



The Gateway

Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin

April 2009

Thirteenth Issue

Welcome

Twice a year the Chinese people remember their ancestors in a special way. The 4th or 5th April is one such occasion. In English it is called the Ching Ming festival or Grave – Sweeping day and it is a public holiday in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Sweeping the grave means clearing the gravesite of dirt and debris, weeding around the site and repainting gravestone inscriptions. Food and drink is offered to the spirit of the deceased, paper money is burned, candles are lit and family members kneel and bow in respect. There has always been a marvelous tradition among the Chinese people of never forgetting their roots.



While many people in this part of the world are still grieving after the disastrous Sichuan earthquake, the one in central Italy took us by surprise. May the souls of all the deceased rest in peace and may God comfort the relatives and survivors.

In the midst of all our human tragedies, faith gives us the assurance of eternal life. Christ is risen, Alleluia.

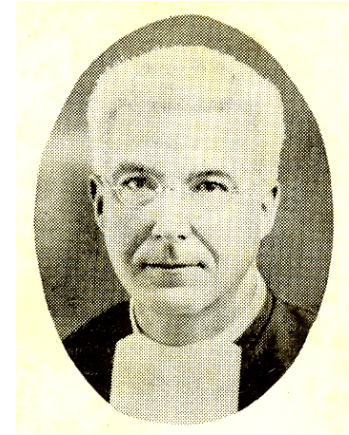
A happy Easter to all our readers and we hope you will find something to your taste in Gateway 13.



Brother of the Month

Brother John Lynam 1886-1964

Brother John, also known as Celba John, was born on March 3rd 1886 in Ballick, Moyler, Co Laois, Ireland. Two of his relatives also joined the Order. They were called Brothers Finian and Alban Lynam.



Brother John joined the Brothers at Castletown on the 17th March 1902 as a junior novice and received the holy habit on 29th July 1902. After the spiritual formation of the novitiate he began to further his studies.

However, in 1904, at the age of 18, he was asked to leave his native shores and was sent to New York. For the next 7 years he tested his teaching skills in New York, in particular in St Brigid's School. Then, in 1911, he was asked to move again, this time to Manila in the Philippines. He was to be one of the pioneer group to open the first Lasallian school there, called De La Salle College which, in time, became De La Salle University.



The first faculty of De La Salle College Manila, 1911. Brother John is back row, second from the left.

Brother John was only 25 years old when he landed in the Philippines. Apart from a short interlude in Malaysia, he was to spend the next 24 years teaching and helping Filipino youth in various roles.

He adopted a relatively relaxed atmosphere in class in order to bring out the best in his pupils. A puckish sense of humour was a great asset. With a straight face he would crack jokes and have the whole class in stitches. As is often the case with a born storyteller, his listeners often wondered if he was joking or telling the truth.

On the one hand he explained trigonometry, solid geometry and advanced algebra admirably well while on the other hand he brought Literature to life.

Soon after the establishment of De La Salle College, and in keeping with his abiding interest in sports, he started the first basketball team. To this day the College basketball team is one of the best in the country. In 1924 he was a founding member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association of the Philippines. Later he organized the Philippine Amateur Athletic Association and was Chairman of the Football Committee.



In 1927 he became the Director of the College and worked wonders for the morale of the staff and students. Perhaps his most memorable achievement was the ability to place his Commerce graduates in various business and commercial firms. He worked tirelessly and successfully to place his charges in good professional positions. When asked how he did it he would quietly wave off any personal credit but did admit he had many friends.

He also helped in the organization of the College Alumni Association, something the members never forgot. They were to welcome him back with open arms for the golden jubilee of the College.

In 1931 Brother John was asked to be Director of St Paul's Institution, Seremban, Malaysia. He began the process of shaping the school quadrangle into a fine set of modern buildings. But the call of the Philippines was still strong and he was allowed to return in 1933.

In 1936 the Brothers' superiors however, in their wisdom, saw fit to move Brother

John again. This time he was to take over first as Sub-Director and teacher of Class 1 and then, in 1937, as Director of St Joseph's College, Hong Kong. It was to be an eventful move as he would remain as Director throughout the war years.



