



The Gateway

Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin

September 2008

Sixth Issue

Welcome



On the 1st September 2008 about 10,000 Hong Kong Lasallian students got off the marks for the new academic year.



The 6 year old Primary 1 children steal the show as they take their first steps into a strange world. Their eyes and body language tell it all. We Lasallian educators know that they are the “young plants” that have been “confided to our care”, the living reality of the vision and mission handed down to us by St La Salle over 300 years ago.

The older children have seen it all before. Yet they too are growing, and with the sap of youth, put out new branches and blooms. We are to take care of them as if they were the children of kings. We try to do this by being kind but firm, our Lasallian way.



*The soul of each one of your pupils is infinitely dear to God.
St. La Salle*

Brother of the Month

Brother James Dooley (1915-2001)

“A soldier held a revolver to my head, all the time repeating the same word which I did not understand until the translator came up. The word was, ‘Ingrisu-ka!’

‘Are you English?’ ‘No’.

‘Are you a soldier?’ ‘No’.

When the soldier grabbed me, he had caught my profession crucifix which was entangled in my pyjamas top. He examined it closely, let it drop gently and said, ‘Kasorikku-ka?’ which I took to mean, ‘Are you a Catholic?’ ‘Yes,’ I replied. He pushed me away but kept me covered with his gun.”

So Brother James wrote about the experience that was to leave an indelible mark on him for the rest of his life, namely, his arrest and imprisonment by the Japanese occupying forces in Malaysia. After this first encounter Brother James determined to learn Japanese! Indeed he would later learn many other languages associated with his life and work. The passage also reveals his gift for the dramatic, a gift that never left him.

Brother James was born in County Laois, Ireland, on the 30th August 1915 and received the name Michael in baptism. Fifteen years later he became an aspirant to the De La Salle Brothers and took the Habit of the Brothers on the 8th September 1931. In keeping with the times he was given a new religious name, Brother James. After initial studies and formation he volunteered for the missions.

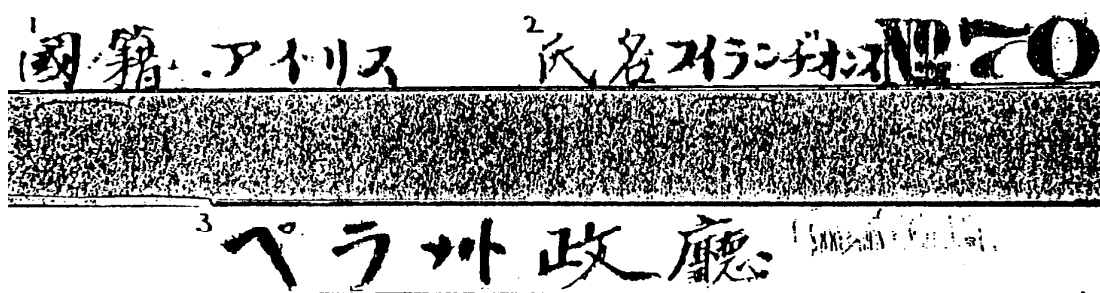


In September 1934, at the age of nineteen, he arrived in the Far East and was posted to St Joseph's, Singapore, for his first teaching assignment. Those were the days of wearing heavy black robes in sapping heat and with no air-conditioning. Three years later he was transferred to St John's Kuala Lumpur and then on the 10th January 1939, to St George's Taiping in Malaysia. He was already displaying fine teaching qualities and learning the Malay language.

In the Chinese language Taiping connotes “peace”. Little did the Brothers and the town inhabitants realise how soon their peace would be shattered.

As was the custom, the Brothers went to a bungalow in the Taiping hills for their Christmas break. On New Year's Eve, Japanese soldiers arrived on the hills and came banging at the door of the Brother's bungalow. Brother James opened the door to the revolver-wielding soldier described above. The Brothers were all arrested as spies and "escorted" downhill during the night. They were taken to a school playing field not far from their own school and tied to the rugby goalposts.

