



The Gateway

Hong Kong Lasallian Family Bulletin

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Thirty-eighth Issue

Welcome

The month of March brought the Lenten season into focus. Our schools have had Masses, prayer services, the way of the cross, Lenten lunch fasts and Lenten collections for the poor and needy. In the midst of it all, we celebrated the feasts of St Patrick and St Joseph. After all, there are still some Irish Brothers hereabouts and we have no less than three schools named after St Joseph, patron of the Brothers Institute.



Early April is the usual time for the Ching Ming festival when Chinese people “sweep the graves” of their loved ones who have passed away. This year Ching Ming fell on the 4th April.

For the past few months Hong Kong has had the novel experience of going through a selection process for its future Chief Executive, with 3 contenders for the post. The people call it a “small circle” election since we still do not have universal suffrage. This has been promised for 1917. Time will tell.



Our relatively new District of South East Asia (LEAD) has recently held its first District Chapter. Brother delegates from the 7 countries of LEAD met in Penang to discuss and draw up plans for the way ahead. The event is included in Lasallian Family Updates.

This is the 4th anniversary of “The Gateway.” Wish us well!

A very happy Easter to all our readers.

Brother of the Month

Brother Peter Damian Whealan 1908 - 1941



Of all the Brothers of the Month covered in “The Gateway”, none has had a shorter term of service in Hong Kong than Brother Peter Damian Whealan, barely nine months in fact. Yet, over seventy years later, we find that he has left us an admirable and unforgettable example and memory.

Edward Proctor Whealan was born in Newark, New Jersey, America, on the 22nd January 1908. He was brought up in a fervent Catholic household and trained from childhood to value the spiritual and eternal. Even as a child he was precocious by nature, straightforward and independent in action. In St Michael’s Primary School he made rapid progress and graduated with honour.

At this stage he had made up his mind to become a religious and chose the Christian Brothers because of their involvement in the education of the young. And so, in December of 1922, Edward entered the Juniorate of the Brothers at Ammendale. Family circumstances, however, made it necessary for him to return home and look for employment. He found it with the Chrysler Corporation in its Newark office. Advancement was rapid until he was recognized as one of the Corporation’s best salesmen.

While working with Chrysler, he strengthened his Catholic faith by joining the Knights of St Columbus, the Holy Name Society and the St Vincent de Paul Society. Through these organizations he was given scope to practice the various acts of mercy.

Things took a turn for the better and, after an absence of eight years, he requested admission to the Brothers Novitiate at Ammendale. On October 31st 1930, he returned to his former home and restarted the spiritual formation he had so reluctantly dropped. He received the habit of the Brothers, the religious name Damian Peter and made a fervent Novitiate.



At the completion of his Novitiate, he pronounced his first vows and was sent to the Scholasticate at Eddington, Pennsylvania, where he continued his studies and was initiated into the work of the classroom. Right from this early age, he showed himself capable of directing his pupils.



In September of 1932 he was transferred to the West Catholic High School for Boys in Philadelphia, where he spent the next four years. While teaching there, he attended classes in La Salle University and received his Bachelor Degree in Commerce in June 1934.

A Brother companion of his at the time had this interesting note: “Brother Damian Peter had a great devotion to the Most Blessed Mother and succeeded in instilling this devotion into the hearts of his pupils. At West Catholic School he erected a permanent shrine to the Mother of God. This he constructed of wood and plastic in a most artistic manner. His students voluntarily contributed to purchase a beautiful statue of Our Lady for the shrine.”

Another close Brother companion of the time attests: “Brother Damian Peter did nothing by halves. The business acumen he had acquired before entering the Novitiate made him careful to require from his students neat, tidy and exact work. The blackboards in his classroom were always bordered with appropriate maxims, sayings and suggestions. His Catechism lessons and Reflections were highly praised by the boys, and the extreme care with which he prepared and presented all his lessons was a frequent subject of comment.”

He liked order and discipline in his classroom but this was tempered with kindness, in the best Lasallian tradition.

