

The Gateway



Issue 91
June 2021



The golden shower tree is the national flower of Thailand; its yellow flowers symbolizing Thai royalty. It is also the state flower of Kerala, India. The flowers are of ritual importance in the Vishu festival of Kerala. The cover picture was taken at a quiet corner of Kowloon Tsai Park, near La Salle College.

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Concept by
Brother Patrick Tierney
Mr. Paul K.K. Tam

Welcome

Welcome to the final issue of 'The Gateway' for this academic year.

Summer is with us, the sun shines, and the soft summer rains fall lightly. Final examinations have commenced, and we count ourselves lucky that we can have them despite Covid restrictions. The students might not feel the same way!

We also count ourselves lucky that our schools and Lasallian Family managed to hold a number of events as you can see from the Family Updates. Of course, we are hoping that there will be many more such to choose from in the next academic year.

Some of the Brothers of the long ago are fondly remembered in the 'Old Hong Kong Connection' section. I am sure they would not have considered themselves in any way extraordinary but to us they appear to have been extraordinary men, men of faith, service and community. They all had connections with Hong Kong and we would like to pay a little tribute to them.

The gaps which appeared in the picture of 'Blast from the Past' are gradually filling up. Many thanks to those who contacted us.

The Gateway is edging towards its centenary issue. Many of our readers will surely have stories to tell and we would love to hear from you. You may have memories, reflections, pictures etc.

Happy Holidays!



Old Hong Kong Connections

Perhaps not many readers realize that we had a number of vocations to the De La Salle Brothers Institute in years gone by, all with some connection to Hong Kong. Some were born in Hong Kong, some in mainland China and at least one in Macau. Others were sent here as young men, to teach in St. Joseph's College.

We feature a little about three such men here, each so different and each so similar in their efforts to spread the good news.

Br. John Edward Coates



John Coates hailed from Hong Kong and with his brother joined the De La Salle Brothers Juniorate in Kuala Lumpur in 1916. Later on, he had a great cross to bear when his brother, Br Cuthbert Henry Coates, died of tuberculosis in Mandalay, Burma in 1924 at the young age of twenty-three.

John was born on 15 June 1900 and was one of the 21 Juniors from Kuala Lumpur who formed the first group in Pulau Tikus, Penang, in 1918. Of the original 18 who received the Holy Habit, 9 persevered in the Institute, and besides Br Lawrence Robless, they included Br Casimir L'Angellier, Br Amedy Lyne and Br Austin de Lemos.

Br John began his long teaching career at St John's Institution, Kuala Lumpur, in 1922 and retired from St Francis Institution, Malacca in 1969! He was a successful teacher, and after stops at St Joseph's, Singapore, and St Michael's, Ipoh, he was selected with Br Austin to make the second novitiate in Lembecq, Belgium, in 1932. For two years he was Sub-Director of Juniors and the impression he made on the young hopefuls was deep and lasting.

Br John toiled without sparing himself in Malacca from 1953 to 1969 when age and ill-health made retirement imperative. He was very happy when with Br Lawrence Robless he celebrated his Golden Jubilee of his taking of the Habit in St John's Cathedral in the presence of a large gathering of friends and Old Boys.

In 1972, he was admitted to the Home for the Aged in Penang, run by the Little Sisters of the Poor who gave him all the health care he needed. He was very happy with the Sisters but was practically bed-ridden from Dec. 1973. Needless to say, he looked forward to the visits of his confreres and to the occasional visits he could make to the novices and scholastics in Pulau Tikus.

With the passing away of Br John Coates on 12 February 1974, the Penang District, comprising Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong, lost a well-known and well-loved figure, one of the pioneers of St Joseph's Training College, Pulau Tikus, Penang. Naturally, Penang and Malacca where he laboured so zealously and untiringly for 15 and 16 years respectively, were the principal mourners.

Though it was a school-day there was a goodly gathering of Brothers and Sisters and teachers

and boys in the Chapel and at the graveside. Br Lawrence Spitzig was there to thank the good Sisters and their Chaplain, Fr Lobeze, and all who were present, on that sad but memorable occasion.