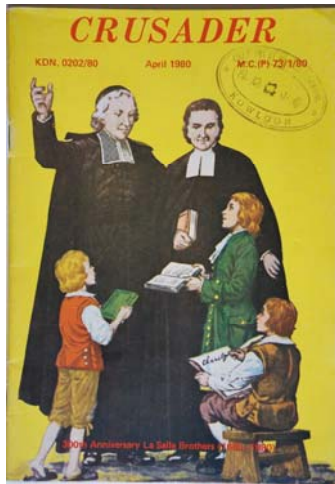
The cross questioning began. A Japanese officer approached the Brothers, bowed three times most respectfully and said something in Japanese. Later they learned he had said "You will be shot to death as spies tomorrow morning". They could well believe it since executions had already begun.



ARM BAND - original in red, which I still possess - issued by the Japanese Military Authority on January 13, 1942 - Japanese calendar - year 2602.
Translation: 1. Nationality: Irish, 2. Name: Brother James, No: 70
 3. Perak State Government.

Fortunately another officer approached and, thinking that the Brothers were priests, ordered them to be cut free and jailed instead. It was a close shave. For the next few years the Brothers endured a not so merry-go-round of imprisonment and house arrest before liberation at the end of the war. Brother James, however, was at pains to point out that they came across a number of Japanese officers and soldiers who did their best to make life more tolerable for the prisoners.

Brother James was sent on home leave in 1946 and then to Rome to deepen his Lasallian formation. Here, as might be expected, he brushed up on his French and Italian. On his return to the East in 1948 he was appointed Director of aspirants to the De La Salle Brothers. The location was Penang, Malaysia, and he was to serve there for the next fourteen years. He left a deep impression on his young charges who remember him, not only for his spiritual qualities but also for his sense of humour and more especially for his story-telling flair. He could keep them spellbound with first hand war stories.



It was at this time that Brother James' writing abilities came into focus. He loved to write and kept up a large correspondence. His typewriter was seldom silent. He was now asked to produce and become the first editor of a quarterly magazine called "The Crusader" which contained short stories, general knowledge, a pen pal section and information about our Lasallian world. The magazine proved very popular with teachers and students in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore. Brother James was editor from 1949 to 1955 and copies reached 8,000 readers. The name of the magazine was later changed to "The Young Lasallian".

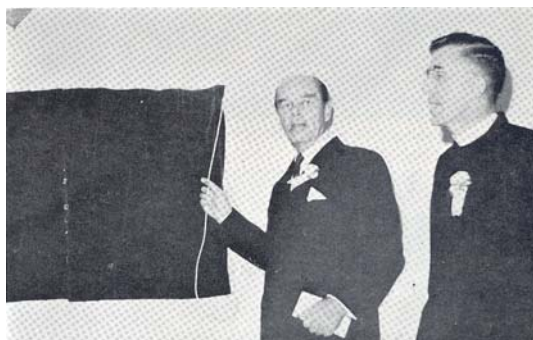
In 1962 Brother James was sent to De La Salle University, Manila and took out a Masters degree in Journalism. Upon completion he was posted as Director and Principal of St Joseph's College, Hong Kong, arriving on the 17th January 1964. He was succeeding Brother Brendan Dunne who had been associated with the school since 1932. Brother Brendan was not an easy act to follow but if Brother James was considered a lightweight in comparison he soon set about dispelling the myth. He prodded and cajoled the staff and students until they came around and the school went from strength to strength. He encouraged a wide range of extra curricular activities. He kept the school community regularly informed by circular and produced what may be considered the school's first Student Handbook, laying a strong emphasis on discipline and politeness.



One aspect of discipline that Brother James focused on was the lining up of students before going to class. He insisted that form teachers lead the students back to their classrooms in an orderly manner.

During his term as Principal the Communist inspired riots of 1967 broke out. It was a tense time for all. Mao Tsz Tung's little red book had become the left-wing bible. Crowds of slogan chanting rioters marched daily to Government house, quite close to the College. Schools in Hong Kong were also targeted and students were encouraged to start their own 'Cultural Revolution' in and outside the schools. Brother James and his staff managed to keep the College going without undue disturbance.

The 1960s and 70s witnessed a big growth in the Hong Kong Lasallian mission. There were sufficient Brothers to lead the way. Plans for new schools began to take shape. Brother James saw the need for a feeder Primary and so was born St Joseph's Primary School which opened its doors in 1968, much to the delight of parents in Hong Kong.



Official opening of St. Joseph's Primary School 1968 by the Director of Education

Brother James also accepted an offer to sponsor a new College in Chaiwan to cater mainly for children of the working class. The school is called Chong Gene Hang College in memory of its chief benefactor.

