



The Gateway

Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin

November 2018

Seventy-Seventh Issue

Welcome

This issue features something about the life of a famous Hong Kong Lasallian. Professor Charles Kao is often referred to as the “father of fibre optics,” for being one of the pioneers bringing the internet into our lives. Charles studied in St. Joseph’s College, Hong Kong, under the benign influence of Brother Brendan Dunne, and has fond memories of his school life. He paid a number of visits to the College later in life where Brother Thomas Favier and the whole school welcomed him and his wife, Gwen, cordially.

The last few months saw a number of special events. First off we had the international Lasallian Days of Peace from 21st September to 21st October. We show a tiny part of the splendid efforts made by our schools and students to bring meaning to those days.

Our New Teachers Induction Day was held on the 13th October and there was a fine turnout. Brother Dennis Magbanua gave the keynote address and much satisfaction was expressed at the quality of our new teachers.

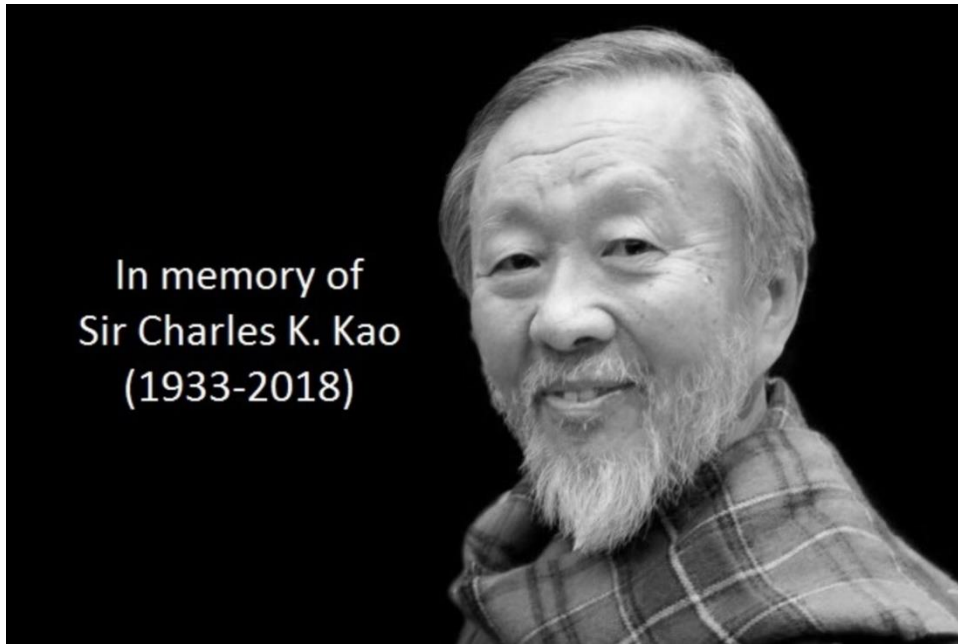
In the month of October, we had a special visit of 4 Brothers who were taking a week’s orientation course of our Lasallian world in Hong Kong. Indeed, we hope to see all 4 Brothers again in the coming year.

Then there was the Mass and Blessing of the extension of St. Joseph’s College at 26 Kennedy Road, a listed heritage building. And the Bishop came as presiding celebrant.

And talking about something special, towards the end of the month of November we witnessed the conferring of a Masters degree in Education, with Distinction, on Brother Francisco De La Rosa, familiarly called Brother Sockie. We reckon this is a first of its kind for a Brother in Hong Kong. Hearty congratulations Brother!

Christmas is coming. May our loving Saviour, born a helpless babe, guide and protect us always.





Father of Fibre Optics - Professor Charles Kao

Professor Charles Kao entered St. Joseph's College in 1948 and became a world-famous engineer and a world leader in the field of optical fibres.

He was born in 1933 in Shanghai into a modern, intellectually accomplished family. His grandfather was a well-known poet and calligrapher, two skills that used to be highly admired in China. Charles had an enjoyable childhood. The school he went to back then taught French, English and Mandarin. It was very challenging but great fun as well.

We take up the story in the words of Professor Kao himself:

"The primary school I attended in Shanghai was a very liberal one, established by scholars who had returned from an education in France. The children of leading families were enrolled there, including the son of a well-known man, believed to be a top gangster of the underworld!

