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LASALLIAN EAST ASIA DISTRICT



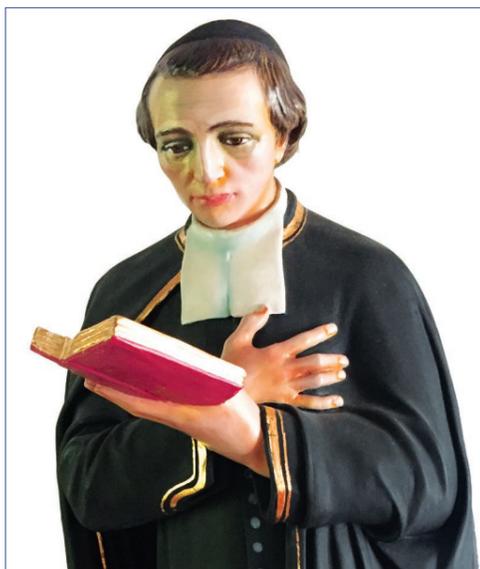
# gateway

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(Cover) This statue of St. Brother Solomon stands in the foyer of the school office in La Salle College. We believe it is the only one of its kind in this part of the world.

# The gateway

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# issue 67

## The Gateway Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin October 2016 Sixty-seventh Issue

# Welcome

The Gateway is back on track after the summer break. Schools are in full swing, bursting with academic and extra-curricular activities. Autumn is still with us with its occasional hints of cooler air.

We continue with our “Memories” thread, this time from an old boy with a fine memory for detail. Many readers will remember the old songs and singers that are mentioned, others will relate to some of the characters in the article and others will feel the spirit permeating a true scout. We thank William Lai for making this article available to us.

The Updates contain three visits. Brother Guillermo of Peru visited China to receive a high-level award in recognition of his great contribution to spreading Chinese culture. Hopefully his many books, written in Spanish, will one day be translated into English.

Another visit was by Brother Gustavo Ramirez, our General Councillor for Mission and Association. He came to us in the height of summer when schools were not in session. Nevertheless, he was able to visit a number of schools and meet some staff and get an overall picture.

Then there was the visit by two young Brothers, John from Thailand and Ranier from the Philippines. They linked up with Brother Sockie here in Hong Kong for a Vocation Awareness programme. They visited all five of our secondary schools and met numerous groups. Please God their efforts will bear vocations fruit.

The canonisation of St. Brother Solomon aroused much interest. Schools made good use of resource packages and there was a Thanksgiving Mass for the Lasallian Family on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October. Bishop Joseph Ha delivered a fine homily.

Around the same time, we were reaching the end of the annual International Lasallian Days for Peace. Valiant efforts were made by all schools to promote peace on earth. ■



# Memories

## William Remembers

In 2008, the North American Lasallian Newsletter published an interesting article by an old boy of La Salle College called William Lai, Class of 61. William wrote about his school-day memories and we would like to share them with the wider community. We thank the editors of the Newsletter as well as William himself for consenting to reproduce this very slightly amended version. Relax and enjoy.



### Memories Are Made of This (Dean Martin 1955): *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Believe it or not, I was a choir boy at La Salle Primary School which was housed at Perth Street at the time. The year was 1954 and we were taught to sing all the Christmas carols. I had known the carols before,



but this time we were being trained to sing them in a choir for a road-show. We had many practices and had to learn all the lyrics by heart. The practice sessions were enjoyable breaks from the routines of the school.

The road show took the choir a-carrying to the patients of various hospitals. One of the hospitals we visited was the British Military Hospital, aka La Salle College before it was returned to its rightful owners. The choir therefore had an exclusive preview of the Dome and its interiors before it became La Salle College again. The visit to what was then called 33<sup>rd</sup> Hospital was recorded in pictures. One of the pictures taken at this visit appears on page 131 in Mark Huang's "Sons of La Salle Everyone". If I am not mistaken, this picture came from my collection. Challenge for the reader: find me in the picture.

The choir training for carol-singing made such a mark on me that I would hark back to that time every Christmas or whenever I hear carols being sung at concerts or played on radio.

