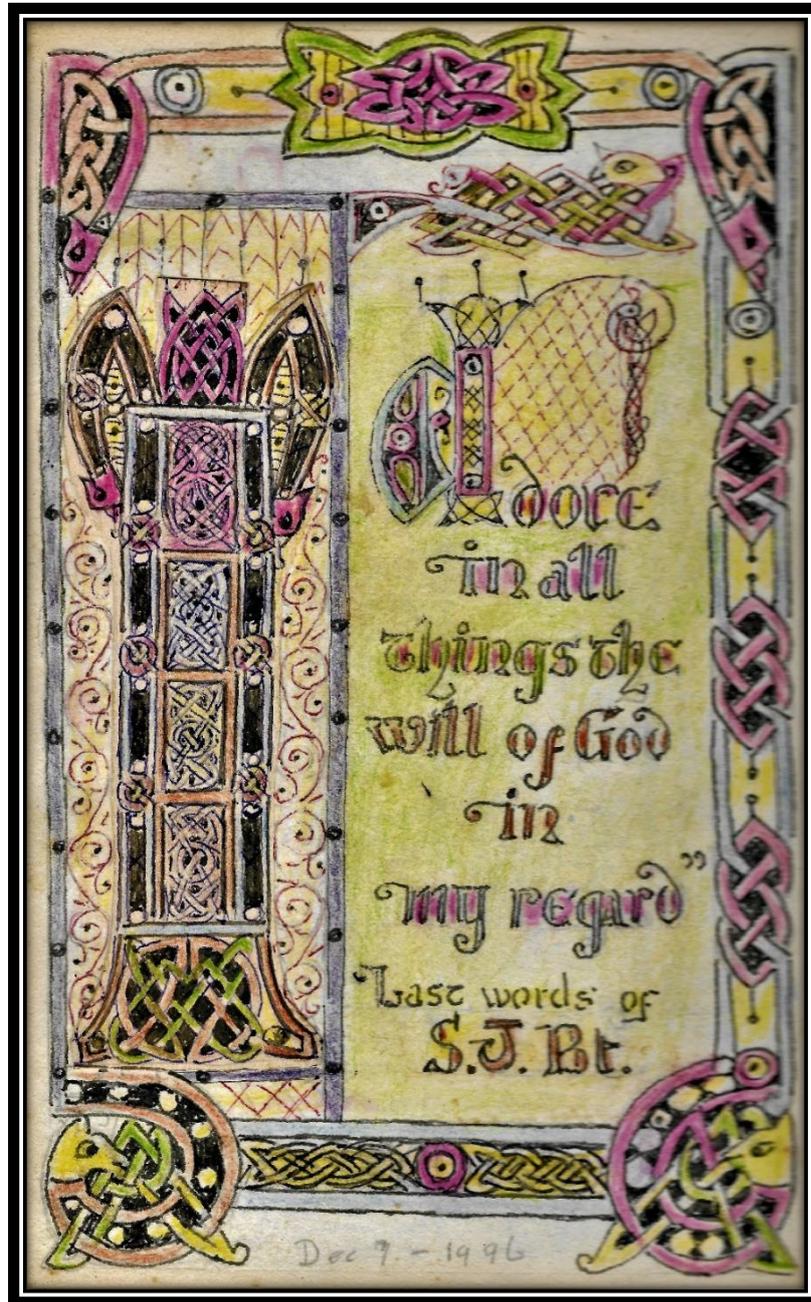
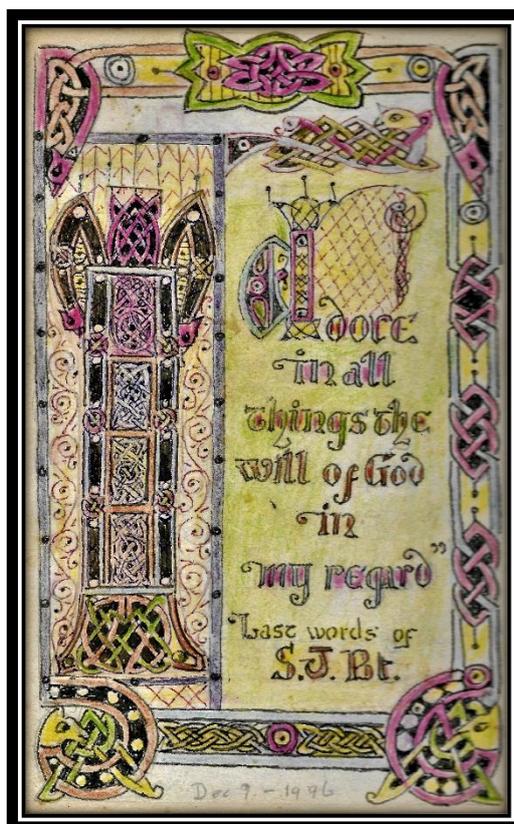


