

The Gateway



Issue 98
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Autumn scene in the garden of the
Motherhouse, Rome

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Welcome

Gateway 98 is our Christmas issue. We wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Covid restrictions have been easing slowly but surely though the government warns about a winter spike in numbers. While we do not wish to see any increase, we are not sad to see the easing of restrictions. They have caused much tension and hardship.

One good effect of the easing is not only that we can resume normal schooling but that extra-curricular activities have also returned. This is seen especially in the music, sports and uniform group activities and competitions. They are back in full swing.

Our feature article returns to a Brother who had a long-lasting effect on all who came into contact with him. Br Cassian was truly a man for all seasons. His knowledge and learning took many forms and in this article we try to highlight some of this. He is an example to all who believe in lifewide and lifelong learning.

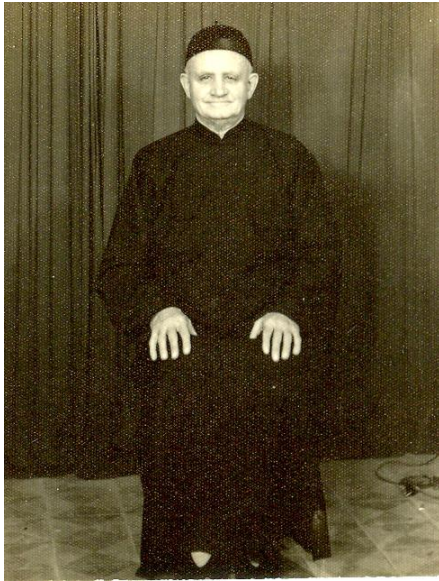
Congratulations to La Salle College on the celebration of its 90th anniversary. One of the anniversary projects was the revamping of its Heritage Centre and History Corridor. They are located on the first floor of the school and both current as well as old boys are expected to make good use of it. The College also managed to set a new Guinness record.

Another of our schools, Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School, is about to embark on its Golden Jubilee and we wish it the very best on the road ahead.

Happy Christmas – Happy New Year!



Writings of Br Cassian

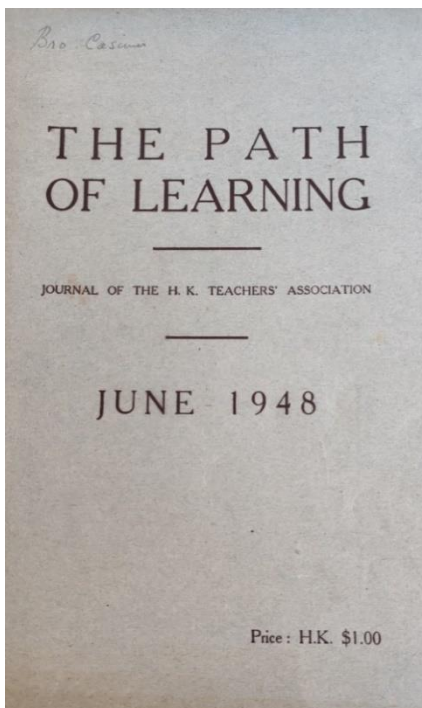


By all accounts, Brother Cassian Brigant, the second Principal of La Salle College, was a man for all seasons. He immersed himself in a host of educational activities from teaching and administration to counselling to public lectures to scouting to civic projects. Nothing seemed to tire or daunt him. Here are a few excerpts of his writings, mainly taken from journal of the Hong Kong Teachers' Association called 'The Path of Learning' as evidence of his broad vision and knowledge.

Based on Merit

It is a remarkable fact that China never lost her democratic spirit in the sense that the intellectual and governing class always remained open to rich and poor alike. Whoever showed scholarship, though it was but a certain type of scholarship, by his ability to pass examinations, secured governmental positions together with the honour and emoluments attached to the positions.

This sense of equality was still deeply ingrained in the Chinese soul up to a few years ago. I have a vivid memory of the admonition given by a Chinese gentleman and a multi-millionaire, to his two sons aged 15 and 17, when he was saying farewell to them as they boarded a ship for San Francisco: "Remember," said he, "that you are only school boys; you know nothing of life. The youngest cabin steward on this ship is your superior in experience, and as such, he is entitled to your respect; be kind to him."