### Lunch-time religion



At the Perth Street campus, the lunch hour was usually a fairly quiet period. Sometimes we would go explore the hills at the back of the school just beyond a piece of gravel ground that passed off as a football field. Sometimes we would just hang out somewhere on the school grounds proper. If Brother Felix, the Principal, happened along and saw you loitering around seemingly doing nothing useful, he would strongly suggest that you go to the school chapel and partake in the recital of the Rosary by joining in with an ever-

present crowd of fervent, lunch-time Rosary faithful. Yours truly was at the receiving end of this suggestion a few times. Yes, I know the Rosary well.

The Hail Mary and the Our Father and other prayers, of course, were said on many other occasions other than just at Brother Felix's lunch-time urgings. But the lunch prayers did add to the tally and, after chalking up a million and half Hail Marys and Our Fathers, they become part of you, much like your arms and legs. It's instant and complete recall of the entire verse even after decades of having nothing to do with Mary or Our Father.

### The Air That I Breathe (Hollies, 1974)

In the Middle-Forms, we had separate catechism and Bible classes. One year, a certain Brother was our Bible teacher. He would have us mark out lines, paragraphs and sections of the New Testament, and the homework was to learn the designated segments by heart, to be tested for recitation the next Bible class. If you failed to recall the marked passages verbatim without aid, you would be asked to stand in a line-up in front of the class, or sometimes outside the classroom.

During class, he would also walk around the students' desks and peer over their shoulders closely as he emphasized a teaching point he was making. He gave us, or at least me, a personal appreciation of the phrase "breathing down your neck".

I won't describe the air that I breathed then, but suffice it to say that I learnt my Bible well. This Brother was, of course, not the only Bible teacher we had through the years. Other teachers also encouraged the learning of the Bible by heart to some extent, but perhaps in less of a demonstrative fashion.

Many years later, I would surprise unsuspecting friends and professional colleagues with Biblical quotes apropos to the occasion. People were amazed that I, normally not a religious-looking sort in adult life, could blurt out passages from the Bible spontaneously as if I were a preacher. That sometimes generated much interest from my associates and livened up social occasions. I have this Brother and other Bible teachers to thank for that.

**I'm a Believer (Monkees 1966) ... or not**

Humour and agony aside, the religious schooling at La Salle became an integral part of an intellectual background that later on would provide an insightful perspective with which the world would be viewed. I have found that the religious knowledge learnt at La Salle has helped in a better understanding of world affairs; in enhancing the appreciation of cultures, literature and history; in establishing rapport with colleagues and clients of various faiths; in evaluating different belief systems; and in generally having a satisfying quality of intellectual life. One does not have to be a religious practitioner, or even a believer, to benefit from and be enriched by a religious education. La Salle College had done that for me. Note that I am referring to only the religious education that I received at La Salle College.

**Of Irish Brothers and Irish Coffee**

A couple of blocks from the Dome, at the corner of Waterloo Road and Prince Edward Road (or was it Boundary Street?), there was a coffee shop, called The Coffee House. A few friends and I used to go there from time to time. The Irish Coffee in that shop was



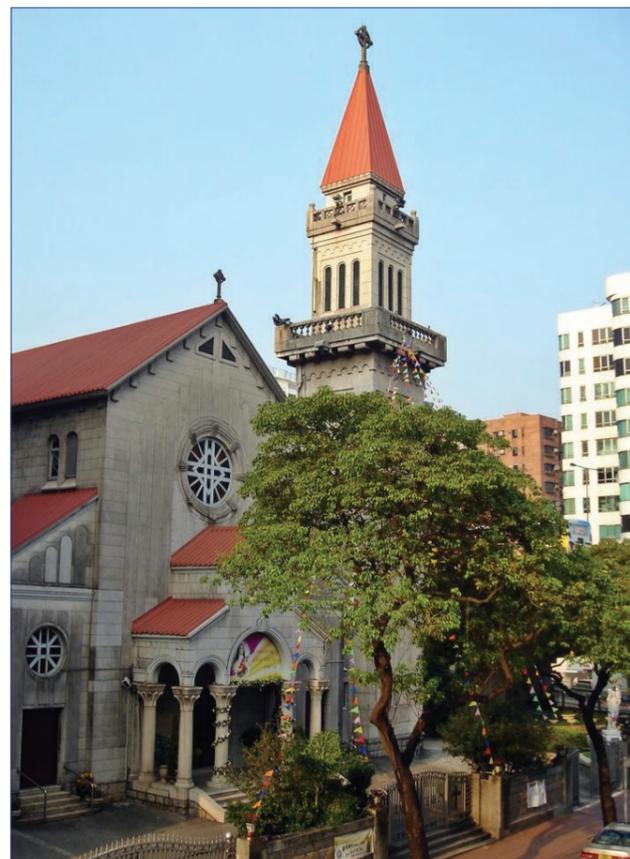
incomparable. We would go there after school but sometimes we would skip class and spend (no, not waste) a little bit of our youth sipping laced coffee there. We thought we would, for a while at least, escape from the watchful eyes of the Brothers, many of whom were Irish, only to