The Gateway





The cover features an illustration in Celtic art by Brother Patricius O'Donovan, a poet and an artist. His story was featured in Gateway issue 17. (www.lasalle.org.hk)

Issue 84
April 2020

First published in 2008

Published by
The Hong Kong Lasallian Family
18, La Salle Road,
Hong Kong

Concept by
Brother Patrick Tierney
Paul K.K. Tam

Welcome

Since the last issue of the Gateway, Hong Kong and many countries of the world have been battered and bruised in the battle against Covid-19. In such troubled times the words of Pope Francis bring much consolation.

“Rivers do not drink their own water, trees do not eat their own fruit, the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are born to help each other.”

Our fervent wish, then, in this issue of the Gateway is for the safety and well-being of all our readers and indeed of all people on the planet and our sympathies go out to all who are bereaved.



And speaking of nature. The annual call of the koel came late this year, first heard on the 22nd February. The call at first was rather weak and croaky, as if the bird, too, were affected by a virus. However, the bird is now at full throttle. The flowers, too, continue to bloom beautifully, from the golden trumpet to the azaleas, from the bougainvillea to the spider trees.

With all schools closed, the number of updates in this issue of the Gateway are few. Nevertheless, we hope you will find the content interesting.

Keep safe, keep well, and we look forward to brighter times.



Canadian Connection

Our worldwide Institute, including our Hong Kong sector, owe a debt of gratitude to our 'French Connection.' We are well aware that the founder of our Institute was French and appreciate that many French Brothers served with distinction all over the world, including here in Hong Kong.

Less well known to our Hong Kong Lasallian Family, perhaps, is our 'Canadian Connection.' Brother Leo Miller, Director of West Point Reformatory (1878-1881), Brother Cyprian Gendreau, Director of St. Joseph's College (1880-1884) and Brother Abban Gendreau (Director of St. Joseph's College (1889-1894) were Brothers from Canada. Not many Canadian Brothers served for long periods in Hong Kong. Yet, in history, a number of Brothers from Canada did serve here for short periods of time while two of them (Brothers Gilbert Perrier and Anthony Knoll) served for lengthy periods.

Another part of the history which may also not be well known is the mission of the Brothers in China before 1949. These were Brothers from Canada. Having served the Church in Manchuria from 1937, the Brothers decided it was time to prepare to open a school in Beijing. For this purpose, they bought a house there in 1947, naming it St. Benilde House and sent 4 Brothers from Canada to form the Community.

These 4 Brothers, Savaria Isidore (Director), Adrien Boyer, Gilbert Perrier and Cyprien Lebel, went by train, ship and plane on the long journey to China. Fortunately, we have a first-hand account of the journey, hand written by one of

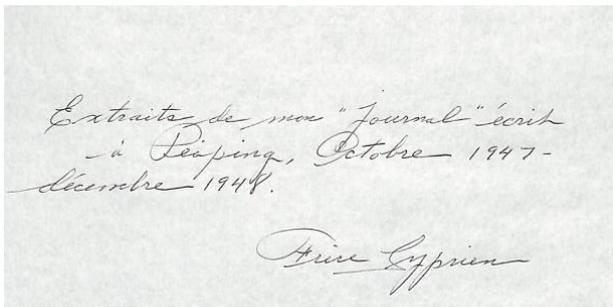


the Brothers involved, Brother Cyprien Lebel. He kept a journal of the journey and wrote it up after arrival in Beijing. The timeline was from October 1947 to December 1948.