Scouting

It is the beauty of the Scouting Movement to create among its members a friendship that is as enduring as life. All the Governors of Hong Kong who have succeeded one another in the office for the last forty years have willingly accepted to be the Patrons of the Boy Scout Association because the motto of the scout is Service, the gift of oneself to the service of others. There is something noble in a boy who makes the promise of loyalty to God and to help other people at all times.

The Laws of Salem

The great Cistercian abbey of Salem was founded in 1136. It had at one time a library of 30,000 volumes which are now to be found in the University of Heidelberg. To this abbey was attached a very famous school. The school had seven laws which commend themselves by their great educational value. They set out well the ends and purposes of a school. Here are the Laws:

- (1) Give the children opportunities for self-discovery. When a child has come 'into his own' you will hear a shout of joy.

- (2) Make the children meet with triumph and defeat. Life is not always plain sailing; it has its crests and troughs, its successes and failures. It is good for the educator to know what the child's reactions to defeat and to success are; the first should not cause despondency, the latter should not result in pride.
- (3) Provide periods of silence. The advantages of silence have been universally acknowledged. The Church and the religious institutes have also introduced it into their regulations and with annual and monthly retreats.
- (4) Train the imagination. The power to resist the pressing stimulus of the hour cannot be acquired in later life; it often depends on the ability to visualise what you plan and hope and fear for the future. Self-indulgence is due in many cases to lack of vision.
- (5) Make games/sports important but not over dominant. Games here must be taken to mean hard, physical games. They must be used as an enjoyable means of self-expression.
- (6) Make the school open to all. It is of great benefit for the children of the rich to share the experiences of an enthralling school life with the children of those who have to struggle for their daily bread.

The Christian School

The task of the Christian school is a superhuman one. It must aim not merely at making its teaching of first-rate quality, so that the boys and the government get what we might call maximum value for their money in good jobs and as good citizens. But it is even expected to revolutionise the meaning of what is a good job or a good citizen, to fit its boys not merely to accept a conventional place in our half-crazy world, but to play a part in making it more sane and healthy; to think about their careers not merely in terms of material rewards, but of how they can serve the glory of God and the needs of mankind.

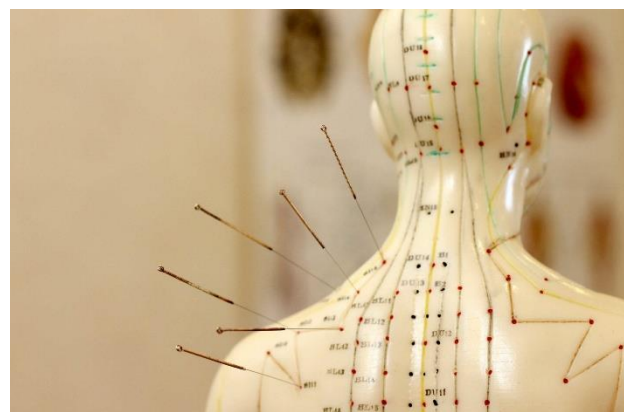
It must try to impart a vision of education as not of something you can acquire or buy, or copy down and learn by heart, but something which you catch like an infection, something which is exacting, worshipful and compelling; which forbids you to trifle with truth or confuse what is truly good with what is merely respectable; something which lies beyond the petty details of classroom and school routine, and beckons you on, as the mountain-top lures on the climbers and justifies the daily grind upwards.

It is a task in which even the smallest success is of lasting quality and belongs to the things which do not pass away.

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Acupuncture

As its etymology indicates, Acupuncture, pricking by a point, acupuncture is a method of treatment which brings relief or even healing on pricking certain precise points of the tegument by means of fine needles of gold, silver or various alloys. It has been in practice in China for 4000 years, and is now attracting more and more attention in the West.



The far Eastern doctors had noticed from a very high antiquity that alterations and trouble in a specified organ were almost inevitably accompanied by a painful cutaneous localisation which had its seat either level with the organ in question or at a point very remote from it. Without having heard of the Chinese points, Western clinical physicians had come to the same conclusion. In all cases, the discovery of these points is a result of clinical observation and this in China has been carried very far.

Acupuncture is not a universal panacea but is primordially the medication of pain. Neuritis and sciatica, lumbago, rheumatism, certain diseases of deafness and of visual impairment are now currently treated by acupuncture. The liver and the gall bladder are sensible to its action; the kidneys much less.