be hooked by Irish Coffee. I still think that Coffee House made the best Irish Coffee I have ever tasted, and I have tried it in many places in my travels. Even to this day, whenever I see Irish Coffee on restaurant menus, my mind goes back to the "real" Irish Coffee that we had at that coffee shop against which the present Irish Coffee being served to me would be judged.

Looking back, I am glad that the strongest substance we ever took was Irish Coffee. While we belonged

to the same generation, we never became flower children.

**Standing on the corner, watching all the girls go by (The Four Lads, 1956)**



After coffee and sometimes after school, we would actualize the lyrics of this 1956 Four Lads hit, by standing on the corner of Waterloo and Prince Edward Roads and watching all the girls go by. The girls, of course, were Maryknoll girls. Sometimes, it was more strategic to position oneself across the street where the St. Teresa's Church was and still is. Those were the days before any of the flyovers were built and you had a better view of pedestrian movements and an easier way of crossing the street. Some of us advanced beyond the watching stage and actually acquired Maryknoll girlfriends. But that's another story, or stories. A few years after leaving La Salle College, I was married at St. Teresa's Church. No, she was not a Maryknoll girl. The girl-watching platform had moved to the University of Hong Kong by then. Belilios won out that time. Forty years on and two sons later, it's still going strong.

**They will always sing this song ... but with which word?**



Did you know that Brother Felix had wanted to change a word in the school song? The word was "minding" in "She would have us ever minding, That above is our true home". He believed that the use of "minding" in this context was a malapropism. He said

the correct word should be "mindful". The reason was that "mindful" meant bearing in mind, whereas "minding" could mean to be leery of something that one wants to avoid, as in the ad-nauseum warning to "mind the gap" in the Hong Kong Underground (MTR). The intent of the two lines in question was that "she" wanted us to bear in mind that the "above" is our true home; she did not want us to be apprehensive of the fact that our true home is above. Brother Felix actually had us singing "mindful" for a while. But I guess the idea did not catch on in the long run.

Though his wish to change the wording did not hold, what Brother Felix taught us was the need to be aware of the subtleties and nuances of the words we used if we wanted to master the language and express ourselves clearly and accurately.

**Baywatch without the babes**

La Salle College has always been noted for her outstanding athleticism. We would all aspire to be a school athletic star at some point. But unfortunately for



me, I had neither the talent nor the physical attributes to satisfy this aspiration. But I did know how to swim from a young age. My only hope was to make something of this inclination. I found it in lifesaving.

I began life-saving training after joining the scouts. We trained to obtain life-guard qualifications from the Royal Life-Saving Society. There were, and still are, I believe, progressive levels of life-saving qualifications and we would train hard for a higher level every year. While I did not have the muscular prowess to swim fast in competition, I could swim long. I remember going to the swimming pavilions at Lai Chi Kok. These pavilions were constructed out of wood and bamboo and consisted of two prongs protruding from the rocky beaches to form what looked like swimming pools between the two protrusions. We would swim innumerable laps in these "pools", as a requirement of the life-saving exams which consisted of being able to swim in certain styles for certain distances within certain time limits. Another requirement was to swim fully clothed for a certain distance and then take off all street clothing in water without submerging one's head. Before or after these swims, we would practice life-saving techniques either in water or on land. Sometimes we would train on beaches where we would swim from beach to beach and then swim back to the originating beach (because that's where our clothes were). I surprised myself when I actually was able to advance to the then highest level of life-saving qualifications, the Distinction Award. I even became a life-saving instructor. As far as the swimming went, I was never an aquatic star, of course; but I did swim across the harbour once when the cross-harbour race was an annual event. I was also in a marathon swim at least once. I can't recall the exact route of this marathon, though I still have the medal marking this participation.

