the vision to the world. Brothers Alphonsus Chee and Thomas Lavin were the 'action-men', seeing to the day to day operations. The firm of Cheung Kong, led by a youthful Mr. Li Ka Shing, became the



contractor, tasked with bringing the new dream building to reality. The Brothers agreed to a land exchange deal with Mr. Li subject to school building conditions. The wheels were set in motion in 1977 and there was no looking back, except in nostalgia.

To their credit, the old boys of the school, while understandably sorely sad, rallied round and accepted what was to be with good grace. To this day they possess an almost sacred respect and love for the old school and will talk about it at the drop of

a hat. Present students and those who never studied in the old building cannot be expected to have the same feelings as those who did. Still, something of the spirit of the old is beautifully captured in a verse of the much loved school song:

"From her lofty station pointing,
To the sky's majestic dome;
She will have us ever minding,
That above is our true home."

Work on the new school building proceeded at a frantic pace and within two years it was ready for occupation. Friday, the 2nd July 1979 was the last day when lessons were conducted under the majestic dome. There had been a soft opening of classes in the new building in June and all classes moved in for the school opening in September. The official opening, however, did not take place until February 1982. The



massive redevelopment had been completed and facilities of the most modern kind were now a part of La Salle College. It had survived two major upheavals in the space of thirty years and emerged with flags flying high.

The 'Dome' had been replaced by the 'Quad' and so it has remained ever since. Heritage treasures from the old building were judiciously incorporated in the new. They included the stained-glass window under the old dome, the large statue of St. La Salle from the entrance, the old chapel pews and statues, the burning torch and the cross from atop the dome.

The artist commissioned for the new building was Francisco Borboa. His outdoor wall murals of the school crest and of St. La Salle with a stream of



children were bright and colourful. He also did the stained-glass for the new school chapel and for that of the Brother's chapel. Perhaps his masterpiece was the indoor wall mural of the old school, appropriately located in the Old Boys' Room. Mr. Borboa also left his distinctive mark in murals for La Salle Primary School.

The new La Salle College lost little or nothing in usable space. By any standards it is a large school, graced

on one side by a 50 metre Olympic-size swimming pool and on the other, by a magnificent track and field. The Gymnasium and Hall are large and aesthetically pleasing. The garden, centrally placed at ground level, is a gem. It is generally viewed as an oasis of peace in the midst of Hong Kong's hectic pace of life.