From left: Gilbert, Cyprien, Adrien and Isidore, on the ship General M.C. Megis



Brother Cyprien kept a strict accounting of the number of miles travelled. 8000 miles from Montreal to San Francisco (by train), 2080 from San Francisco to Honolulu, 4767 from Honolulu to Manila, 625 from Manila to Hong Kong, 850 from Hong Kong to Shanghai (by ship) and 700 from Shanghai to Beijing (by plane), a total of over 17,000 miles. The timeline of the journey was from October 8th to November 16th 1947.



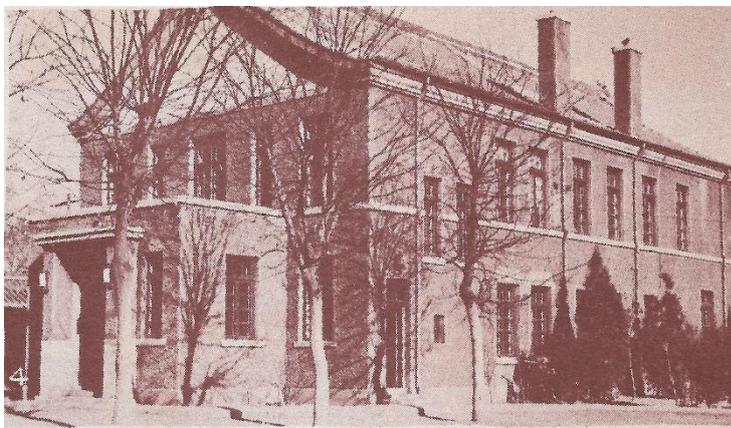
Their arrival in Hong Kong was on 7th November, disembarking in Kowloon. "Brother Martin receives us at the ship and takes us to St. Joseph's College where Brother John, Director, welcomes us in a magnificent way." The following day they toured the Hong Kong island and the New

Territories ending up with supper in La Salle College hosted by the acting Director, Brother Cassian.



The final leg of the journey was from Shanghai to Beijing on 16th November from where they took a bus to the city terminus and were greeted by the first ever postulant (preparing to be a Brother) from China called Pai King who later became known as Brother Salvador. They made their way to the new residence that the Brothers had erected in Beijing.

A few days later they made their way to the Franciscan language school and started learning Chinese.



St. Benilde House, Beijing

The new residence of the Brothers was blessed on the 4th January 1948 by the Cardinal. However, during the next few months most of the Brothers working in Manchuria began to arrive because the Communists were taking over and schools would have to close.

Despite this, the Brothers at the new residence in Beijing celebrated the feast of

Blessed Brother Benilde, after whom the house was named. This was on the 4th April 1948.

The annual Retreat for the Brothers was held from September 25th to October 2nd. Then, news was received of the fall of Moukden 瀋陽, Chanchun 長春 and all of Manchuria 滿洲 into the hands of the Communists and their forces were advancing on Beijing.

It was decided that the mission would have to be sacrificed until better days. On November 19th 1948, “after a year and three days in Beijing, we leave for Hong Kong via Shanghai.”

“I leave Shanghai with Brother Isidore on the Chinese Prince S. Hong” and arrival in Hong Kong was on the 29th where they were met upon arrival at La Salle College by Brother Patrick, Director and Brothers Cassian, Raphael, Herman and Wilfrid.

The new assignments were given on the 24th December. Brother Leopold would go to Penang, Malaysia while Brothers Isidore, Gilbert, and Adrien would go to St. Joseph’s College, Hong Kong. Brothers Odilo and Cyprien would stay at La Salle College, Kowloon. The postulant, Pai King, would be sent to make his Novitiate in Nhathrang, Vietnam.



Brother Cyprien and his class, La Salle College, Perth Street, 1950

Note: We are indebted to Miss Nancy Lavoie, archivist of The Brothers of the Christian Schools, Canada Francophone, who kindly forwarded a copy of Brother Lebel’s handwritten diary to us and to Brother Denis Lebel, nephew of Brother Cyprien, for translating the original into English.