Apart from training, the school life-saving team was tasked to be the lifeguards at various public and private social events (no pay, just a free lunch). I remember going on some fancy yachts on some of these tours of duty, which was kind of a treat. My life-saving team-mates and I had sat in life-guard stands on beaches watching the swimming crowd frolicking in the water, but I could not recall anyone of us ever

being approached by half-naked women as the Baywatch series suggested might be the case.

For me, what all this life-saving and water training did was not so much the actual technical aspects of life-saving as the life-skills they imparted. The training had helped the build-up of such qualities as: perseverance, tenacity, endurance, and a certain “stick-to-it-iveness”. To this training at La Salle College, I attribute my later stamina that allowed me to cope with and persist in difficult situations of various sorts, such as working extraordinarily long hours without any pause, keeping cool under extreme stress, remaining steadfast in the face of adversity, sitting through long and boring professional conferences where everybody else would clamour for a break or end, or shoveling knee-deep snow in -30°C weather, etc.

I did not encounter any occasion to use my life-saving skills as a member of the school life-guards. But the habit of scanning the surroundings whenever and wherever there are swimmers around never left me. This vigilance finally paid off many years later when I spotted a swimmer in distress at a pool party, which nobody else noticed, and I got him out of the pool.

**Be Prepared ...  
You had a good home and you left  
(first line of The 17<sup>th</sup> Chant)**

I had been a member of the 17<sup>th</sup> Kowloon Scout Group since I entered La Salle, first as a Cub and then advancing to the Seniors. In conjunction with the La Salle education, I think scouting in the 17<sup>th</sup> helped to shape my adolescent and young adult development. I can recall many of our scouting activities; the outings, camping and singing around a campfire, carrying a rucksack almost equal to my body weight, sleeping on nothing more than a ground sheet (and occasionally without), courses to qualify for badges, marching etc, etc. With some persistence and grittiness, I managed to become a Queen’s Scout. I can still remember receiving the Queen’s Scout Certificate from the then Hong Kong Governor (I think his name was Sir Robert Black) as if it was yesterday.

For me, the scouting participation has had life-long impacts. Apart from the sense of camaraderie akin to the feeling of a “band of brothers”, scouting as I experienced it in La Salle College allowed the development of such qualities as discipline, loyalty, respect, honesty, integrity, and a venturesome spirit.



These traits were to become part of the personality make-up and have served me well. And, the skills that I learned as a scout are still useful today, whether the activity involves trekking in the Canadian Rockies, felling an unwanted tree in the backyard, handing someone a pair of scissors, or tying down some canopy in the fierce prairie wind, just to cite a few examples.

“Nails and Tacks,  
Rails and Cracks  
La Salle Scouts are  
Crackerjacks,  
Yeah! 17<sup>th</sup>.”

**Tipperary ... to ...  
My Old Kentucky Home ... via ...  
Land of the Silver Birch**

Amongst the many enjoyable scouting activities was the sing-song sessions either in weekly meetings or when on outings. Gathering around the campfire after dinner on camping trips was something we all looked forward to after a long day’s scouting field craft. Land of the Silver Birch happened to be one of my favourites. Little did I know at the time that I was singing about my future adopted country. Many of these tunes are folk songs from different lands. Through these songs and the singing sessions, we

were in effect exposed to the various cultures and their folklores. Despite the fact that some of these songs would be considered politically incorrect by today’s standards, this exposure to the diverse cultures was an education in itself. Travelling through the Deep South in the US many years later, I had the feeling that some things were kind of familiar and Dixieland did not appear to be a strange place at all when I recalled the folk songs I learned as a boy scout. As with the religious education mentioned earlier, these kinds of exposure at La Salle had enabled a better appreciation of cultural diversities and an enhanced adaptive capability.