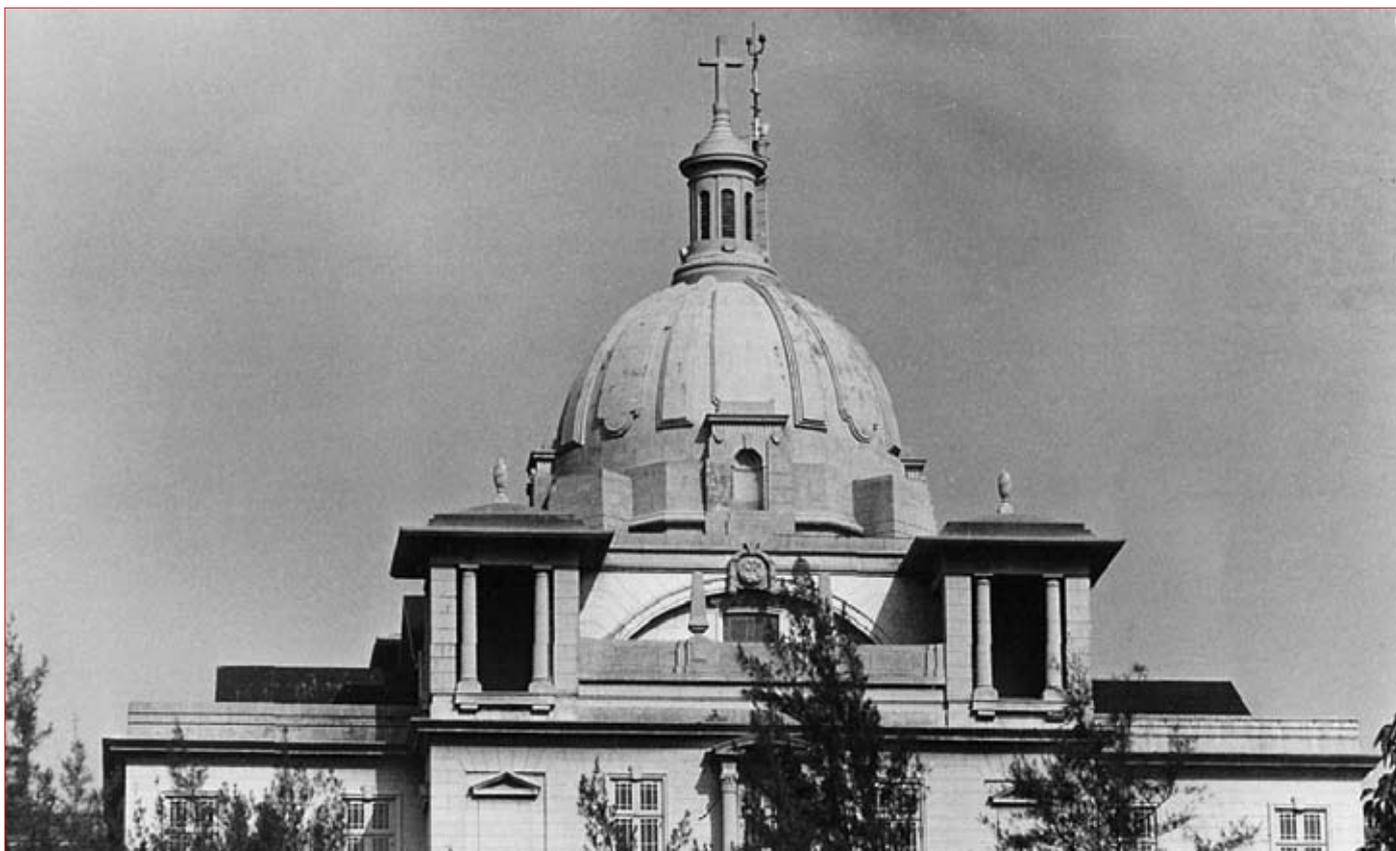
On top floor of the building is the residence of the Brothers, technically on the 5th floor, though it would be on the 7th if counting from lower ground two. Although it is out of bounds, groups of students are occasionally given the 'grand tour' and profess themselves well pleased. The gem on the Brother's floor is the chapel.

As if the new La Salle was not large enough, a two-wing extension took place in the early years of the millennium. These, apart from other things, provided dedicated facilities for Music and IT.

The wings were named for the first two principals of the College, Brothers Aimar and Cassian. The wings overlook the swimming pool and there is a fine link bridge.

La Salle is a school that never seems to rest. It is a hive of activity from morning to night. The facilities are taken over every weekend by student clubs and teams, by old boys and by parents. It is satisfying to see the facilities so well used.





Although the 'new' La Salle College building is already thirty five years old, it has preserved much of its original freshness. This is a credit not only to

succeeding College administrations but also to the generosity of old boys and parents. ■

In Our Hearts Forever

— by Brother James Dooley

“You are Communists. You deserve no pity.”

This is the 7th part of the ‘*In Our Hearts Forever*’ series first started in *The Gateway Issue 50*.

It traces the experiences of Brother James Dooley and his Community during the World War II Japanese occupation in Malaysia.

All this time, the war was still raging. Squadrons of Japanese’s planes flew south each morning, tanks and convoys of camouflaged lorries rumbled through the nights, hundreds of cycling soldiers pedaled on to victory.

Then for us, came the most dramatic and depressing news of all — the Fall of Singapore — Singapore fell to the Japanese on Sunday, the 15th February, 1942 — Chinese Lunar New Year’s Day ... the Year of the Tiger. The local Japanese news sheet smuggled in to us, stated, “... Singapore, the Gibraltar of the East, has fallen to superior Nipponese Forces ... The last vestiges of British Imperialism destroyed ... a new era of co-prosperity proclaimed ...”