Br Lawrence Robless recalls Br John as a 'successful Geography and Empire History teacher in Singapore where he taught the Cambridge classes. He would cycle out with the boarders on picnics and showed himself an able tennis player. In fact, he had a lethal backhand! What a contrast with his closing years when he was a victim of Parkinson's disease'.

Br Visitor remembers him as an 'excellent Brother wholly devoted to the Institute and the Church, who always showed a strong attachment to prayer and was totally committed to his work in school, right up to the time when sickness made it well-nigh impossible to continue in active service'. He still made himself useful to the District by the edifying example of his life of ceaseless prayer. The Rosary was ever in his hands, and he was ever cheerful, and resigned to God's will in his sufferings. The Sisters and the inmates of the Home admired this good holy man.

People were always struck by Br John's love of prayer and his serene and unruffled character. He was generally respected and admired for his equanimity of temper.

Br John never forgot the place of his birth and prayed constantly that Hong Kong would supply young men for the Brothers. We still long for that day and never cease to pray for vocations from Hong Kong.

Brother Francis Rozario

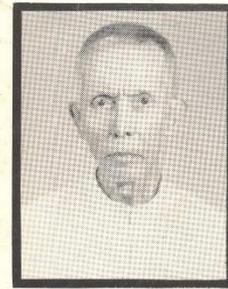


We are fortunate that Br Francis wrote something for the Centenary issue of the St. Joseph's College magazine.

"I was born in Hong Kong on 24th November 1913 and if I am not mistaken, I entered St. Joseph's College in January 1923.

When I was in Class 3 (Form 4 nowadays), we were taught by an Irish Brother Eusebius (Eusebius Mahon, who died in 1963 and was buried in Scotland) and who gave us some talks on joining the Brothers, which I believe was the beginning of my vocation. I was greatly encouraged by Brother Matthias to become a Brother of St. John Baptist de La Salle. Our Director at the time was Brother Aimar, and he brought me to Penang in August 1932 to enter the juniorate there in Pulau Tikus.

After my Novitiate and Scholasticate, I was sent to St. Xavier's Institution, Penang in September 1935. In January 1937, I was transferred to St. Joseph's College, Hong Kong and in August 1939 to La Salle College, Kowloon and there I made my Perpetual Profession in



Pray for the Repose of the Soul of
Brother John Edward Coates
Born in Hong Kong, on June 15, 1900
Died in Penang on February 12, 1974
in the 55th year of his Religious Life.
R. I. P.

the same year. I was sent back to Malaysia when the world war broke out.

I am so sorry I am not able to be present at the Centenary Celebrations of my much beloved Alma Mater, St. Joseph's College, on account of my poor health, although, thank God, I am still able to do some work. However, I must thank the Auxiliary Visitor, Brother Alphonsus Breen for having invited me to my beloved Alma Mater, which I pray God, Our Heavenly Father may shower with abundant blessing."

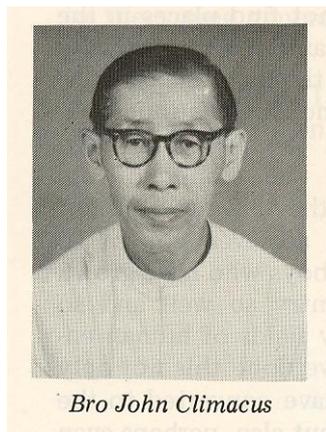
Br Francis was a holy man and took the teaching of religion seriously.

From 1940 until his retirement he taught in a number of schools in Malaysia and Singapore. In retirement he was District Bursar for a while but his chief focus was spreading the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

As age and sickness grew, Br Francis was placed in the home for the aged run by the Little Sisters of the Poor. In the summer of 1990, he had to be hospitalized and the Brothers in his Ipoh Community informed his family in the United States and U.K. In July 1990, his younger brother, Luis, journeyed all the way from London to see him. Luis shared Br Francis' flair for hymn-singing and every day Luis was at his bedside singing old favourite hymns, including the Latin Tantum Ergo and O Salutaris.

Brother Francis died in Ipoh Malaysia on the 8th August, 1990.