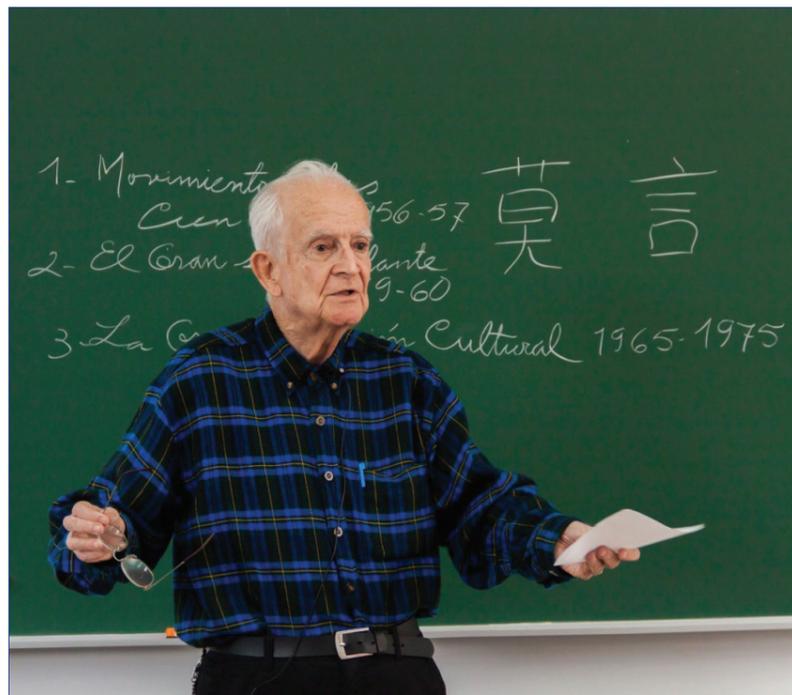
**Another 50 years**

The year was 1957. It was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Boy Scouts movement. I remember going to the Golden Jamboree and singing The Jamboree Song of 1957. A line in the song was: “... And we’ll march along together another fifty years”. Well, 2007 was the second 50<sup>th</sup> year, which happened to coincide with the 75<sup>th</sup> La Salle College anniversary. It is with some regret that I was not able to see any event or function marking the centennial anniversary of the Boy Scouts on my visit to Hong Kong for the 75<sup>th</sup> celebrations. Perhaps it was a question of the timing of the visit. ■



# Family Updates

## Brother Guillermo Award



Some years ago, a Brother from Peru, called Brother Guillermo, would occasionally come to stay with the Brothers in Hong Kong during holiday time. At the time, he was lecturing in Spanish at universities, including Beijing University and at the same time was researching and writing about Chinese culture. He became a prolific writer and ended up with 25 books, written in Spanish. Just recently, Brother Guillermo has received a decoration in recognition of his contribution to the promotion of Chinese culture in the world. The ceremony took place in Beijing at the end of August 2016. We share Guillermo's joy and unite ourselves with him in prayers and congratulations.

## Councillor Visit

Brother Gustavo Ramirez, General Councillor for Association and Mission, paid a summer visit to some countries in East Asia. He visited Hong Kong from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of August. Although the visit was short and fell right in the heart of the summer holiday, Brother was able to visit a number of schools, including De La Salle Secondary School, St. Joseph's College and La Salle College and Primary. Since his area of responsibility falls under Mission, he was particularly interested in the details of our mission in Hong Kong. Mr. Eric Ku, the then Principal of De La Salle, was an excellent source of information and enlightenment. If Brother Gustavo ever finds his way back to us, we will make sure he visits our other schools also.



## Trip to Sabah

Following a number of approaches by his old boys of Sabah days, Brother Lawrence took the big decision to fly to Kota Kinabalu to attend the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner of La Salle and Sacred Heart alumni.

He made up his mind to travel in August 2016 and took off on the 18<sup>th</sup>, returning on the 25<sup>th</sup>. He was accompanied by his nurse, Alice, and by the Brothers cook, Wendy.

The dinner was attended by a record 1,452 persons seated at 132 tables. The Guest of Honour and Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak, Tan Sri Richard Malanjum, said: "Before I go any further, let's be upstanding and welcome a very important guest in the person of Rev. Brother Lawrence Blake." Brother Lawrence is the only remaining former Irish teacher of the school.