60 Years Ago

Numbers play a significant role in Chinese culture and they have a special relationship with the number 60. It signifies that a person has completed a full cycle of life, which calls for a grand celebration. The history of the 60th birthday is based on Chinese astrology. Twelve animals symbolize astrological signs. The Chinese calendar is based on the 12 signs and the five natural elements: metal, fire, water, earth and wood. This results in a 60-year cycle. Following the 60th birthday, the person begins a new life, as if he/she were born again.

Let's take a brief tour of our Hong Kong Lasallian history 60 years ago.

There was the almost unbelievable number of 12 Brothers in each of our two Communities at the time.

St. Joseph's College had Brother Brendan Dunne as Director together with Brothers Gilbert Perrier, John Lynam, Hilary de Mello, Paul O'Connell, Michael Curtin, Lawrence Blake, Meldan Treanor, Alban Lynam, Columba Tarrant, Bonaventure Reilly and Peter Phelan.



Sitting from left: Brothers Wilfrid More, Felix Sheehan, Paul O'Connell, Brendan Dunne and John Lynam.

Standing from left: Brothers Gilbert Perrier, Peter Phelan, Henry Pang, Bonaventure Reilly, Michael Curtin, Theodore Quigley, Paul Sun, Meldan Treanor and Anthony Knoll

La Salle College had Brother Felix Sheehan as Director together with Brothers Casimir Husarik, Wilfred More, Henry Pang, Anthony Cheung, Anthony Knoll, Eugene Sharkey, Alphonsus Breen, Theodore Quigley, Livinus Walsh, Jerome Larkin and Gregory Lim. In addition, Brother Paul Sun, Superior General of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, resided in the Community.



Staff of La Salle College in the 60s

Front row: Brothers Livinus Walsh, Anthony Cheung, Ladislaus Bednar, Michael Curtin, Casimir Husarik, Felix Sheehan, Fr Lea, Anthony Knoll, Herman Fenton, Eugene Sharkey, David Jordan.

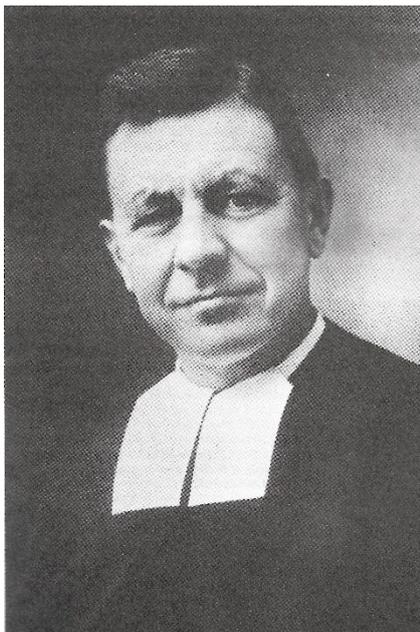


School-wise and right up there in front is the Thanksgiving Mass for the return of La Salle College from its 'exile' in Perth Street. The Mass was held on the 7th January 1960 in the old school chapel with Bishop Bianchi presiding. The chapel was packed to capacity for the joyous occasion.

Afterwards there was an Art Exhibition of both Chinese and Western paintings. The La Salle Primary School was also on the move in the sense that a fine extension was opened by Lady Black, wife of the Governor, on the 28th June 1960. Bishop Bianchi was also at hand for the blessing.



The history of St. Joseph's College reminds us that 1960 was also the year of Typhoon Mary, nicknamed "Bloody Mary." It caused great damage and loss of life in both Hong Kong and China. It also caused considerable damage to the roof over the Brothers' Quarters which were flooded out. The roof had to be stabilized, the library and staircases repainted and the Quarters mopped up.



As regards Speech Days, the Guest of Honour at La Salle College was Brother Lawrence O'Toole, Assistant Superior General while Dr. and Mrs. Tang Hon Chiu, SD presented the prizes and certificates at La Salle Primary School.

Brother Lawrence quoted an interesting Eastern proverb relating it to the purpose of education. The proverb is to the effect that if you have only two coins left you should spend one coin on the purchase of bread in order that you may remain alive; and the other coin should be used to buy a flower that you may have some reason for remaining alive. Brother Lawrence was emphasizing the point that education is for livelihood but also for appreciating all that is true and beautiful.