How do the Chinese doctors establish their diagnosis? By far the most important means is the interpretation of the pulses. The Chinese have elevated this to a true science. The number of deductions they may reach by placing three fingers on three well localised points at the root of your thumbs and at your wrists is simply amazing.

Many cases could illustrate the point. We have had a convincing case at La Salle College. One of our Matriculation students fell from a window of the Library down to the hard cement below. He was transported to a nearby hospital where an X-ray examination showed a fracture of the spine. Poor Joseph was put in plaster at once and told that he was in for 6 months. Three days later his father took him home. He put him into the hands of a Chinese doctor and a fortnight after we had a smiling Joseph back in school, none the worse for his accident.

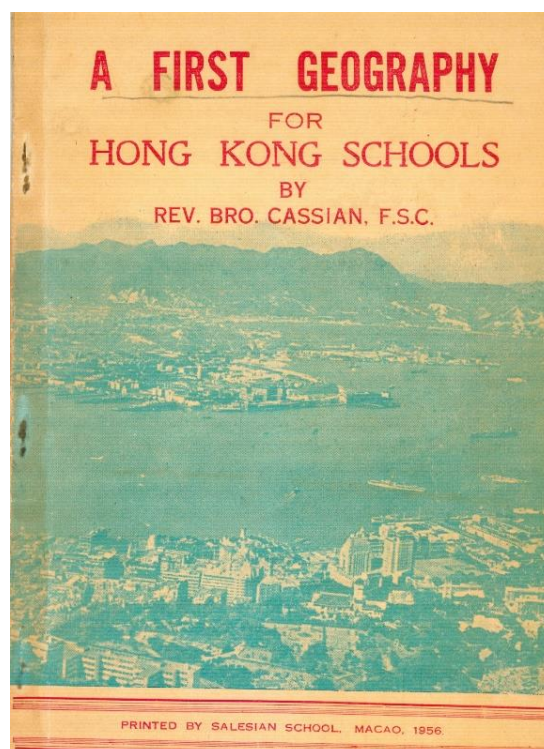
Of the Chinese doctors it can be said that they are very painstaking. In accord with the strictest orthodoxy they deal not with cases but with beings whom they have charge of, and whom they consider it their duty to direct towards the full realisation of all their possibilities. (Lecture to Chinese Section of the Hong Kong Teachers' Association 27th April 1950)

See picture page 25

History and Historians

More and more do historians go back to first sources of information and they all seem to be convinced that the main quality of history is accuracy. That is why it is regrettable that erroneous facts and wrong judgments should have crept into textbooks and are reprinted from one edition to another.

By all means let there be hero-worship but let the definition of the heroes be modified. From a political and social point of view, love, hatred and vanity weave everywhere the same absurd and bloody piece of cloth. It were good to forget those men whom a combination of cunning and violence carried to the supreme power, and whose title to immortality is only measured by the sum of the evil they wrought. Veneration should be more and more to men who were distinguished by the loftiness of their ideals, who towered above their contemporaries by their benefactions, their thirst after justice and



charity. These alone are to be considered to be the essential moulders of civilisation. Francis of Assisi, Vincent de Paul, Fr. Damien should now come into their own, their biographies should be in every history textbook for it is through biography that a real taste for history can be cultivated.

Some advocate the scrapping of all national histories, and the teaching of World History based on textbooks compiled by international bodies. Incidentally, the importance of selecting a good textbook is felt perhaps most by the teacher of History. This was emphasised at the pedagogical conference held at Montreal in the summer of 1950: 'The master may enjoy a high prestige in the eyes of his pupils; the textbook however has for itself the authority of the written and printed thing. It is difficult to cast doubt on its sentiments.'

A Belgian delegate made a passionate appeal for the formation of an international spirit. 'We must begin by eliminating the nationalist exaltation, the systematic depreciation of neighbouring countries, the inaccuracies and counter-truths which still mar our present textbooks. It is time that we present History as one whole and no more centre it on the rivalries between nations, nor on the fluctuations of political power or the spiritual radiation of one's own nation. Beyond a simple understanding between peoples, the teaching of History must serve towards the formation of an international spirit.'