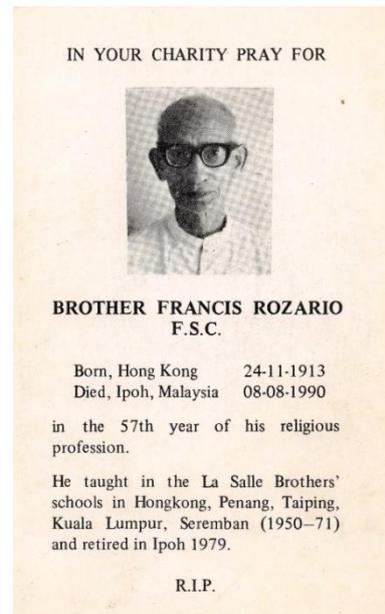
Brother John Climacus Toh (1904-1994)



Brother John came from a long established Hokkien family with profoundly Buddhist roots. He was born on 16th February 1904 in Penang, Malaysia. His father sent him to the Lasallian St. Xavier's Institution. Despite fierce opposition from his father and other family members, John decided to be baptized a Catholic and later, at the age of 21, to join the Brothers.

Partly to avoid confrontation, John was sent to Indochina (Vietnam) to join the postulancy programme at Hue. It was the 9th February 1925 and exactly a year later, 9th February 1926, that he took the Brothers' Habit (robe) in the Novitiate at Saigon. Even then his father kept sending letters pleading for his return. In reply Brother John would ask his father to try and understand and give him his blessing and send a photo.

Again, possibly to avoid trouble, Br John was posted directly from the Novitiate to St. Joseph's College, Hong Kong. This was on the 14th February, 1927 and his Director was the ever-gracious Brother Aimar followed, in 1930, by Brother Matthias Linehan whose quiet, understanding ways answered fully to Br John's gentle sincerity and good nature.

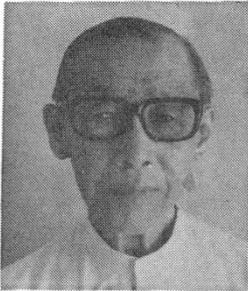


He taught standard 7 and found time to take Cantonese lessons from Mr. Benedict Cheung, Brother Anthony Cheung's father. He was lastingly grateful for these lessons.

Indeed in 1934 the future Br Anthony Cheung had Br John as his teacher. Br Anthony writes: "Even then he struck us as being a man of prayer. We noted how he would kneel at the classroom platform for a short period before commencing his lessons. As boys we would whisper: Be quiet, Brother John is praying! He was for us a model Brother – saintly, kind, charitable and patient. He never scolded us."

It would appear that in St. Joseph's Br John had achieved what he had set out to do – to be an effective teacher without resorting to scolding and punishments.

In your charity pray for



Brother John Climacus Toh
FSC
Born: Penang 16 Feb 1904
Died: Penang 16 Jun 1994

He taught in Hong Kong,
Penang and Seremban and
was for many years
Bro Sub-Director of
Novices and Juniors.

May He Rest In Peace!

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It was while teaching in Hong Kong that Br John eventually received the best news possible. His father had become reconciled to his being a Catholic and a Brother. With the passing years Br John was to have the happiness of seeing most of his family receive baptism. His supreme joy came on the day when he baptized his long-estranged father. His mother also died a Catholic.

Br John left Hong Kong in 1937 and spent the rest of his life teaching and forming young Brother aspirants in Malaysia. He became famous for collecting and distributing gifts to the underprivileged and indeed to children generally. His Christmas parties became known far and wide.

This constant determination to do good is well captured in a speech by the then Brother Visitor, Michael Jacques.