Passing of a Legend

The Mayor of Hong Kong.
The Tsar of the Olympics.
Il Comandante.

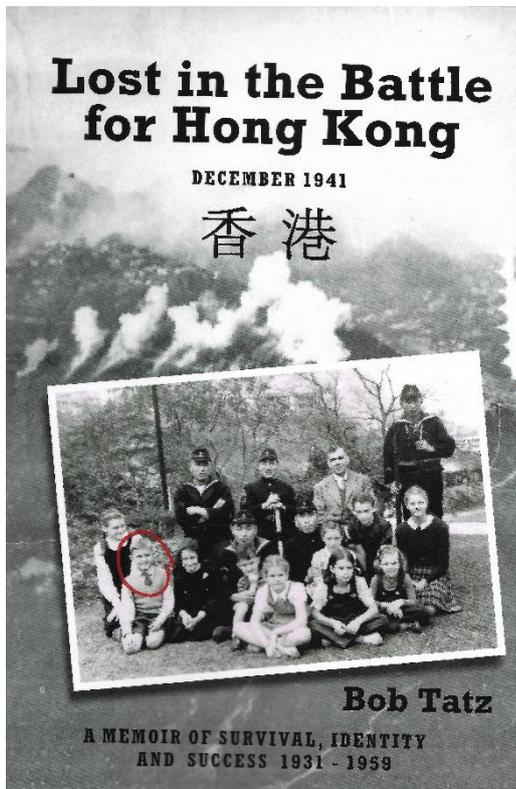


Such were some of the 'titles' given to Arnaldo de Oliveira Sales who passed away on the 6th March and whose funeral took place on the 27th March. Mr. Sales, familiarly called Sonny, had reached the century mark.

The funeral Mass was held in St. Joseph's Church with the parish priest Father Joseph Tan as the celebrant. Burial took place immediately afterwards at St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery, Happy Valley. Representatives from the Hong Kong civic, sporting, and religious bodies were in attendance. Sonny is survived by his two younger sisters, Amalia and Marie. The eulogy was delivered by Brother Thomas Lavin who gave a fine overview of Sonny's long and eventful life.

Sonny belonged to that unique group of students who came from St. Joseph's College Branch School on Chatham Road and who were the first to enter the magnificent new La Salle College in 1931/32. He remained a staunch Lasallian all his life, contributing much to both the Lasallian world and to the cultural and sporting life of Hong Kong. In recognition of his loyalty, dedication and contribution he was affiliated to the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Brother Superior General, Brother Alvaro Rodriguez, conferring the title AFSC on him in 2010.

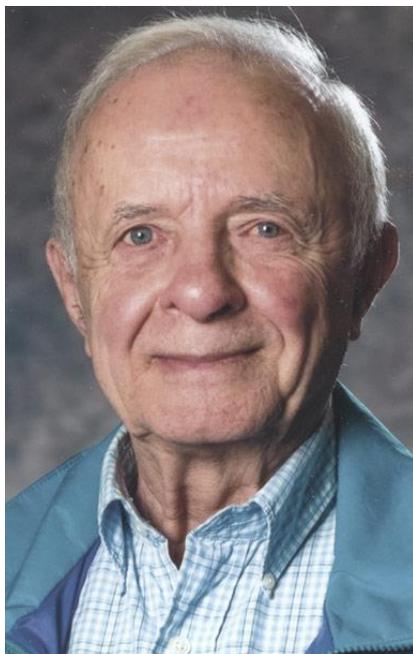
Old Boy Author



Recently, a book has been published in Canada by Bob Tatz. It is called ‘Lost in the Battle for Hong Kong.’ It is a memoir of his life experiences, clearly and interestingly portrayed. Following the death of his mother, Bob finds himself alone in the world at the age of seven. As the war breaks out, he is lost in the streets of Kowloon....

Of immediate interest to our readers will be the fact that he studied for a short time at La Salle College, Kowloon. This is what he has to say about this brief period in his life.

“La Salle College, near our flat, had reopened soon after the end of the war. I enrolled and started classes in January 1947, to complete the schooling I had started in England.