I made a good friend in primary school who liked to play with me at home. We got our driver to buy all sorts of chemicals. Reading from scientific magazines, together we experimented and made mud balls from phosphorous to throw at stray cats and dogs. The mud balls would explode with a bang and frighten the animals out of their wits! From glass bottles and such like I would fashion the funnels and beakers needed. I had bottles of cyanide and concentrated acids.

One day as I was boiling up some nitric acid, the bottle exploded and the concentrated acid splashed onto my young brother's trousers. It burnt the cloth entirely away but fortunately did not land on any of his skin! My parents were furious and confiscated all my chemicals, including the cyanide. I wonder where they disposed of the stuff.

At the time, the family had a home that was situated inside the French Concession. The International Settlements were in an area within the city where various Western powers held authority. These areas were generally kept free from the rough and tumble of the metropolis, providing a haven from the human poverty of China. The locals nicknamed this area *shili yangchang* (a ten-mile strip of foreign spectacles). So when the Japanese invaded China in the

1930s, these areas were off limits for the invaders. The family was shielded from the horrors that occurred. With the chaos of war, the law courts were suspended, and social gatherings dried up. My parents stayed home more during this period, and we built a closer relationship with them. Together we played bridge and card games to pass the hours.

The cessation of war with Japan did not bring peace. Soon the Red Army, which had been fighting the Nationalist Government, was at the city gates. My father made the decision to leave. The topic had been discussed often over the family games of bridge and the various options mulled over. To move to Chungking, or to join relatives in Taiwan, or perhaps there were relatives who lived in Hong Kong too?

In 1948, gathering a few belongings, the family boarded a ship that sailed out of Shanghai on a grey dismal wet day. The famous waterfront at the Bund slowly receded out of sight and that was the last we saw of our home city for many years.

A short sojourn in Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, persuaded my father that Hong Kong would be a better haven. With help from maternal relatives in Hong Kong, the family found a small apartment and my brother and I were enrolled into St. Joseph's College where our cousins also studied. As English was the preferred medium of instruction, the local dialect of Cantonese was not a requirement and I never felt the need to learn the tongue."

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Date:

Registration Form

Name *Charles K. Kao*

Address *3rd floor, No. 1 Lan Sin Street, Hong Kong*

Place of Birth *Shanghai* Date of Birth *Nov. 4th, 1933*

Nationality *Chinese* Religion _____


School last attended *Shanghai International School* Class *finished Class 5*

Result of last Examination (Passed or Failed) *passed*

Date of leaving last school *May, 1949*

Class to which admission is sought *Class 4*

Second Language *English*



Professor Kao recalls that the school staff and students at St. Joseph's College were nice to him and accepted him as an equal. At that time Brother Brendan Dunne was the form teacher and students were required to speak English within the campus. Since Charles was already fluent in English, his classmates never had need to teach him Cantonese. The subjects he especially

liked were Physics and Chemistry and anything related to electricity.

One thing he remembered most about the school was the high degree of freedom allowed and the spirit of the teachers. Although a high degree of freedom was allowed, the students studied hard to prepare for examinations and teachers worked hard day after day to educate pupils in the hope that one day they would become successful and productive people who could contribute to society.

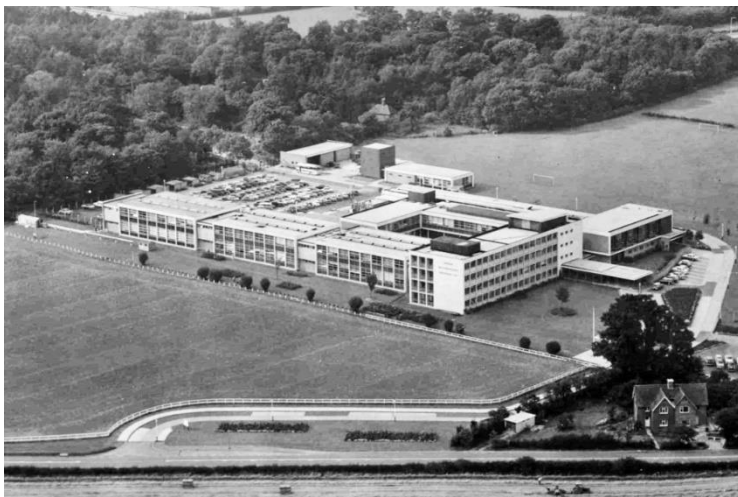


The teacher Professor Kao remembered most was Brother Brendan whom he wrote about in a book of memories called “The Wonder Years.” He said Br Brendan had not only taught him knowledge but more importantly how to treat others and be a good man.