Brothers Community of St. Joseph's College Hong Kong, pre-war.
Brother John, Director, center of front row.

The war years was a difficult time for the Brothers. Since both St Joseph's and La Salle Colleges were taken over by the Japanese no teaching could take place. In addition, one of the Brothers who volunteered his services to the Red Cross was killed when the ambulance he was driving was hit by an exploding shell. It was decided that all the Brothers, except for three, would transfer to Lasallian schools in Vietnam. They were lucky to be able to find transport. The three who remained in Hong Kong were Brothers John, Paul O'Connell and Martin Kelleher and their role was to maintain a claim on their two schools. These three Brothers, being Irish nationals, would not be interned.

Brother John had a collection of stamps and it so happened that the Japanese officer in charge of the area had a similar interest. Brother John presented him with his collection of stamps. Because of this kind gesture the Brothers were spared harsh treatment. Moreover, across the road from St Joseph's was Clementi school which had been transformed into a Japanese school. The Japanese headmaster and Brother John became friends. By all accounts Brother

John's personality effected a calming influence, something much appreciated especially in wartime.

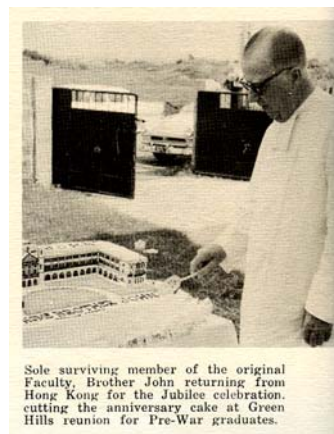
After the war ended in 1945 Brother John and his two companions set about restoring the school buildings from a hospital and Japanese administrative offices. Much of the furniture and equipment had either been looted or destroyed. The Government could not offer much help. Many schools could not even get enough paper to print their exams. It was Brother John's task also to find the former teachers who were still alive and living in Hong Kong and to recruit new teachers. Large numbers of pupils were applying to enter school, most of whom had lost out on their schooling during the war. Added to this was the influx of families from mainland China fleeing the Communist advance.

Brother John also called on the services of a young Portuguese old boy, Enrico Rosario. Mr. Rosario was able to use his business contacts to supply the College with materials for teaching. He spent the rest of his working life as a much appreciated school secretary. He retired at the age of 70.



Enrico Rosario, SJC old boy
(1931-1939)
School secretary for 30 years

Brother John was happy to hand over the responsibilities of Director and Principal to Brother Raphael Egan in 1949, but for the next eleven years he continued to take an active role in teaching. He was particularly active in teaching religion and English dictation in the lower forms. He would correct all these dictation scripts conscientiously before distribution. The value of Dictation has its critics but Brother John's students certainly developed an excellent listening ear.



The alumni of Manila had not forgotten and Brother John was able to visit in 1949 and again in 1961. In his 1949 visit the De La Salle Alumni Association President presented him with a pocket watch which he kept faithfully until his death. In the 1961 visit for the golden jubilee of the College his sprightly step had slowed and his eyes had dimmed but, as one spectator put it, "his sunny charm was still potent". He was allowed to remain in Manila in retirement, in the city and among the students he loved so well.



Brother John Hall,
De La Salle
University, Manila

In his later years Brother John suffered from a heart condition. He never slept in a bed but in an easy-chair. Unfortunately he had a fall from which he never really recovered. He faded away slowly and died on the 16th April 1964. He was buried in the grounds of what is now the Brothers Novitiate in Lipa, Philippines.

And so passed a man of pleasant temperament, refined, gentle and dignified in manner, as well as a natural storyteller.

umble and respectful servant,

Brother John
Director.

Oriental Flavour

Ching Ming Festival 清明節



Segment of the famous 12th century Chinese painting, entitled 'Along the River during the Ching Ming Festival'

This important Chinese festival is sometimes referred to as Grave-Sweeping Day, and is somewhat akin to Cemetery Days in the West. Ching Ming is held on the 106th day after winter solstice, and usually occurs on April 4 or 5.