I was delighted to find Eddie Eleazer, a friend from Baginton Fields Hostel in Coventry, in the same classroom. We often worked on homework assignments together and quizzed each other just before tests. As the College was operated by a Catholic institution, I was surprised to see Eddie, whose father was a rabbi. There were practical reasons for the choice: the school had a good academic reputation and was conveniently located close to their home in Kowloon.

Eddie was about six months older than me which made a significant difference, as far as matriculation exams were concerned. Eddie qualified for his matriculation examinations leading to university entrance in June 1947. To write the matriculation exam, a candidate is required to have attained the age of 16 – I was short four months.

The principal of the College was Brother Cassian, a French-speaking Belgian. He was quite good to all the students but had a penchant for tweaking the ear of any

younger student passing within his reach. Brother Honorius lectured on the Bible (for the Catholic students) and taught geography. Brother Raphael taught English and history and showed us an efficient technique to take down notes during lectures – very useful when attending university. Mr. Xavier, a lay teacher, was a brilliant mathematician who had developed a great technique for solving factorizing problems in algebra. Another lay teacher, a Chinese gentleman whose name I cannot recall, taught us physics and chemistry. He often handled acids carelessly during laboratory classes, and all his clothing seemed to have at least one burn hole somewhere.”

Mr. Tatz is generally accurate though we do note that Brother Cassian was indeed French, not Belgian. Brother Raphael is the very same man that was Principal of both St. Joseph’s College and La Salle College. He seemed to be both a born teacher and a born headmaster.

Mr. Tatz now lives in Canada. He married an Irish girl, now deceased, and the book is dedicated to her and ends with one of the many beautiful Irish Blessings.



Staff of La Salle College in 1947.

Faithful Friend

Brother Paul O'Connell was one of the longest serving Brothers in Hong Kong having arrived here in 1907 and remaining almost uninterruptedly until his death in 1979. He was a lover of nature and of dogs. Many stories are told about his dogs and how he talked to them as if they were human.

About 60 years ago, one student, Thomas Lee, at St. Joseph's College wrote a short article for the Green & White, the College magazine. Here it is:

I LOVE BESSIE



There is no reticence or mystery about this fact. Anybody standing by while I am with her can see the love I express in my eyes and my speech. I view her as I do the brightest star in the heavens, the biggest multi-coloured flower in the garden, the glittering diamond among a pile of stones.....

I first set eyes on her eight years ago, and was so struck by her beauty that since then, not a single day has elapsed without my thinking of her. Indeed, who can forget her? Who in St. Joseph's College does not know the name Bessie, and does not like her?

Bessie is the dog of St. Joseph's College – a great friend to everybody. Personally I like dogs, and therefore, she has been my friend ever since I first saw her luxurious coat of golden hair and her bewitching eyes. Indeed, I like her better than my own dog.

Bessie, being the school dog, is looked after by Rev. Brother Paul whom she follows all round the school. She abstains both from meats and bones on Fridays, and, when the Brothers go into the chapel every day to pray, she stands outside and waits patiently. She seldom barks, but during the mid-night Masses of every year, she does a little yapping, evidently surprised at the assembly at that hour. Moreover, she has never bitten anybody. Boys used to crowd round her, stroking her, patting her. The little boys of the primary classes seem to know no limits; they plunge their hands into her mouth, take away things from her mouth when she on the point of eating.....While I looked on, I was very afraid lest she might bite them; but no. She stood by and licked them with her tongue, like a mother taking care of her children, a cat taking care of her kittens.

During school hours, faithful Bessie follows Brother Paul to the stationery room where she lies down until the daily business is over. She is often seen chasing after a ball that has gone astray, returning to the boys with the ball between her teeth.

Bessie! May you live long in the memory of all the pupils of St. Joseph's College.

Sports abounding

The Coronavirus outbreak, among other things, has meant that many people confine themselves to their homes or places of work. Indeed, many now work from home. With church services suspended, even priests and religious have time on their hands. In the earlier days of the virus outbreak, our younger Brothers were able to invite a number of priests for a mini football game, something like Futsol, except that they played on the big football field of La Salle College. It looked like an international encounter because the players came from Italy, Thailand, Indonesia and India. These days the young Brothers play some basketball, badminton and even frisbee and also go for occasional hiking.