“I did well academically, but did not apply myself much to athletics or

sports during my five years at St. Joseph’s College. My ex-classmates, in later life, reported that they remember me as a quiet person who did not join in the rough and tumble of boys play. I managed almost straight A’s in the school matriculation examinations, which qualified me to apply for entry to the University of Hong Kong. However, the University was still in some disarray after the war and not all faculties were functioning. I wished to study electrical engineering. Britain beckoned and the British Council in Hong Kong was helpful. In 1953 I boarded a P & O liner bound for England.

Someone in senior management had noticed how I had worked on the microwave projects and felt the promise I showed should not be lost to the company. An offer came allowing me to transfer from Loughborough to the research lab, Standard Telecommunication Laboratories (STL), in Harlow, sometimes referred to as the birth place of optical fibres. To add incentive for me to stay, a job would also be found for my wife, Gwen, at the new location. Loughborough had to be pacified and the lawyers got to work on that, and to get the house deposit refunded. The offer was too good to pass up, and my future was destined to take on this new course. I stayed with ITT Corp, working for the next thirty years at various locations, in the U.K., the U.S.A. and Europe.

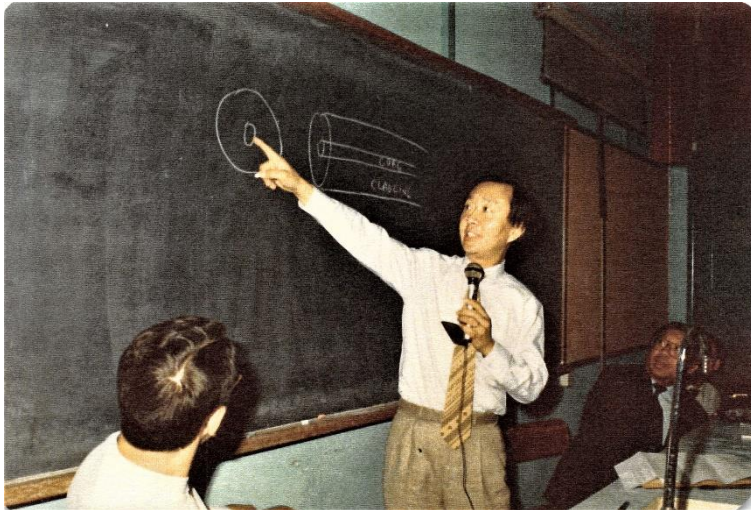


In 1970, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, CUHK, came calling. Would I come to the institution to set up an electronics department? STL agreed to give a two-year leave of absence, which then became four years. I was able to see the first batch of students graduate, and to establish a graduate programme as well. During this time, 1970–1974, annual summer leaves were taken to return to STL to keep abreast of developments in the research field

of optical fibres. It was also an opportunity to see my parents, who had remained in Harlow.

By 1974, the project I had seeded, with the now famous 1966 paper published in the *IEE Proceedings*, had progressed to the pre-production development stage. An industry had grown up around it and it was full speed ahead to revolutionize the telecommunications systems around the world. ITT wanted me back to be part of the team for this endeavour.

So the young family was uprooted again and the move this time was to the ITT plant in Roanoke, Virginia, in the U.S.A. I was promoted to Chief Scientist, then Vice-President and Director of Engineering in charge of the electro-optical products division at ITT. During my years in the U.S.A., I continued to travel to other research labs around the world, to discuss progress, to encourage work, to keep abreast of the leading edge of the developments. It was a busy time. I always dropped by to visit my parents in the U.K.”



In an interview given to the students of St. Joseph’s College, the ‘father of fibre optics’ explained that about forty years ago, people used high-frequency wave signals to transmit signals for telecommunication, but the wires and cables required took up much space and was too limiting for conventional use. It was later discovered that laser could also be used in the same way to transmit signals and that it took up much less space. The problem was that for laser transmission,

half of the signals would get lost for every metre. That was when he stepped in, believing that a good material could be found to guide the lasers. After much research, he and his team created the fibre optic cables that we use today. But, he added, that even though the optic cables worked quite well, some lasers still get lost if the cable is bent sharply. That would often lead to a beautiful sight in the laboratory as the whole room would suddenly fill with light. Professor Kao considered that the research process was both interesting and exciting.