Having completed the canonical six years as Director and Principal, he was transferred to La Salle College in Kowloon in January 1970, returning to the ranks as a regular teacher. Despite the lapse of many years he had not lost his touch and his English lessons to the senior classes were so interesting his students would not miss them for anything. He always tried to follow the Lasallian motto of being firm but kind in class. He also found time to become the Spiritual Director



Brother James and Chinese friends

of one of the Legion of Mary praesidia in the school. Throughout his years in Hong Kong he grasped every opportunity to study Chinese (Cantonese) and could make himself understood in this difficult language.

In 1977 while still happily teaching in La Salle College, he was invited to Rome by the Superior General to



take charge of SECOLI for the next six years. SECOLI was the fund raising and dispensing arm of the Institute, channeling funds to deserving Lasallian third world projects, especially to Asia and Africa. For Brother James this required a vast correspondence, much travel and cool judgement. In Rome he also honed his Italian and French skills.

His term of six years with SECOLI ended in 1983 and he decided to return to Ireland with a special portfolio to promote the missions. He was based in the Provincialate community in Dublin. Over the next nine years he did regular rounds of the schools giving inspirational talks and slide shows on the missions. His first hand experiences coupled with his gift for story telling made for compelling presentations and the students responded most generously with their contributions.

At the age of seventy-seven he took official retirement, first in Kildare and then in Downpatrick for his remaining years. He was still interested in news of the schools East and West, still kept up a big correspondence and enjoyed welcoming friends and visitors to the house. He had strong family ties and visited them regularly. Although his health was gradually deteriorating he was reluctant to part from his beloved community at Downpatrick. The Brothers and his family helped him reach the decision to retire to the Brother's nursing home in Castletown. It was a matter of weeks before the end.

Brother James passed away at Castletown on the 29th July 2001, just a few weeks short of his 86th birthday. Brother Patrick Collier delivered a fine eulogy. After Communion, a nephew, John Sheeran, sang "The End of a Perfect Day". Brother James was then laid to rest to the strains of the traditional "Salve Regina", a fitting finale for one who loved the Mother of God.



Brother James, in happy mood, with Brothers Alphonsus Breen and Henry Pang

Oriental Flavour

The Mid-Autumn Festival



One of the most important Chinese festivals, the Mid-Autumn Festival, falls on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, around the time of the autumn equinox (usually September 22). Some refer to it simply as the "Moon Cake Festival". This day is also considered a harvest

festival, a time for relaxation and celebration. Families sit together, enjoy or 'chase' the moon, chat and share moon cakes and fruits.

This festival originated in a fairy tale. A hero named Hou Yi saved his people by shooting down the nine suns out of ten that scorched the earth and burned the crops. He was rewarded with the elixir of immortality. He did not want to consume the elixir and leave his beautiful wife, Chang Er, so he gave the elixir to her for safekeeping. Unfortunately, Hou Yi's disloyal apprentice forced Chang Er to swallow the elixir. She then became a supernatural being. She flew to the moon, and from there pined for her husband. Hou Yi was crazed with grief. Looking up at the moon one night, he saw a figure like his wife. He ran grief-stricken and in vain after the moon. Then he hurriedly brought cakes and fruits as offerings to his wife. Upon hearing this, people developed the custom of watching the moon and eating cakes and fruits to commemorate the event.



The custom of eating moon cakes during the Mid-Autumn Festival is said to have begun at the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). At that time the general populace faced unbearably cruel governance. Zhu Yuanzhang, later to become

Emperor, set out to organize an uprising by uniting the various resistance forces. However, the oppressive presence of government officials made delivering messages extremely dangerous.



One day, Zhu's military counselor, Liu Bowen, hit upon an idea, and ordered his subordinates to hide paper slips in moon cakes with the words "Uprising on August 15". Then the moon cakes were distributed among the rebel forces in different places. When the day came, all these forces converged for the uprising and Beijing, capital of the Yuan Dynasty, was captured.

When news broke of the successful uprising, Zhu Yuanzhang was so delighted that he allowed his men to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival with the common people and ordered moon cakes to be distributed. The custom of eating moon cakes continues to this day.