It is all over, we thought, there is no escape now. We took no part in the compulsory victory celebrations, observing their own injunction to remain indoors to the letter. Then the Kenpeitai were back, asking why we took no part in the parade, harassing and badgering us again. Then an incident occurred that led us to our second term of imprisonment.

A pupil of the school, seriously ill in the hospital quite close to us, sent a message asking to see a Brother. Brothers Denis Hyland, Patrick O’Donovan and John Teo, his teacher, slipped out to see him. Brother Denis records:

“... We found the boy in a pitiable state, he had been bayoneted and his wounds were septic. He and his uncle had been stopped by Japanese soldiers, questioned, tied to trees and bayoneted. The

uncle had died. A neighbour brought the boy to hospital. He was baptized 'John', his teacher's name, and he died soon after ... The Kenpeitai came to the hospital at that very time and brought the three of us to their headquarters. They berated us all day long and forbade any Brother to leave the house or have any contact with the outer world ... Before letting us go, they gave each of us three hard slaps in the face, administered and received in silence ..."

Our food supply was alarmingly low and with no contact with the outside, we could have starved to death, were it not for the Brothers in Seremban, a Community to the south, who sent us some tinned food through Sisters returning to Taiping. The Sisters had retreated before the Japanese entered the town for fear of their orphans being violated by soldiers. The food, considering the conditions prevailing, was almost miraculously delivered on the 19th March, the feast of St. Joseph, 1942.

We just could not go on as we were, so Brother Denis sent a petition to the Japanese Chief Police Officer, giving reason why we believed we had been unjustly treated and asking for an audience to state our case.

The result, an order from the Kenpeitai to appear at their Headquarters within the hour bringing with us the now standard towel and tooth brush. We feared the worst and added a few items, a spoon, a pair of scissors, needles and thread, some soap and a few blankets. On our arrival at their headquarters, we were left standing for about two hours, their usual form of humiliating people. After more ranting and raving — finally, "... You are Communists, your students are Chinese, enemies of Nippon, you deserve no pity ..."

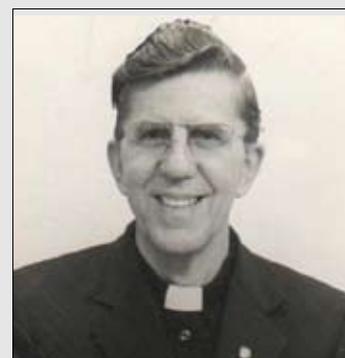
Prison again. Once inside, we were subjected to a rough search. Everything was taken except our prayer books and rosaries and a few blankets. We were assigned to separate cells this time but not locked in them as the retreating British had destroyed the door keys. But we were secured in the Block.

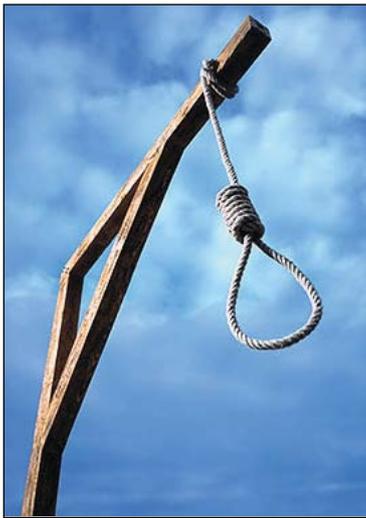


St. Paul's Institution, Seremban

Brother James Dooley was Principal of St. Joseph's College, Hong Kong, from 1964 to 1970 after which he taught in La Salle College until called to Rome in 1977.

For more about Brother James, please read our Issue 6 at <http://www.lasalle.org.hk/pages/docs/TheGateway06.pdf>





The P.O.Ws gathered round us welcoming us back and regarding our return as a sign the war was going against Japan.

Conditions had improved greatly since our first internment. There was no overcrowding, the sanitary system had improved, the sick were using the hospital section where we had been and for our supper we had a kind of soup, some rice and three small loaves each — cobs, the prisoners called them.