Napoleon Bonaparte

At the age of fifteen he entered the Military School in Paris as a cadet. He was then 4ft. 10in. tall; 5ft. 6in. was his fullest height.

Napoleon never liked hearing people talk of his genius; he often repeated that his superiority was the result of hard work. He acquired a vast intellectual culture, being helped by a prodigious memory. In September 1785 he was easily placed first mathematician of the school.

Napoleon certainly did much harm to France by destroying two millions of her young men on the battlefields of Europe; he allowed his vanity and ambition to get the better of him in 1812 and 1815 and left France smaller in territory and weaker in political influence than she had been when he had received command from the French people. Yet, he did a vast amount of constructive work in the brief spell of twelve years, not in France alone, but in all Europe, the unification of which continent he advanced by at least a century.

It was a betrayal almost of his own genius that a man who was so well gifted should have chosen the sword to reach his ideals, some of which were certainly praiseworthy.



Family Updates

Induction Day for Lasallian Teachers 2022



It has been 3 years since we were last able to hold an Induction Day for our newly appointed teachers. On 15th October 2022, we were able to gather about 120 of these teachers at La Salle Primary School Hall. They were divided into 19 groups and shared on the 12 Virtues of a Good Teacher. Story of our Founder and history of the Lasallian mission in Hong Kong were also presented. The presenters were Brothers Dennis, Patrick, Thomas, Jeffrey, Jude, Paolo while Brother Edmon and Miss Alice Lau were the MCs.

Participants were also asked to suggest a 13th Virtue that could be particularly applicable to modern times. Creativity and flexibility received the highest votes.

Speech Days 2022

On 17th November, the College held its Annual Speech Day and Prize Giving Ceremony. The Guest of Honour this year was the Most Reverend Stephen Chow Sau Yan, S. J., Bishop of Hong Kong.

Bishop Chow encouraged the graduates that living an interesting, meaningful and fruitful life is pivotal. To realize this, the young men will encounter hardships, yet failure is not fatal. He remarked that being young is a great asset as it is the best time when they could learn from mistakes and embrace growth, through which their integrity and maturity could be nurtured. It is also the time when most lifelong friendships and companionship are found and consolidated, which they should well cherish.

Friday 25th November saw the Speech Day of La Salle Primary School. The Guest of Honour was Brother Angelo Paolo S. Mata, familiarly called Br Paolo. He strongly advised the students, and indeed the general audience, to develop a mindset of gratitude. He emphasised that this leads to a fuller, more meaningful life. This message was well received.



Torch Relay - Run Into the Future

A rather unusual and creative event to commemorate the 90th anniversary of La Salle College was held on 29th October 2022. The event was entitled 'Torch Relay – Run Into the Future'. Staff, students, parents and old boys from across the generations took part in this fund-raising drive. The first lap was completed by the Brothers, while the 90th lap was completed by F.6 and a group of La Salle Primary School P2 students. This signified the passing of the torch as this P2 group will be F.6 in ten years' time and will help celebrate the Centenary of the College by then. The Torch Relay was a great success and all participants enjoyed the occasion.



Inter-school Drone Competition

Chong Gene Hang College and De La Salle Secondary School participated in the Rotary Club Inter-school Drone Competition on 3 December 2022. They got marvellous results emerging as the first and second runners-up in the Time Trial event.



Sports Updates:

Now that Covid restrictions have eased somewhat, inter-school games have resumed. Over the last few weeks, our Hong Kong Lasallian schools have been in action, especially in football and basketball and have been performing rather well. St. Joseph's College emerged as senior basketball champions on Hong Kong Island against fellow Lasallian school, Chong Gene Hang College. Meanwhile La Salle College were 1st runners up in the senior basketball competition in Kowloon. As regards football, St. Joseph's College had to compete with Diocesan Boys School and, after a titanic struggle, St. Joseph's won out on penalties. Celebrations were loud and joyful.



Birthdays

We have had two birthdays recently, first of Br Paolo on 26th November and then Br Patrick on 4th December. There is a big age difference between these two Brothers but nothing shakes the bonds of brotherhood.

The Lasallian Education Council of Hong Kong kindly arranged a special celebration for Br Patrick, since he was attaining his 80th birthday.

Our thanks to Br Paolo and Patrick for their contributions to the mission in Hong Kong.