Ching means pure or clean while Ming means brightness. Ching Ming is linked to the Chinese tradition of paying respect to ancestors. Many believe that the departed can assist living relatives.

Visiting the cemetery is also referred to as 'hang san', that is, walking the mountain. In the old days Chinese people were buried on hill or mountain sides and big cemeteries can sometimes occupy an entire hill or mountain.

Eating the food offered to the deceased is considered good luck. Paper money is burned for use in the afterlife, candles are lit and flowers placed.

In a famous Vietnamese epic poem about the Ching Ming festival, called The Tale of Kieu, the poet sets the scene nicely:

**Swift swallows and spring days were shuttling by
of ninety radiant ones three score had fled.
Young grass spread all its green to heaven's rim;
some blossoms marked pear branches
with white dots.
Now came the Feast of Light in the third month
with graveyard rites and junkets on the green.
As merry pilgrims flocked from near and far,
the sisters and their brother went for a stroll.**

Ngày xuân con én đưa thoi
Thiều quang chín chục đã ngoài sáu mươi
Cỏ non xanh tận chân trời
Cành lê trắng điểm một vài bông hoa
Thanh Minh trong tiết tháng ba
Lễ là Tảo mộ, hội là Đạp thanh
Gần xa nô nức yến oanh
Chị em sắm sửa bộ hành chơi xuân



The Ching Ming Festival is also frequently mentioned in Chinese literature. The most popular poem concerning the festival, even to this day, is by Du Mu 杜牧 (803-852), who is best remembered for his lyrical and romantic quatrains. Here it is.

Ching Ming

A drizzling rain falls like tears on
the day of Ching Ming;

清明時節雨紛紛

On his way, the mourner's heart is
breaking.

路上行人欲斷魂

He asks a shepherd boy where he
can find a wine-house to drown his
sorrow,

借問酒家何處有

The boy points to Almond Flower
Village in the distance.

牧童遙指杏花村



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
Alphonsus Bloemen	1933-1940	19-04-1974	Philippines
Dennis Monchauzon	1873-1942	11-4-1942	Burma
Edmund John Burke	1934-1937	12-04-1958	Burma
Eusebius Mahon	1921-	23-04-1963	Scotland
John Lynam	1936-1960	16-04-1964	Philippines
Joseph Lalo	1887-	01-04-1901	Burma
Martin Duquet	1915-	29-04-1947	France
Patrick McInnerney	1889-1894	23-04-1894	Hong Kong
Peter Close	1900-1903&1914	30-04-1914	Hong Kong
Sylvester McGrath	1903 -1908	16-04-1931	Ireland
William Lefabre	1882-	13-04-1916	Malaysia



Brother Alphonsus
Bloemen



Brother Edmund
John Burke



Brother John Lynam



Brother Dennis
Monchauzon



Brother Peter Close



Brother Sylvester McGrath

Family Updates

Chinese Olympic Gymnasts

The 27th March 2009 was a red-letter day for the students of La Salle Primary School. Two Chinese Olympic gymnasts, Li Xiaopeng 李小鹏 and Liu Xuan 劉璇 paid a visit and shared their experiences as well as their hopes and dreams. They held their large audience spellbound. The school is very grateful to the Parent Teacher Association for arranging the visit.



Brothers Forum and Retreat

Brothers from Japan, the Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong stayed from 5th to 12th April in the Redemptorist Centre, Pattaya, Thailand. For 2 days they discussed various aspects of the process of restructuring as they plan the way forward towards a new District. The rest of the time was spent in Retreat, ably directed by the Brother Vicar General, Brother Thomas Johnson.



Lasallian Education Council

The Council hosted a lunch gathering with the Principal and Vice-Principals of Chong Gene Hang College. These lunches are a good way of keeping members up to date with our Hong Kong Lasallian schools. They were also able to thank Vice Principal David Cheng who will be retiring in the summer.