There were more than two thousand prisoners of war at this time. Remnants of English, Scottish, Indians and Gurkha (Nepalese) regiments, including three Anglo-Indian officers together with the man who had been bundled up at our feet on New Year's Day ... all in the condemned cells close to the scaffold with its rope of Belfast linen.

In our own Block, there were about thirty civilian prisoners, estate managers, engineers, ships officers and the Chief of Police of Singapore, a Scot, who spoke several Asian languages including Japanese so he became our translator. Most annoying and most amusing of all, the perpetually cheerful and noisy Chinese crew of a ship sunk in the Gulf of Siam. They spoke no locally known Chinese dialect and so nobody understood them ... except perhaps, the Block guards who communicated with them by writing Chinese characters in the sand ... both could read the characters although the words were pronounced differently in the two languages.

One among them played excruciatingly and often on a Chinese fiddle with two strings. In exchange for oral English practice — we had no writing materials — they gave us some food as they had their own money and were allowed out of the prison at times.

Our Block Guard was an easygoing, kind little soldier, probably too old for front-line service. He locked us in our Block at night and let us out again in the morning. He used to wander through the Block, smiling and exchanging pro and anti Japanese banter with our translator.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A P.O.W.

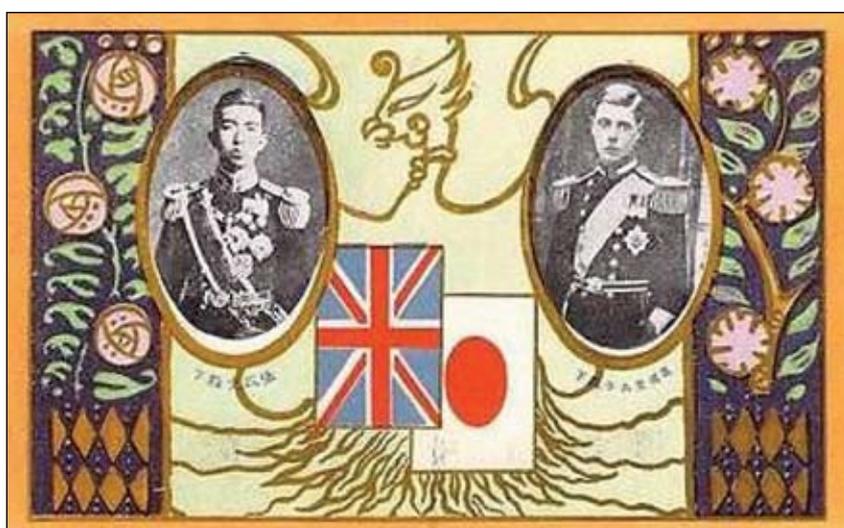
Our day began with "Tenko 点呼", a roll call at 7.00 am. Our Block Guard called us to attention with the command, "Kiotsuke 気を付け!" Attention! ... and the Guard was promptly dubbed, "Whiskey". We were put in groups of ten each and we had to count in Japanese. A subsequent Guard, neither bright nor pleasant, could never get the prisoners into tens ... some moved this way and that ... He used to yell and give one or two of the men a slap in the face. We were convinced he never had the faintest idea how many P.O.Ws were under him and he was not enlightened.

A breakfast of rice, black sugarless 'tea' and on a good day, a cob or two. Work parties of about fifty men each, moved out of the camp under guard after breakfast. They had to sweep streets, clean war debris, drag trollies filled with bales of rubber or scrap to the railway station for doubtful shipment to Japan. The arrogant and bullying guards did not care whether the work was humiliating, dangerous or contrary to International Law. A dinner similar to the breakfast was served at noon and the last meal of the day was at 4 pm ... hence the importance of having an old tin can to store a bit of rice against the long night.

The Brothers — "... because of your association with bad elements, Communists and enemies of Japan ..." Meaning our Chinese pupils, were not allowed to work. Instead, we were detailed to help the orderlies in the hospital, our wages, ten cents a day (two pence) per person, perhaps. By putting the tuppences together over a long period — inflation was already running high — we were able to buy, through soldiers on work parties, an occasional bottle of soy sauce to replace the acute shortage of salt in our diet.