Closing the 90th

La Salle College brought its 90th anniversary celebrations to a close with two major events on consecutive days.

First up was the Celebration Dinner which was held in the Convention and Exhibition Centre on 10th December 2022. The dinner was noted for bringing together old boys of many generations, from those who joined the school in the 1940s to present day students. A highlight of the event was the granting of award-winning certificates to long-serving teachers. In fact, all of them had served the school for over 30 years each.



The following day was the Family Fun Day. Crowds flocked to the event, having been starved of such for three years because of covid restrictions. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and the weather smiled benignly. Two highlights were the official opening of the revamped school Heritage Centre and the attempt at a new Guinness record. This took the form of a jigsaw puzzle mounted on a huge spherical atlas of the world. The appropriate jigsaw pieces had to be inserted in the 81 countries where there is

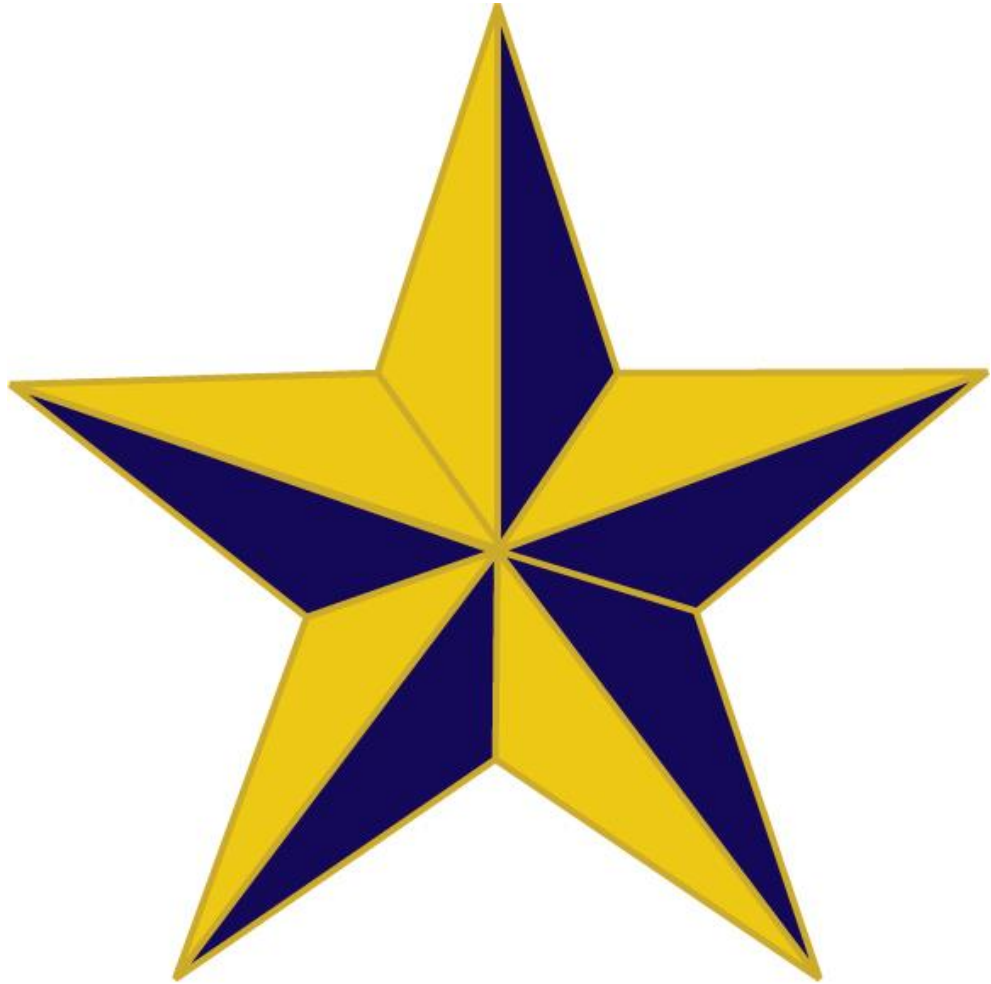
a Lasallian presence. The record was duly set.

The 90th anniversary celebrations were fittingly brought to a close with the whole community singing the school song.



Autumn scene in the garden of the Motherhouse, Rome





Great Things Are Possible



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