Another companion at West Catholic High School recalls: “Brother Peter possessed many wonderful qualities. Among them, we may mention faithfulness in writing encouraging letters to friends and pupils who were suffering from illness or because of some reverse in fortune or in family affairs. Neatness was characteristic of him. His classroom merited the title ‘spotless’. His remarkable sense of humour gave the

Brothers many a hearty laugh. His impersonations, especially of the British aristocracy, would do justice to an accomplished actor.”

Although he loved his family and country, it was around this time that he showed an interest in missionary work and in 1936 he requested to be sent to the mission field. His request was accepted and he was assigned to De La Salle University, Manila.



Brothers Community, Manila, Pre-war. Br Peter, back row, 4th from left

Soon after arriving in Manila he was entrusted with the responsibility of the deanship of the College of Commerce. He also took charge of the College publications. In addition, in 1939, he took out a Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Santa Tomas. With the necessary qualifications in tow, all was set fair for a strong period of tenure at De La Salle University.

The looming clouds of war changed everything. The Lasallian leadership of the time was aware of the dangers to the German Brothers in various parts of the world. In April 1941, and since Britain was already at war with Germany, it was thought best to transfer a German Brother from St Joseph's College, Hong Kong, to neutral Manila. Brother Peter Damian was asked to replace him in St Joseph's. Brother Peter's response was to say that he would be happy to spread the good news of Christ even to the depths of war-torn China.

And so, Brother Peter was sent to St Joseph's College, Hong Kong, arriving there on the 3rd April 1941. He taught there until his untimely death in December. Judging by an

account of two American friends who visited him in St Joseph's, Brother Peter had settled in nicely. One of them records: "We spent a most pleasant day with the Brothers. Brother Peter proved himself a most accomplished, interesting and entertaining host. Besides, he seemed so happy in his work."

The outbreak of war in Pacific Asia, however, intervened mercilessly. On December 8th 1941 the Japanese attacked Hong Kong. After the attack on Pearl Harbour, the United States declared war on Japan. Brother Peter felt he should do his bit for the war effort and signed up for voluntary service as a non-combatant.

Things moved swiftly. Brother Peter had been given an ambulance to drive the wounded to hospital, usually to the Indian General Hospital, now called Tung Wah Eastern Hospital, Causeway Bay. Despite Japanese guns and vigilance, he had driven his ambulance safely through the lines, bringing in several wounded whom he had picked up on the Northern front.

Colonel Ride was in charge of No 1 field ambulance. By the 23rd December his soldiers were dying on every front and there were so many waiting wounded. His officers in council were almost in despair when in walked Brother Peter who had somehow or other managed to get his ambulance through the Japanese lines. He said he would return to the northern front to pick up more of the wounded that he had been forced to leave behind. Colonel Ride and his officers tried to dissuade him, knowing that such a journey was tantamount to almost certain death.

Brother Peter made up his mind. "I must go" he said. "I promised them that I would return." Taking his young Portuguese companion with him, Private A. B. Carvalho, he was soon speeding northward to the wounded men. Guns blazed around him as he sped on. Eventually, outside the Po Leung Kuk orphanage in Happy Valley, a blast of machine-gun fire found him. He groaned in agony, uttered a prayer and fell forward on his wheel. Then all was still.



Private Carvalho, who rode in the front seat, was pushed out of the vehicle and, although injured, survived the attack. He was taken to Bowen Road Hospital and later made his way to St Joseph's College and told the Brothers what had happened to Brother Peter. His parents only learned of his death in August 1942 when a ship

returned to the United States with the first internments.

There is no record of where Brother Peter was buried. His name and date of death is inscribed on the Brothers memorial tombstone in St Michael's Catholic Cemetery, Happy Valley.

A father of a boy who was taught by Brother Peter wrote to his parents: "Please accept my heartfelt sympathy on the death of your good son. He taught my boy to love and serve God. My son is now in the military forces of our country under General MacArthur in Australia. You really have reason to rejoice as your son is indeed an angel in heaven."

And this is how his death was seen by a Brother who knew him:

"You sleep, tonight, in a lonely grave,
Far, far from your native shore;
The roar of guns and the drone of planes
Are thrills that you heed no more;
Your noble death on the field of fame,
Unexcelled by decrees of fate;
It gained for a Brother a martyr's crown,
A hero for the church and state."