The soy sauce was rationed thus. The bottle top was pierced with a sharp object, no bottle openers, and three shakes over the rice administered to a Director, two for the Sub-Director and one for other ranks. Brother Thomas O'Brien was sauce distributor.

Our Commandant, Captain Hanada, the officer who had earlier ordered me to "say prayers" made life in the Camp tolerable. The sick were reasonably well looked after, we were free in the Camp grounds during the day and in the Block at night. We even had an occasional sing-song suggested by the Commandant. One night he told a story. "When I was a school-boy, a great Englishman came to our school and to welcome him we sang, 'There will always be an England'. That man was the Prince of Wales (Edward VIII) and,



he added with a knowing smile, “he did not bring Mrs. Simpson with him ...” Loud applause!

A few days after the fall of Singapore (renamed Syonanto 昭南島 — brilliant South Island) the Kenpeitai with High Command approval, initiated a purge of Chinese bad elements, a favourite term which included criminals, volunteers who had fought against them, members of the China War Relief Fund and all those with tattoo marks on their bodies ... interpreted as members of dangerous secret societies. After rounding up, thousands of men spent hours and days even, in the burning sun with no food, water or toilet facilities. “Screening” followed. Those who “Passed” were rubber-stamped “EXAMINED” on their clothes or their person. Those whose clothes were marked cut the piece and carried it like an identity card. Those stamped on the arm had to make sure the imprint was not washed out. All those who “Failed”, were imprisoned or executed. Japanese records stated that six thousand ‘died’, unofficial accounts put the number at between twenty-five and fifty thousand, disappeared or dead. Hooded accusers were used to identify suspects.

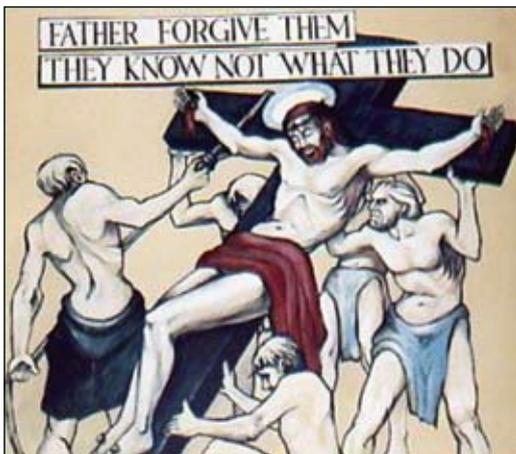
The “Clean-up of bad elements Squad” moved up through Malaya and reached Taiping on Easter Sunday, 1942. On Easter Sunday morning thousands of people were hounded from their homes and assembled in different open spaces in the town. Even Mass in the local church was interrupted and the congregation hunted out.

On that same Sunday morning, the Brothers were ordered out of their cells to double up with the Chinese sailors. We had strict orders not even to peep out of the cells. Towards nightfall, a troop of soldiers with fixed bayonets prodded and propelled those who had failed the screening test before them. They were bundled ten or twelve to a cell and left there all night with no human facilities.

In the morning, they were tied one after the other, to a kind of lectern-like platform and flogged until they admitted they were ‘bad elements’. I did not witness the actual flogging. That Easter Reign of Terror for Taiping ended when the victims were taken away in lorries. Some said they were buried alive outside the town, others, that they had been shipped to Papua New Guinea as slave workers for the Japanese. As far as we know none returned home.

We crawled back to our cells and cleaned them out. Such was our Easter of 1942. We tried to associate those innocent men, flogged and led to death, and ourselves too, with the words of Jesus: “Father forgive them, they know not what they do.”

(To be continued)



Stanley Warren, a British war prisoner in Singapore painted five murals within the prison camp. All his paintings represent the triumph of the spirit over human degradation. Other prisoners in other Camps recorded their feelings on prison walls and cell doors ... unfortunately conditions were such that they could not have been recorded.