On his return, Brother Lawrence said he not only enjoyed the visit but that some parts of Sabah were the nearest thing to heaven on earth. There might be a tourist rush after this!



## Hong Kong Lasallian Volunteers Facilitators' Camp



The Hong Kong Lasallian Volunteers Facilitators' Camp 2016 was held from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August at La Salle College, Kowloon. The Camp began with a sharing by Brother Sockie about his journey as a De La Salle Brother from the beginning. The programme also included the story of the Founder, team spirit building games and a reflection session in the school Chapel. The Camp ended with a dinner in the Brothers' quarters. The participants found this is a meaningful and memorable experience.

## Christian Brothers Schools Leadership Camp 2016

The Christian Brothers Schools Leadership Camp was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2016 in Cheung Chau, a beautiful off-shore island. 26 student leaders from our five Lasallian secondary schools attended the camp. There were two input sessions, refreshing the participants' knowledge about our Lasallian Spirit including the spirit of leadership. There were various reflection and sharing sessions. Our hope is that the participants will be empowered on their journey, serving as student leaders in their own schools and that they will never fall alone on this Lasallian journey.



## Widening Horizons

Our first Lasallian International school in Malaysia opened its doors at the end of August 2016, presided over by Brother Thomas Lavin who has spent much of his missionary life in Hong Kong. The school is located in Petaling Jaya, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. It was the brainchild of old boys of our well-known St. Joseph's Institution, Singapore and so the school is called St. Joseph's Institution International, Malaysia. The school's Blessing ceremony was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, with Archbishop Murphy Pakiam presiding. Some members of our Lasallian Family in Hong Kong have already visited and came away impressed. Long may the school prosper.



## Vocation Campaign

It has been a long time since we have had a vocation from Hong Kong to the Brother's way of life from. We have not lost hope. Indeed, just last week, from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, three young Brothers embarked on a vocation drive. Brothers Ranier, Sockie and John visited all five of our secondary schools, spending time reflecting and playing with the students. They also met with various student and teacher groups and gave a short round-up to a meeting of APLEC Hong Kong. Their programme was well organised by Nikki Chan, giving the Brothers maximum exposure. The Brothers, Principals and helpers in all five schools were a great help too. Let us hope and pray that the seeds of a vocation have been sown in the hearts of some of our students and will bear fruit in due season.



## Badminton Boost

La Salle College is pleased to announce that Ko Shing Hei has captured the Championship at the U15 Mixed Doubles with his partner, Lui Lok Lok (Heep Yunn School), at the Badminton Asia U15 Junior Championships 2016 which was held in Indonesia from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2016. They beat their Indonesian opponents 21-11 and 21-18. Ko Shing Hei also managed to make his way into the Semi-Finals at the U15 Boys Singles. This achievement is a boost to the sport not only in the College but in Hong Kong.



## CoolThink

Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School has received the good news that the school has been accepted as one of the 32 Network Schools for the Computational Thinking and Coding Education Programme. The Programme aims to design a curriculum that increases the computational thinking and coding skills of upper primary students, as well as to increase their interest in computer science. Coding is the ability to write programming language that provides instruction to computers and widely regarded as an effective mean to develop digital literacy and problem solving skills. A "Start-up Lab" will be installed with educational hardware tools to help in the coding activities of the school.



## Saint Brother Solomon

The canonisation of Brother Solomon Leclercq was a cause of great joy to the Hong Kong Lasallian Family. Each school made good use of a resource package to get across the story of the saint and to stress the values he upheld. The main celebration was a Thanksgiving Mass held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October in the chapel of St. Joseph's College. Bishop Joseph Ha kindly officiated while Fathers Bruno Lepeu and Carlos Cheung concelebrated. The congregation was particularly pleased at the presence of Brother Alphonsus Breen, bright and cheerful at the age of eighty-three. May Saint Brother Solomon bless us all with peace.