Although Brother Peter's burial site is unknown, his memory is green and the Lasallian Family in Hong Kong will ever treasure his example of self-sacrifice.

Postings of Brother Peter Damian

Ammendale, Maryland	Juniorate	1922
Chrysler Corporation	Working	1922-1930
Ammendale, Maryland	Novitiate	1930-1931
Eddington, Pennsylvania	Scholasticate	1931-1932
West Catholic High School, Philadelphia	Teaching	1932-1936
La Salle University, Philadelphia	Bachelor of Commerce	1934
De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines	Teaching	1936-1941
St. Joseph's College, Hong Kong	MBA	1939
	Teaching	1941

Family Updates

St. Joseph's Primary Sports Day

It was the turn of St. Joseph's Primary School to hold its annual Sports Day on the 1st of March 2012. Wanchai Stadium, situated not too far from the school, was the venue. The weather was benign, dry and cool, ready-made for sports. The meet lasted the whole day so



that the boys had to bring packed lunches. Many boys finished their packed lunches well before lunch! In any case, an enjoyable day was had by all.

Prof Henry Tye's Lunchtime Lecture 'The Beginning of the Universe'



Professor Henry Tye (64), old boy, MIT Alumni, Professor of Physics, Cornell University, and recently appointed Director of the IAS (Institute of Advanced Studies) at HKUST visited his alma mater on Friday 9th, March and gave a lunchtime lecture on 'The Beginning of

the Universe'. Professor Tye is a leading researcher in String Theory and Inflationary Brane scenarios explaining the origins of the universe. His work involves him with teams of scientists such as Dr. Stephen Hawkins and others at the CERN project in Switzerland. Prof Tye mentioned that cosmic physics supports what is known as the Big Bang and that Inflation Theory explains how the Big Bang developed out of nothing. Strings and Brane Theory help explain Inflation Theory but before all this was nothing, very intense nothing. Philosophy and theology are still required to pose reason to explain nothing because nothing philosophically, and therefore theologically, is something. Whew!

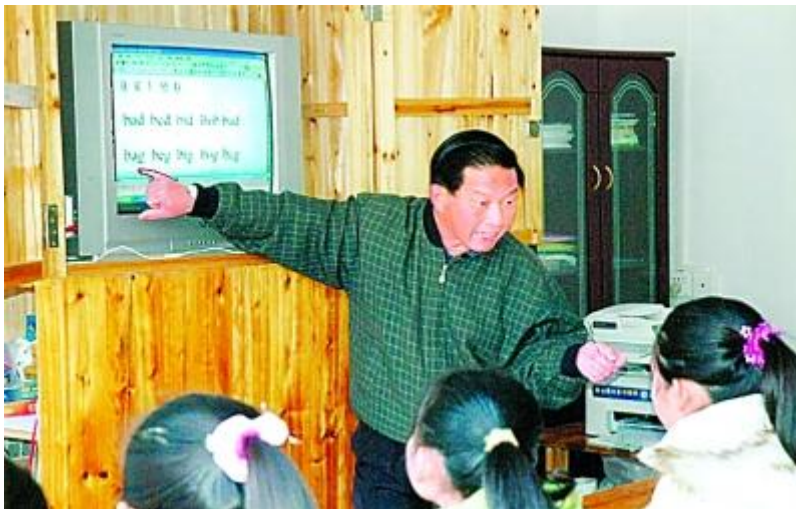
In Loving Memory

Teachers, students, parents and old boys gathered in La Salle school chapel on the 17th March 2012 for a memorial service for the late Mr. Chan Chau Mo. Mr. Chan had been a physical education teacher and sports-master for many years and had shown respect and decency to all who came into contact with him. Before the age of official retirement, he had been suffering much from diabetes and related illnesses, all of which he bore with admirable fortitude and patience before eventually succumbing. Many of those at the service spoke feelingly of Mr. Chan's role in their lives. May he rest in peace and may the Lord console his wife and family and relatives.