Family Updates

Carnival Time

La Salle Primary School held its annual carnival on the 8th February. The early morning was quite cool but the sun came out early making for ideal carnival conditions. The games stalls were tastily decorated and long queues of eager young ones were soon formed. With such quality on offer, the judges had a difficult time assessing the best. Student performances in music and sport filled out the morning programme. We hope the neighbours were not unduly disturbed by the Chinese Drums! The boys play them with style and dash. The afternoon was particularly crowded with visitors and the day ended happily. The organisers can feel well pleased.



Inter-School Athletics



The month of February has become the month for the annual inter-school athletics battles. They are a noisy, cheerful and colourful three-day occasion and on the final day there is an explosion of sound. Four of our Lasallian secondary schools were in action. St. Joseph's and Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) retained Division 2 status while Chong Gene Hang and La Salle featured in Division 1. The athletes of La Salle College came within a whisker of winning the under 14 category but were pipped at the line in the very last race. The school managed a creditable second overall and lives to fight another day.

Lasallian Volunteers



The Annual General Meeting of the Hong Kong Lasallian Volunteers was held on the 8th February. The outgoing executive committee, chaired by Peter Leung, handed over the reins to a new committee chaired by Linus Chan. The Volunteers receive and give formation, serve the needy and help all Lasallian secondary school newcomers into the Lasallian community. Indeed, the new committee believes the focus this year should be on strengthening the community element in our schools. We thank the outgoing committee for keeping the flame alive and wish all the best to the new.

Dance Champions



The La Salle College Jazz Dance Trio won the highest award (Honours Award 優等獎) from among 44 entries, with unanimous applause, at the Hong Kong Schools Dance Festival on Monday the 3rd February, for their dance, 'Let's have a break'. The College also won the Choreography Prize for the Section. Later, on the 15th February, the full dance team was highly commended for a 'kung-fu' style dance called Wu Lin. Congratulations to the Dance Team and to coach, Mr. Bon Kwong and to teachers in charge.

Home for the Aged

On the 31st January 2015, a group of pupils from De La Salle Secondary School, N.T. paid a visit to Sheung Shui St. Joseph's Home for the Aged. They were accompanied by some members of the School's Parent-Teacher Association. The School Choir sang and some parents entertained the old folks with Chinese opera. The visit was a 'Happy Chinese New Year' gift and was much appreciated.



Sunny Sports

The La Salle Primary School Annual Sports Day took place on the 15th January under a brilliant blue sky — literally not a cloud in the sky. There were two Guests of Honour this year; Mr. Charles Chan, Chairman of the Parent Teacher Association who encouraged everybody to good sportsmanship and Mr. So Wa Wai, an Outstanding Young Person's Award Winner. Mr. So, in fact, was the first Hong Kong Para-Olympic gold medal winner, coming in first in the 100 metres. Since then, he has won a number of golds and is currently the world record holder for the 100 and 200 metres. He spoke movingly about his early difficulties and was an inspiration to the young boys. The singing of the school song and photo-taking rounded off a very successful meet.



Celebrations

140th Anniversary

St. Joseph's College



Green and White Day

St. Joseph's College has a long tradition of staging Open Days. There was a special one on Sunday, the 1st February, to celebrate its 140th anniversary.

On a cool, crisp morning the Opening Ceremony took place in the school playground with the Hon. Sir David K.P. Li as Guest of Honour. Sir David was the 4th generation of the Li family to attend St. Joseph's and both the Old and New Halls are named for his great, great grandfather, Li Shek Pang.