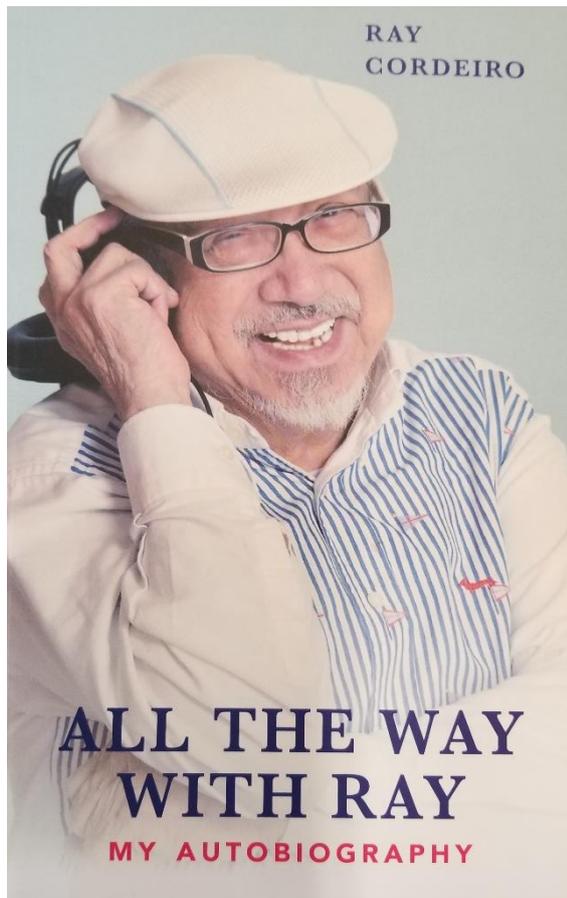
"It would be difficult for me to speak about Br John Climacus in a way that would do justice to what he means to us, and he himself would probably feel embarrassed and uncomfortable. But at least I think I should point out that, through all his tribulations,

by his great simplicity, humility, fidelity and life-long dedication to the Lord, Br John embodies the characteristically Christ-like virtue of goodness.

In following Christ so dutifully, so docilely and so lovingly, we can say of Br John as the Apostle described His Master and Lord: "He went about doing good". All of us who have known Br John, have lived with him, have had dealings with him, even those of us who have remarked him only from a distance cannot deny that this about describes Br John wherever he goes."

With deteriorating health he was admitted first to the Home run by the Little Sisters of the Poor in Ipoh and then in January 1987 to Penang. This quiet man of practical kindness died on 16th June, 1994.

A Living Legend



Generations of Hong Kong people grew up listening to a radio programme called “All the Way with Ray.” Ray referred to Ray Cordeiro, who has the distinction of being not only the longest serving disc jockey in Hong Kong but in the world. Indeed, he made it into the Guinness book of records. He was commonly called “Uncle Ray.” One of the highlights of his career was interviewing the Beatles, way back in 1964. He could not believe his luck.

Ray is a proud old boy of St Joseph’s College. He remembers his time there as if it were only yesterday, not least the smell of the playground toilets! He was admitted to the school when Brother John Lynam was Principal and a fine Principal he was. One teacher in particular inspired Ray, an English language teacher called Vincent Chan. He had an exquisite command of the language and Ray took him as a role model.

Now the time has come for Ray to hang up his boots, or rather to hang up his headphones. He does so at the tender age of 96 and he makes it clear that he has every intention of reaching his

centenary. That’s the spirit.

To celebrate the occasion, he has also published his autobiography, entitled - you guessed it - “All the Way with Ray.” Ad Multos Annos, Ray!



Dinner with old friends from St. Joseph’s College in the 90s.

Family Updates

Principals' Conference

The Principals of our 8 Hong Kong Lasallian schools felt fortunate that they were able to meet face to face on the 5th May, from 9 am to 12 noon. We were also fortunate in being able to have lunch together, due social-distancing being observed. The meeting's opening prayer was followed by two special items, one on the Catholic and Lasallian ethos of our schools and the other on the establishment of a Hong Kong Lasallian Animation and Formation Team. The first was presented by Br Patrick and the second by Br Dennis. The Principals also addressed such items as the National Security Education, Safeguarding and Evaluation of Online Learning in these pandemic times. The meeting was rounded off with individual school updates.



The Council Meets

The Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council (LEC) held a plenary meeting on 29th May 2021 in the Conference Room of La Salle College. There was full attendance. The first part of the 3 hour meeting was taken up with two formation presentations for the benefit of members. The first, presented by Br Patrick, was on the Catholic and Lasallian Ethos of our schools. The second was presented by Br Dennis on the importance of establishing a Lasallian Animation and Formation Team (LAFT) with emphasis on caring for our students. The presentations were well received. Reports were given on the Lasallian Mission Fund and the recently held raffle. Decisions and directives were given on other important matters such as the question of safeguarding in schools and the role of the School Sponsoring Body in the implementation of the New Security Law. Some information was also given on the latest projected LEAD project for the poor which will be located in Thailand near the Myanmar border.