When the interviewing students mentioned how some current textbooks show his photographs and asked him how he felt about that, Professor Kao replied that ever since he was a child and saw degrees and honours after peoples’ names, he had wanted to become somebody like that, so he had now fulfilled his childhood dream. But despite his great achievement, he is a humble man. He just felt the happiness and pleasure of reaching his target. He hoped that his achievement would serve as a motivation for others. He strongly believes that one should keep pursuing one’s target and be honest and try one’s best.

His main reason for coming back to Hong Kong was because he and his wife had two children. Living overseas, they were in the minority, while in Hong Kong they were in the majority. He thought living in a majority situation would be more natural for his wife and family. That was one main reason for accepting the offer of work at the Chinese University in 1970 and helping them open an electronics department.

Asked to comment on how new technology would affect people, he said that people’s relations with one another would definitely change, not that the relations would become lost but rather the way we communicate and express ourselves will be dramatically changed. We will each be acquiring a sense of global existence. As we are currently in a transition period, it is very sensitive with many new technologies being discovered but not yet stable. He also reminded the students that the entire system in our world is changing. Terms like “nationality”, “religion” and even “morals” no longer mean the same as before. So we should be careful to keep up with

the ever-changing world around us. He also expressed his opinion on IT teaching, saying that IT was just a tool and not anything that would provide instant, magical improvements.



Talking about changes in his Alma Mater he stated that nowadays there were lots more opportunities for students. A student could start a company on the internet and earn money and do all sorts of things they were not able to do in his time. He also thought that students today had many more rights and that was a positive change as long as it did not interfere with other people's rights.

Professor Kao left the students with this parting advice. He said that one should always understand others and understand how they think as he believed that very soon people on this planet will be living within one global society.

For a number of years before his death, Charles was afflicted with Alzheimer's disease and was lovingly cared for by his wife. Charles passed from this life on the 23rd, September 2018. It goes without saying that there was a huge turnout to pay respects at his repose and at his funeral. A memorial service was also held at St. Joseph's College and a book of condolence opened.

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New Teachers Induction 2018



The New Teachers Induction Programme was held on the 13th October 2018 in the Hall of La Salle College. A total of over 100 teachers from our 8 Lasallian schools took part, on a pleasant Autumn day. They were supported by a large number of the Lasallian Education Council members and by all 8 school Principals.

Brother Jeffrey Chan got the ball rolling with an interesting video and presentation on the life of St. La Salle. We were pleased to have Brother Dennis Magabunua as our keynote speaker and he spoke to the theme of “From Career to Calling” that is the viewing of teaching not just as a career but as a ministry, as a mission, a mission worth sharing with the new teachers. He linked this with the life of Saint La Salle who thought he was just going to be a priest and a canon of the cathedral of Rheims only to find that certain key events led him to start and grow the educational mission for the poor in France.

The feedback of the 8 groups was delivered very well and with excellent content. Each group also produced an icon summarizing their understanding of the Lasallian mission. The programme ended with a buffet lunch in the school canteen.

The organizing committee, composed of the vice-principals of our schools and chaired by Ms. Cecilia Tang deserve much credit for a job well done.



Nagasaki Pilgrimage

Brothers of La Salle College recently fulfilled a long-desired dream by going on a pilgrimage to Nagasaki. They had done some research and, in bonus territory, were guided by Mr. Paul Tam who can speak Japanese.

And so to Day 1. The highlight was a visit to Oura Cathedral, now a world heritage site. The Cathedral is beautifully located

on a rise overlooking the harbour. Two very interesting historical events took place here. When the centuries-old persecution against Christians was lifted in the 1860s, a French missionary priest began building a church at the Oura site. Suddenly, one day, he was approached by a group of peasants and before long discovered they were Christians, hidden Christians. They had been in hiding for over 250 years and still, somehow, had kept the faith. This extraordinary event is sometimes referred to as ‘the emergence of the hidden Christians.’



The other interesting aspect of the Oura site is that St. Maximilian Kolbe worked there before the 2nd World War. After five year’s missionary work, he was assigned back to Germany, then in the grip of Nazi power and terror. The story of what happened to Maximilian makes for gripping reading.

There were two highlights on Day 2. The first was a visit to the atomic bomb site and nearby museum. The exhibits made for sad viewing, as was to be expected. So much terrible history was on display and it was not easy to drag oneself away from viewing and reading. The actual site of the atomic blast is now a Peace Park and it was here that the Brothers shared peace prayers.