Another name for the Mid Autumn Festival is The Lantern Festival because of the custom of designing and carrying lanterns made in traditional shapes such as rabbits, goldfish, carp, butterflies, lobsters and star-shaped fruits. In Chinese mythology butterflies are symbols of longevity, lobsters of mirth, while carp symbolize the Emperor's strength, wisdom and power. In modern times you will also see lanterns shaped like missiles, airplanes, rockets, ships and tanks. The colourful lanterns lend an air of enchantment and excitement to the scene.



The famous Chinese poet, Su Shi, has this to say on the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1076.

**Though miles apart, could men but live for ever
Dreaming they shared this moonlight endlessly!**

但願人長久，千里共嬋娟

Family News

Joint Schools Concert

On 30th of August 2008, St. Joseph's and Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary Schools joined forces for a well-received concert performance. This was the first of its kind for both schools and was highly appreciated by parents.



Visit of Olympic Gold Medalists



Soon after the Olympic Games were over, the Gold Medalists from China were given a trip to Hong Kong. They were of course warmly received. They spent their time demonstrating their skills, touring and shopping. La Salle Primary School was asked to supply Chinese Drummers and a Cheer Squad for one of the greeting gatherings. Both boys and teachers were delighted to meet the stars.

Hong Kong Lasallian Education Council

These are the members who attended the meeting on September the 13th 2008. Among the topics discussed were our School Sponsoring Body Ordinance, Lasallian Formation, Succession Planning and China Outreach.

Seated L to R: Nicholas Ng, Brother Patrick, Paul Woo. Standing L to R:

Wong Mo Ting, Michael Tse, Lester Huang, Peter Lui, Chris Lau, Victor Ling, Tse Shek Kam and Measure Hung.



In Remembrance

We pray for the repose of the souls of our departed Brothers.

Our Brothers	Service in HK	Date of Death	Place of Burial
Marcian Cullen	1921-1928	02-09-1938	Hong Kong
Gilbert Perrier	1948-1977	03-09-1977	Hong Kong
Albeus Leo Collins	1904-1906	04-09-1954	Ireland
Isidore Chantelouve	1901-1906	05-09-1909	Malaysia
Christian Lennon	1908-1913	06-09-1920	USA
Cornelius Peters	1940	06-09-1973	USA
Patricius O'Donovan	1931-1933& 1965-2002	08-09-2002	Hong Kong
Hilary Adrian de Mello	1915-1917 1940-1957	17-09-1960	Malaysia
Honorius Dupont	1934-1947	20-09-1963	Singapore
Ladislaus Bednar	1964-1974	20-09-1999	England
Cairnan Costello	1906-1916& 1932-34	22-09-1950	Malaysia
Paul McGrath	1898-	24-09-1943	USA
Patrick Toner	1947-1956	28-09-1968	Ireland

Brother Marcian Cullen: well-known composer of school songs

Brother Patrick Toner: negotiated with the British army for the return of La Salle College

Brother Gilbert Perrier: came to us from Beijing in 1948

Brother Christian Lennon: of "Christian Era" fame in Ceylon

Brother Patricius O'Donovan: poet, artist, musician...

Brother Hilary Adrian de Mello: a strict but beloved disciplinarian

Brother Honorius Dupont: a flair for drama

Brother Ladislaus Bednar: a pioneer in sex education in Hong Kong

Brother Cairnan Costello: taught Japanese soldiers to make the Way of the Cross



Brother Marcian Cullen



Brother Gilbert Perrier



Brother Christian Lennon



Brother Ladislaus Bednar



Brother Patricius O'Donovan



Brother Honorius Dupont



Brother Patrick Toner



Brother Hilary Adrian de Mello

Presence of God A Teacher's reflection



The feeling of awareness that God is always with us is just like that of students who understand that the teacher is watching them all the time, waiting to praise them whenever they have done something good and positive, shaking the head in disapproval when the student is about to think or act rudely or negatively, ready to comfort them in difficulties etc. As a teacher, being in the holy presence of God may mean that God is watching over the way I educate and treat my students, as 'every encounter with the students is an encounter with God'.

At the beginning of the new school term, I think I have to prepare myself to receive the students God is entrusting to me and, of course, try to enjoy the wonders they will reveal. No wonder St. John Baptist de La Salle encouraged his Brothers to remember the holy presence of God whenever they walked through a doorway, while every half an hour in school, a student would remind the class that they were in the holy presence of God.



All you need and all God wants of you is that you remain in His presence.