De La Salle Brothers Library at CSK opens its doors!



In April, 2019, during preparations for the CSK's 50th Anniversary Celebration, CSK was visited by Dr. Felix Yip and other Old Boys. They showed great care towards the development of CSK and its students and, to this end, initiated the library development project and its fundraiser.

With the generous donations from Dr. Yip and other Old Boys, the library development project was brought to life. Starting in the summer of 2020, the renovation work was completed by April the following year. The new library is named De La Salle Brothers Library to honour the commitment and devotion of the Brothers who served at CSK.

The new school library provides a welcoming and user-friendly environment, seamlessly facilitating students' inquiry and information skills by supplying computer workstations, mobile devices and other socializing features requested by students.

The library is a hub of collaborative learning and integrated technology that provides students with both an appreciation of literature and an aptitude in modern technology, promoting information literacy skills, and encouraging lifelong learning and reading.

Now is the time to don a new jacket, retrieve a tome from the bustling shelves and begin a new chapter. After all, a library is so much more than carts and carrels, stamps and shelves. No, it is the juxtaposition of past and present: the fulcrum where students lean on the wisdom of the past to light their way ahead as they adventure forward into their limitless potential.



Golden Waves

Chong Gene Hang College has a strong reputation in the Visual Arts field. Over the years, its staff, students, parents and alumni have produced paintings, sculptures, designs of all kinds. Nowadays, much of the artwork is in a digitalized format.

This year to celebrate its Golden Jubilee, the College organized a Visual Arts Exhibition at City Hall which ran from the 15th to 19th April 2021. Offerings from various members of the College community were presented, mainly centering on the theme of “Wave.” The College has certainly produced waves of art talent for many years.

Despite the pandemic restrictions, the Exhibition attracted a large number of viewers and there was something there for everyone.



Badminton Champion

The All Hong Kong Schools Jing Ying Sports Competitions come towards the end of inter-school sports for the year. A number of such competitions had to be cancelled because of the pandemic. Badminton, however, was an exception and recently Hung Kuei Chun, a F6 student at La Salle College, emerged as Champion after hefty struggles. He is thus the singles champion of Hong Kong this year. Congratulations to Kuei Chun, to his coach Mr. Lam and to the teachers in charge.



Raffle Draw

The Hong Kong Lasallian Mission Fund Raffle draw was held on the 4th June. Because of pandemic restrictions the raffle had to be cancelled last year but the organisers decided to go ahead this year despite some restrictions prevailing. They are glad they did so, because the raffle turned out to be successful, thanks to the efforts of the organisers, schools, parents and alumni. The sum raised is sufficient to enable the continuation of the projected programmes and projects. Altogether, 100 prizes were drawn and Brothers Dennis and Patrick did the honours. The top prizes are attractive and even the lesser prizes are practical book vouchers. A special word of thanks to Larry Leung who, because of Covid restrictions, directed operations from Singapore and to Nikki Chan who looked after day-to-day operations in Hong Kong.



St. Joseph's College ECA Prize Giving Ceremony

The Extra-Curricular Activities Prize Giving Ceremony 2021 was successfully held on May 21st. As the theme “Amalgamate the Arete” implies, Josephians have achieved various ECA achievements throughout the year, even under the challenges brought upon by the pandemic. Mr. Chiu Tsang Hei, a famous musician and old boy of class of 1984, was the guest of honour at the ceremony. Congratulations to all prize winners, and we wish them further success in future ECA achievements.



Lasallian Educational Outreach: Reaching out in the new norm



Our Lasallian Educational Outreach Project (LEO) had experienced a very difficult and yet meaningful school year. In the last 4 years, the Hong Kong Lasallian Family worked with Caritas to provide English enhancement classes to children of newly arrived immigrants and children from low-income families in the East Kowloon district. This year, lessons began as scheduled but soon classes were suspended because of waves of Covid outbreaks. At first our teachers wished to switch to online lessons, as most schools were doing at the time. However, we soon found out that most of our students could not attend lessons online. Some did not have the devices, some had no wifi connection at home or living environment not suitable for online learning. With faith and patience, our teachers worked out a plan with the social worker. Whenever the restrictions for gathering were lifted and the Caritas centre was allowed to open, students and teachers would be called to meet for lessons, in whatever rooms available. Though full attendance was difficult to maintain, we were able to finish this school term with the number of lessons we had scheduled.