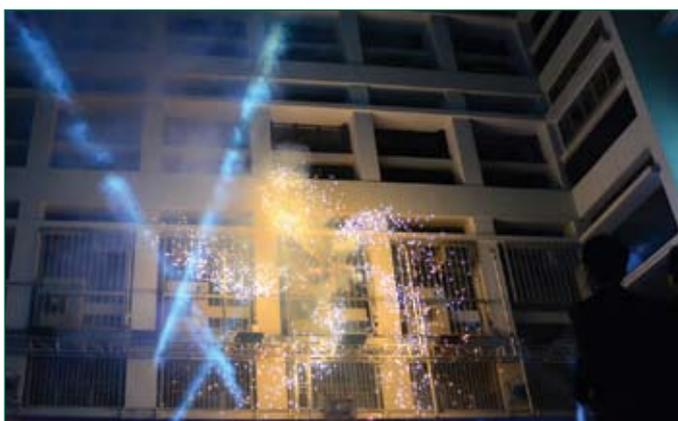
The gateway



Besides Sir David, the stage was graced by the presence of seven Brothers, 'real' Brothers, not plastic ones, as Supervisor Brother Jeffrey Chan emphasised in his speech. It is rare nowadays to find so many Brothers together. Their presence was appropriate because the celebration marked the arrival of the Brothers in Hong Kong 140 years ago. It was also appropriate that a papal blessing was presented to the school for the occasion.

Besides the College Principal, Ms. Caroline Chan, all the other Lasallian School Principals and Supervisors in Hong Kong took time out to attend. The Open Day was ideal for staff, students, old boys and parents to merge as one. The organizing committee deserves much credit for the success of the day.

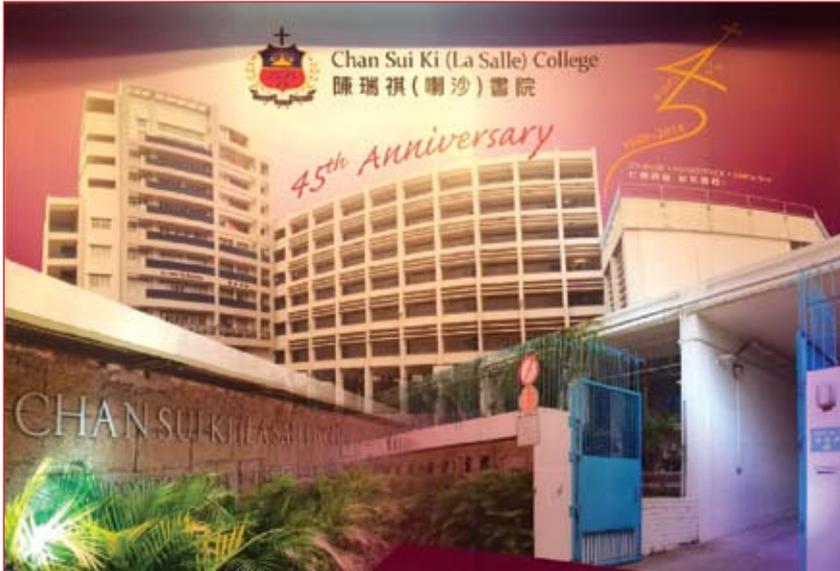
Epoch ... ■



Celebrations

45th Anniversary

Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College



Gala Dinner

Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College is celebrating its 45th anniversary. Following on their successful Open Days the next major event was a celebratory Dinner. This was held in Club 1 on the 31st January. As the Chair of the Old Boys' Association and organizing committee, Larry Leung, remarked: "We planned for a small gathering but it has turned out to be a very large one."

Out of six school principals in its history, four were present, led by Brother Lawrence

Blake, a robust eighty five. Another highlight was the toasting of the first graduating group of 1969, pictured together with their teachers. Chan Sui Ki has the distinction of having two school songs, one from pre 1977 and one post. Both were sung with gusto.

God spare us all the health for celebrating the 50th anniversary dinner.

Thanksgiving Mass

To celebrate the 45th Anniversary of the school, a thanksgiving Mass was held on Thursday, the 12th February 2015. The chief celebrant was Rev. Stephen Lee, Auxiliary Bishop of Hong Kong, assisted by Rev. Matthew Chan, S.D.B. and Rev. Francis Che, S.D.B. The school prepared prayers of intercession that were both relevant and meaningful. The Mass was a fitting conclusion to the 45th Anniversary celebrations, thanking God for all the blessings He has bestowed on the school since its founding in 1969. ■



... ONE FAMILY





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