The second highlight also bore its weight of sadness, being the site of the crucifixion of 26 Catholic martyrs, in the years of persecution. Three of them were mere children who would not betray their faith. The story of the 26 martyrs is also well worth reading.

The Dragon Team

A dragon team, composed of 4 Brothers from overseas, paid a week's visit to Hong Kong in mid-October 2018 as part of their orientation to the city and to its Lasallian mission. The Hong Kong Lasallian Family is eagerly hoping that these 4 Brothers will be assigned on a longer-term basis come summer of 2019.

This time they were able to meet and share with various members of the Hong Kong Lasallian Family, including young teachers, principals and supervisors and some members of the Lasallian Education Council. This was largely in the context of the New Teachers Induction Day held on October 13th. In fact, one of the 4 Brothers, Dennis Magbanua, was in fact the keynote speaker.

Another highlight of their presence was the visit to 3 of our Lasallian schools, De La Salle Secondary School, Chan Siu Ki (La Salle) Primary School and La Salle College. These schools have not seen so many Brothers on their campuses for a long time and their presence and enthusiasm was much appreciated.

They also had time to explore typical Hong Kong housing estates and, of course, to sample local culinary delights.



Visit to Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School
Back row from right: Brothers Gelo, Dennis, Mikey and Francisco

Family Update

Peace Days

The International Lasallian Peace Day month in September/October is greeted enthusiastically by our schools in Hong Kong. The students, guided by teachers, do splendid work, in colouring, drawing, essay writing and short videos. For the sake of recognition, some works are adjudged top class and prizes and certificates are distributed. In truth, all the hundreds of participants deserve recognition and the schools should be commended for their fine efforts. Ms Nikki Chan, the Peace Days co-ordinator, also deserves a round of applause. “Let me be a channel of your peace.”



Virtual Reality for the Elderly



7 students from Chong Gene Hang College were awarded the first prize in the ‘Touching Hearts’ entries in a recent joint school competition which sought to narrow the IT gap between youth and age. The students spent more than a month taking VR videos of Hong Kong famous tourist spots. They then visited 24 homes for the aged and shared their VR videos with a total of

360 elderly. Since most of the elderly cannot move around freely, they appreciated the students’ efforts, taking them virtually around Hong Kong.

Ninety-Four

Jack Lao, an old boy of La Salle College from its establishment in 1932, celebrated his 94th birthday on 4th November 2018. The Heritage Team of the College thought it would be a good idea to invite Jack for a special interview on the eve of his birthday. And after the interview, they had arranged a surprise party, with a goodly number of old boys in attendance. Jack was at first somewhat taken aback but soon entered into the spirit of the occasion and, after the birthday cake cutting, he sang the school song with gusto and delivered a short speech. A joyous atmosphere pervaded the whole party.



Golden Memories

The Convention Hall on Hong Kong Island was the venue for the grand Gala Dinner celebration of the Golden Jubilee of St. Joseph's Primary School. The atmosphere was festive, with lights and bunting. Many old boys of the school turned up dressed as students and nearly all sported the school bow tie. This was very much in keeping with the theme of the celebration which was "Back to School." Another special feature of the night was the procession of 50, each representing a year group since the school establishment in 1968 and each accompanied by a current student. The Guest of Honour was Brother Ricky Laguda, Councillor to the Superior General in Rome. Very appropriately, he linked the school's motto of "Labore et Virtute" with a whole way of life. The Supervisor, Ms Mille Tam, the Principal, Ms Rosanna Chan, the organizing committee, all did a great job. Happy Golden Anniversary.



Water Polo

In the finals of Panasonic 19th School Water Polo Champions held on 13th November 2018, St. Joseph's College recaptured the Championship, after a wait of seven years. In fact, Water Polo has been a strength of the College for many years. This is the 13th time that the school has won the tournament in its 19 years of existence. Congratulations all round.