Mr. Chan, extreme right, in his prime

Award for Brother David Liao



Brother David Liao was featured as one of 8 examples of the Spirit of Lei Feng in this year's 50th Anniversary Celebration of Lei Feng Day. He was honored with the title "Yang Lei Feng" and the acknowledgement from the Education Ministry in Beijing came from a special

committee headed by Li Chang Chun 李长春, a member of the powerful Central Politburo. La Salle Study Centre was featured nationwide in connection with National Lei Feng Day on 5th March 2012. Brother David says that the award came as a complete surprise to him. He has already completed 10 years of mission in China. We congratulate Brother David and wish him continued good health in carrying out his work.

La Salle in Asia

The first Chapter of the newly formed District of South East Asia came to a fitting conclusion on Saturday 31st March 2012 with the celebration of 160 years of La Salle in Asia. The celebrations were held at St Xavier’s Institution, Penang, the ‘motherhouse’ of the Brothers for many a year. The Thanksgiving Mass was held in the spacious school chapel followed by a tour of an area of the school set aside for an exhibition. A gala dinner rounded off the evening, with the chief minister of Penang State as Guest of Honour. Let us give thanks for all the devoted Brothers and Lasallian partners who dedicated their lives to the cause of human and spiritual education over the past 160 years.



Our Lenten Season



Prayer and Fasting

The teacher and boy opposite are engaged in a lunch time fast.

The Way of the Cross

These images come from the Oratory of the Brothers in La Salle College, Hong Kong. They are the work of Francisco Borboa for the opening of the new school building in 1979.



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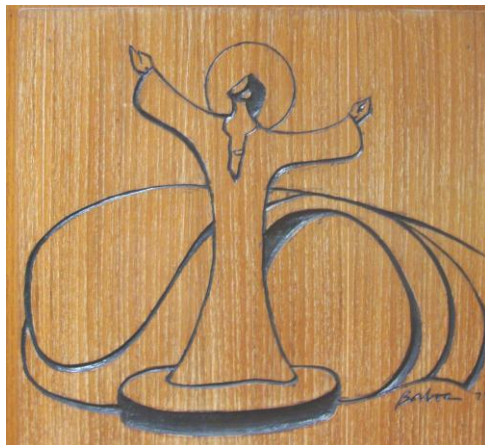
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The Lord is truly risen
Alleluia

Oriental Flavour

Right and Wrong

When it was time for Bankei to hold his meditation course , pupils from many parts of Japan came to attend. During one of these gatherings a pupil was caught stealing. The matter was reported to Bankei with the request that the culprit be expelled. Bankei ignored the case.

Later the pupil was caught in a similar act, and again Bankei disregarded the matter. This angered the other pupils, who drew up a petition asking for the dismissal of the thief, stating that otherwise they would leave in a body.

When Bankei had read the petition he called everyone before him. "You are wise brothers," he told them. "You know what is right and what is not right. You may go somewhere else to study if you wish, but this poor brother does not even know right from wrong. Who will teach him if I do not? I am going to keep him here even if all the rest of you leave."

The pupil who had stolen wept. All desire to steal had vanished.

Lasallian slant: We have all met his type before, the pupil who so annoys or angers everybody else that they all gang up on him and want him out. Hopefully, we have also met the principal or teacher who is determined to save him. And we recall Jesus' pardon of the repentant thief on the cross.



Learning to be silent

The pupils of the Tendai school used to practise meditation. Four of them, who were intimate friends, promised one another to observe seven days of silence.

On the first day all were silent. Their meditation had begun auspiciously, but when night came and the oil lamps were growing dim one of the pupils could not help saying to a servant: "Fix those lamps."

The second pupil was surprised to hear the first one talk. "We are not supposed to say a word," he remarked.

"You two are stupid. Why did you talk?" asked the third.

"I am the only one who has not talked," concluded the fourth pupil.

Lasallian slant: One of the Lasallian virtues of a good teacher is, strangely perhaps, that of silence. Of course we do distinguish between purposeful sound and loud disorder. "It is great wisdom to know how to keep silence when the occasion requires it." (St La Salle)