Blast from the Past: Staff of La Salle College December 1947

This iconic staff picture, when La Salle College had managed to get back into shape after the depredations of the war, was taken in December 1947. It will surely bring back memories to the older generation of old boys.

With the help of many old boys, especially Father Edward Khong and Mr. LK Wong, the editors are able to fill in more gaps and make corrections.



1st Row from left:

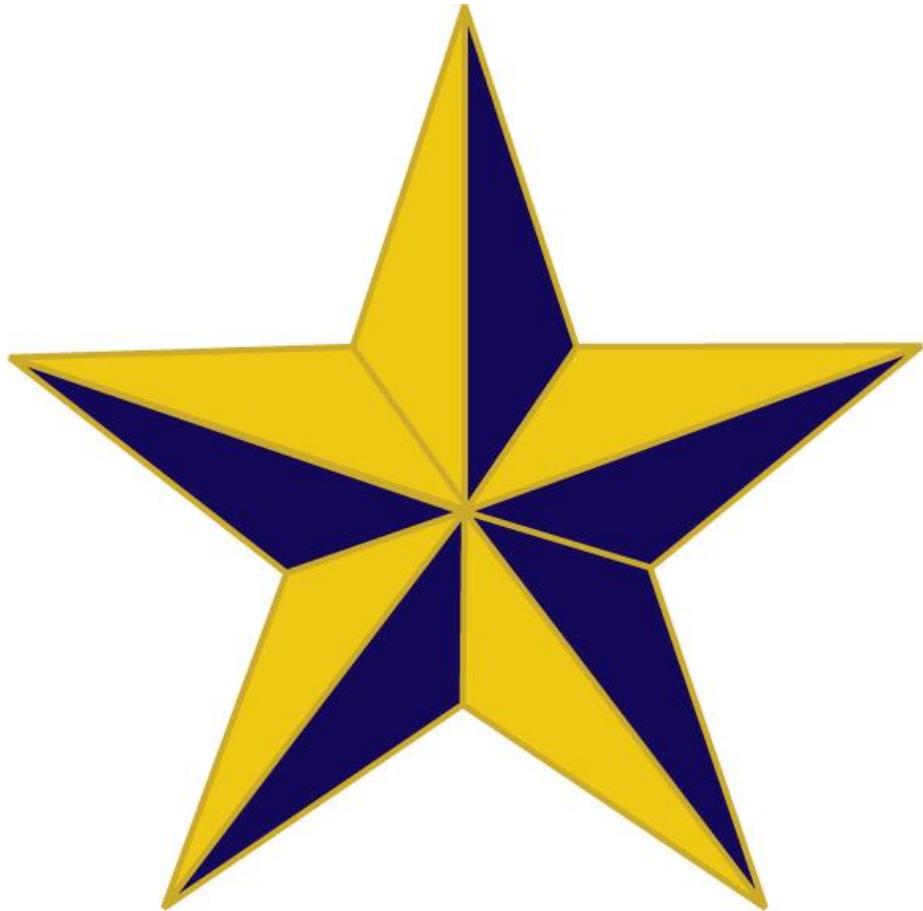
Mr. Henry Ng	Mr. Charles Dragon	Br Raphael Egan	Br Wilfrid More
Br Patrick Toner	Br Cassian Brigant	Fr Bruzzone	Br Herman Fenton
Mr. Benedict Lim	Mr. Yuen Wui Ping	Mr. Francis X Loo	

2nd Row from left:

Mr. Kent Wong	?	?	Mr. Henry Lau
?	Mr. Loo Khim Leng	Mr. Joseph Leong	Mr. Kwok Ming Tsing
Mr. John Yan	?	Mr. Kwok	Mr. SY Chu

3rd Row from left:

Mr. Au Ngok Chung	Mr. Javier Lee	Mr. Lo Wing Hon	Mr. Stephen Leung
Mr. Francis Hui	Mr. Wong Po Tin	Mr. James Huang	Mr. Daniel Chan?
Mr. David Liao	Mr. Chong Man Chiu	?	?



Great Things Are Possible



We are one, and we are many.....