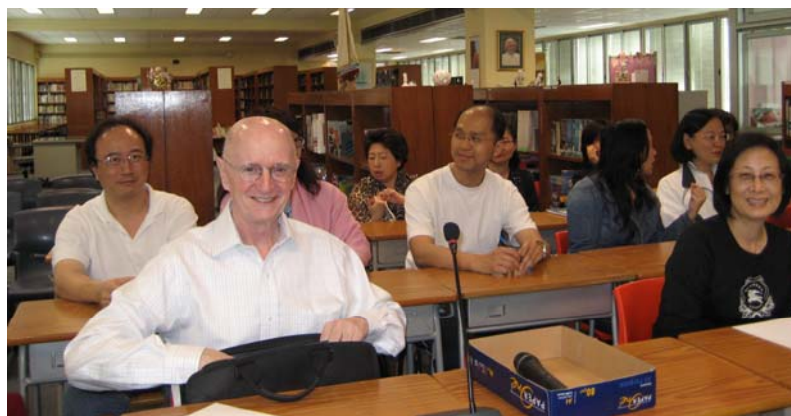
Guest from Singapore

Alvin Tan, one of our Lasallian partners in Singapore, came for a few days. He has been commissioned by the District Council to produce a video specifically on the vocation of the Brothers. We pray that this initiative will bear fruit in due course.



Asia Pacific Lasallian Educators' Conference

Our local APLEC members met for a plenary meeting on the 25th April. These meetings last about 3 hours and form part of our Lasallian formation structure. At this meeting we were blessed with the presence and input of Brother Mark Murphy, chairman of the Lasallian Services Committee for the PARC region.



Sympathies

We extend our sincere sympathy to Brothers Lawrence and Mark Blake and to their family members on the death of their brother, Jack, who passed away on the 23rd of April 2009. May he rest in the peace of the Lord.

The Creation of the World
By students of Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School

The First Day



The Second Day



The Third Day



The Fourth Day



The Fifth Day



The Sixth Day



The Seventh Day



“In the beginning, the earth was formless and desolate.”
(Genesis 1:1-2)

“God saw all He had made, and indeed it was very good.”
(Genesis 1:31)

Thoughts for Teachers from St. John Baptist de La Salle



Caring	Have much more care for the education of those entrusted to your care than you would have for the children of a king.
Discipline	Pray God never to allow you to be carried away by any outburst of anger when you have to punish any of your pupils.
Faith	Do you have a faith such that it is able to touch the hearts of your students and inspire them with the Christian spirit? This is the greatest miracle that you can perform.
Gentleness & wisdom	It is by your gentleness and your wisdom that you will lead those entrusted to your care to give up bad habits.
Kindness	Never speak to anyone except with kindness, and if you fear to speak otherwise, keep silent.
Patience	You expect patience from others, then you must show patience yourself, and let your pupils see you are not acting through whim.
Piety	You should pray much for your students to obtain for them the gift of piety, something God alone can give them.
Politeness	Be sure to be warmly affable toward everyone, to speak and to answer everyone with great gentleness and respect.
Self-control	When you tell your pupils to be self-controlled, are you the first to act that way?
Seriousness	The seriousness demanded of teachers does not consist in having a severe aspect, in getting angry, or in saying harsh words.

Silence	The more completely silence is kept in your school, the more order there will be. For this reason, see that silence is kept.
Students	If you have for your students the firmness of a father to restrain them from misbehavior, you must also have for them the tenderness of a mother to draw them to you.
Students Teachers	The soul of each one of your pupils is infinitely dear to God. Often ask God for the grace to touch hearts; this is the grace of your state.
Vigilance	Teachers must be very alert to whatever can harm or wound their pupils.
Vigilance	See to it that none of your pupils go astray, or if some do, that they come back without any delay.
Virtue	Do not forget to help your pupils acquire gentleness, patience, love and respect for their parents.
Zeal	Secondly, the spirit of this Institute consists in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children, inducing them to preserve their innocence and inspiring them with a horror for sin.



St. John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us.
Live Jesus in our hearts, forever.