# The Hong Kong Lasallian Mission Fund

The Hong Kong Lasallian Mission Fund (the Fund) was established in March 2012 by the Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council under the auspices of the De La Salle Brothers in Hong Kong. The Brothers are a worldwide Catholic Religious Institution called the Brothers of the Christian Schools, known familiarly in Hong Kong as the De La Salle Brothers. In Hong Kong, the Brothers are incorporated under the St. Joseph's College Incorporation Ordinance (Chapter 1048) of the Laws of Hong Kong. They have been in Hong Kong since 1875 and are the Sponsoring Body of eight Lasallian schools.

The Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council (HKLEC) was established by the Brothers in 2004. Its role is to advise and assist the Brothers in promoting the Lasallian vision and mission in Hong Kong. It is chaired by the Head of the Brothers in Hong Kong. Its members include all the School Supervisors as well as members of the Lasallian alumni associations. Current membership of the HKLEC is as follows:

Brother Patrick Tierney (Chairman)  
 Mr. Lester G Huang (Legal Adviser)  
 Mr. Thomas Wong (Treasurer)  
 Brother Thomas Lavin  
 Brother Jeffrey Chan  
 Mr. Wong Mo Ting  
 Mr. Chris Lau  
 Mr. Ho Kong Hin  
 Ms Millie Tam  
 Mr. Eric Ku  
 Mr. Nicholas W F Ng  
 Mr. Peter Choy  
 Mr. Larry Leung  
 Mr. Kenneth Wong  
 Mr. Cheng Tai Man  
 Mr. Ricky Mak

## Purpose and Scope of the Hong Kong Lasallian Fund

The primary purpose of the Fund is to support the programmes and work of the Brothers, with the help and support of the lay partners. The Brothers operate five secondary and three primary schools in Hong Kong. They also undertake a range of educational and formation programmes for staff and young people both inside and outside the schools.

The Fund is not normally used for activities where there are established sources of funding e.g. school programmes or operations funded by the government or by the respective school organisations (Parent-Teacher Associations/Alumni Associations etc). The Fund is primarily used to supplement resources needed for educational and formation activities in schools and educational centres run by the Brothers. The HKLEC is the authority for determining whether a particular project should be covered by the Fund.

The following programmes are expected to fall within the ambit of the Fund:

- formation activities including those run by or for the Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council, the Asia Pacific Lasallian Educators' Congress Hong Kong (APLEC HK), the Hong Kong Lasallian Youth Movement (LYM), and the Lasallian Volunteers (LV); and
- projects for the needy in Hong Kong, in Mainland China and in other places, run by or in the name of the De La Salle Brothers.

## Sources of Funding

The Fund has at the outset taken over some of the assets of the former Hong Kong Lasallian Formation Fund and the Asia Pacific Lasallian Educators'



Congress Hong Kong, and the Brothers have also made a donation to the Fund. All these amounted to about HK\$500,000. Donations to the Fund qualify for tax exemption as approved by the Hong Kong Inland Revenue Department.

Additions to the Fund come from donations or specific fund-raising programmes mounted by the HKLEC. We have since 2014 introduced the Hong Kong Lasallian Mission Fund Annual Raffle within the Lasallian Family to help promote the image of the HKLEC, to publicize the programmes of the Brothers as well as to generate some income for the Fund. Raffle tickets are sold within the Lasallian schools and among alumni.

## Projects Sponsored

Some of the Lasallian projects and activities supported by the Fund in the past number of years include the following:

- La Salle Study Centre in China
- Brothers formation in Myanmar
- De La Salle Secondary School's Students Support Programme
- The Bamboo School Project in Thailand
- The Hong Kong Lasallian Leadership Camp 2014
- Sponsorship of Hong Kong Lasallians' attendance at the 10th Asia-Pacific Lasallian Youth Congress (APLYC10)
- Sponsorship of Hong Kong Lasallians' attendance at the World Union of Lasallian Former Students Congress (UMAEL)
- Sponsorship of Lasallian response to typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines

# International Lasallian Days for Peace



The annual International Call for Peace finds a ready response in our Hong Kong Lasallian world. Each of our eight schools finds ways and means to promote awareness of the value of peace among our staff and students. They do so by means of prayer services, peace declaration day, inspirational speakers, movie screening, creative art and design, exhibitions and musical performances. The annual International Lasallian Days for Peace is seen as something meaningful and practical. ■



... ONE FAMILY





[www.lasalle.org.hk](http://www.lasalle.org.hk)

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