Tournament of Champions

ST. JOSEPH'S CUP TOURNAMENT OF THE CHAMPIONS

2018 Oct 27-28th

St. Joseph's College, 26 Keaneedy Road, Hong Kong



ST. JOSEPH'S CUP



The first international chess tournament co-organized by St. Joseph's College and the Hong Kong Chess Association was held on 27th October 2018. It was held in the pleasant surroundings of the school's newly acquired premises at 26 Kennedy Road, a Grade 1 listed heritage site. Eight world champion amateur players from Hong Kong, India, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Russia, China, and the Philippines were invited to participate in the tournament. Among them was Mr. Daniel Lam, an alumnus of the College, who was the first Hong Kong player to win the championship in the "World Amateur Chess" Blitz Group in 2017. It was a pleasure to watch the different generations mingling easily in a chess-filled atmosphere. For the record, the international tournament was won by a contestant from India.

Student Ambassadors of Ireland

The Irish Consulate in Hong Kong has become very active in promoting community and educational initiatives over the last several years. One of its educational outreach projects is called “Student Ambassadors.” Two representatives from secondary schools are chosen for a programme which includes participation in Irish cultural activities ranging from dance to music to food and sport. There is also a Debate and Public Speaking competition. The kick-off ceremonies for this year's batch of ambassadors was held in the Hall of La Salle College on the 20th November 2018. Representatives from 60 to 70 schools attended, a marvelous show of support. The Irish Consul General, Deputy Consul General, invited guests and student ambassadors were also treated to Harp playing and to Irish dancing.



Workshop for Language Teachers

On 17th November 2018, about 80 Chinese Language teachers of our 8 Lasallian schools attended a workshop hosted by St. Joseph's College. This was a first of its kind. Representatives from the Education Bureau and the Examination Authority were invited to share with our teachers the present trends and pedagogies in the teaching of Chinese Language in Hong Kong. The schools also took the opportunity to share their good practices as well as problems encountered. It is good to know that our teachers of Chinese have strengthened their network and are determined to hold more exchanges in the future.



Speech Days

Speech Days, perhaps the highlights of the school year, are in the news. The month of November is especially popular for holding Speech Days. Both La Salle Primary School and La Salle College had their celebrations on the 9th and 16th respectively. The Guest of Honour for the Primary was Dr. Christine Choi, Undersecretary for Education, while the College brought back its old boy, Mr. Frank Chan, the Secretary for Transport and Housing, both of whom delivered inspiring speeches. The ceremonies kicked off with musical entertainment of a high order. The Prizewinners were awarded their certificates and trophies in front of their very supportive parents. Congratulations all round.



Blessing New Campus



The 21st November 2018 was a milestone in the long history of St. Joseph's College, with the Blessing of its new campus at 26 Kennedy Road, directly opposite its main campus at 7 Kennedy Road. The new building is officially listed as a historical monument and indeed possesses a special character. The Bishop of Hong Kong, Rev. Michael Yeung, was the chief celebrant of a Mass held in the playground and attended by Form 6 and 4 students as well as many guests. After the Mass, the Bishop and concelebrating priests went around the building for the blessing with holy water. The ceremonies came to a fitting end with the unveiling of the Blessing plaque near the entrance of the building.

LEO Opening 2018

The opening gathering for our 2018/2019 Lasallian Educational Outreach (LEO) programme was held at the Caritas Centre in Ngau Tau Kok on the 23rd November 2018. This is the third year of the programme which is aimed at teaching English to recently arrived students from mainland China. About 20 students join the course each year and gradually grow in confidence in the subject. In fact, it is one of the main aims of our volunteer teachers to help the students grow in confidence, to become less afraid when examinations loom ahead. A short test was given to the students in order to assess their current standards. Both teachers and students are looking forward to the year ahead.



Blessing of Renovated Grave Plot

The blessing of the recently renovated plot of the Brothers in St. Michael's Cemetery, Happy Valley, took place on the morning of the 24th November 2018. A goodly number of school administrators and old boys attended and the weather was kind. Brother Patrick said a few words about the occasion and this was followed by a Prayer Service in memory of our deceased Brothers and former teachers. After the singing of the Salve Regina, participants placed flowers on the altar and prayed in silence.



The entire ceremony was fitting, especially in the month of November when we remember the holy souls.

Master Brother



It is not every day that a Brother of the Christian Schools is conferred with a Master's degree from Hong Kong University. The day was the 24th November 2018 and the Brother was Francisco De La Rosa, familiarly called Brother Sockie. Weather-wise, it could not have been a more pleasant day. To add to the colour and excitement, Brother's parents and sister came from the Philippines, making it a happy family gathering. Brother Sockie was conferred with the Master of Arts degree in Education, with Distinction, a well-deserved award for his hard work and perseverance.

Heartiest Congratulations!