

# The Gateway



Issue 81  
October 2019



**Borboa's Painting for Tercentenary**  
"Jesus is talking to him about the last 300 years work of the La Salle Brothers' schools"

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## Welcome

This is the first Gateway issue for the academic year 2019/2020.

The year started in a mood of tension and anger felt by a sizable number of people in the territory. Protests, sometimes accompanied by violence and vandalism, became the order of the day, and still continue. Many of the protesters are young and they worry about their future.

On a brighter note, our Hong Kong Lasallian Family was boosted by the addition of a number of relatively young Brothers. They will be introduced in this issue. We welcome them heartily and pray that their mission here will bear much fruit.

One of our schools, Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College, is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year. We thought it appropriate to go back to the origins, perhaps the little-known story about La Salle Evening Secondary School. We are indebted to Brother Thomas Lavin, a teacher at the school at the time, for his memories in this regard.

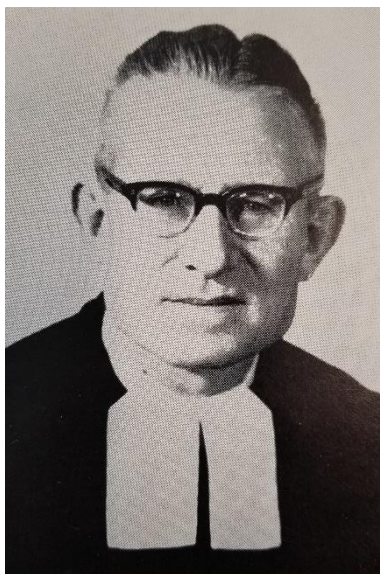
In this Tercentenary Year of the Founder's death, a Thanksgiving Mass was held on 21<sup>st</sup> September with representatives of all our schools as well as old boys and parents attending. We were fortunate to have the spacious Hall of La Salle Primary School for our use.

We are in the month of October, devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary. We ask our blessed Mother to intercede with her Son for peace in our times.





## La Salle Evening Secondary School



Rev. Bro. Herman, F.S.C. Principal.

Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year. It is an opportune time to look back at the origins, specifically at the establishment of the College's forerunner, La Salle Evening Secondary School.

In 1964 an Evening School (Private) was started in La Salle College, to cater for the poor and under-privileged children of the Kowloon City area, who were unable to gain admission to the already over-crowded Government and Aided schools, or to the expensive Private schools in the locality. It had a shaky and uncertain start until later in the year Rev. Brother Herman, at the request of the La Salle Community Council, took over control.

In his quiet and unassuming way, Brother Herman set to work, and despite difficulties, and even a spot of opposition at times, he gradually built up a remarkably well-run school, with students ranging from Form 1 to Upper Form 6. He himself admits that without the co-operation of a number of dedicated lay teachers and of one or two Brothers (who stayed behind, after a long day in class, to teach again in the evening school), the success attained by the school would never have been possible. Such dedication on the part of Principal and staff soon bore fruit in excellent academic results in the Government examinations. With the success of the Evening School more applications poured in until it became necessary to set an entrance examination for each form. An effort was made to keep numbers down to 900.



In his first year in charge, Brother Herman got the school to produce a Souvenir Album. This was his message:

“Now that the school year is drawing to the end, it is our opinion, that all, both teachers and students would like to have a little souvenir to take with them, which in the future years will remind them of the happy and difficult days spent together in La Salle. Apart from class photos we have very little material for this souvenir.

The time at our disposal each day is so short that it is all required to cover the very extensive secondary school syllabus in all subjects. Therefore, we have only limited time for extra-curricular activities. This is one of the many difficulties which we hope to overcome in the course of time.

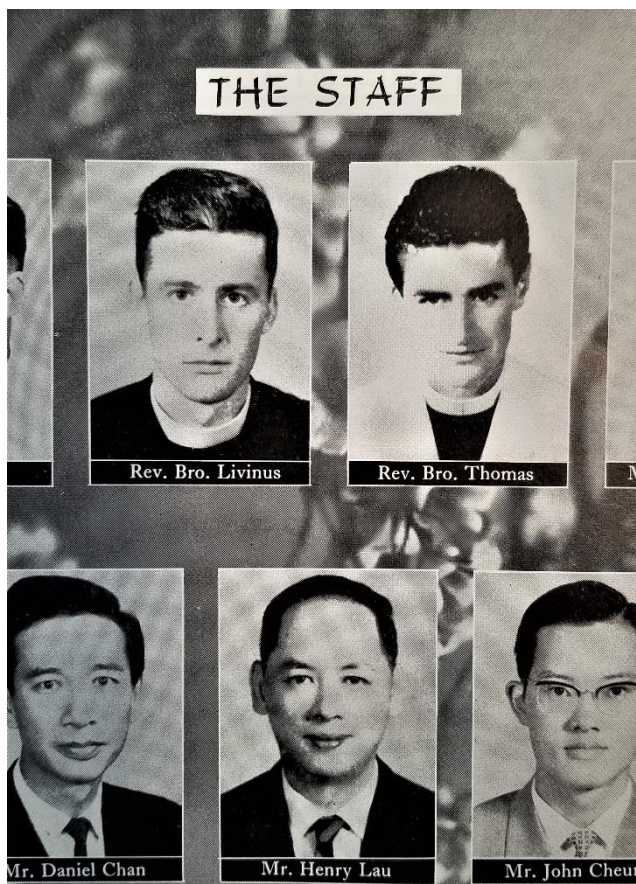
I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to express my appreciation of, and gratitude to, all the members of the staff, whose wonderful self-sacrifice, and loyalty has enabled us to

overcome the many difficulties we have had to meet with in the course of the year. This alone has contributed much to the success of the school. One final word of thanks to Mr. Peter Leung for all the trouble he has taken in preparing this souvenir.

Now a few words to our students. While you are in school, for five, or six or more years, you are among people who are interested in you, in your success in this life, and in the next. You may not always see it that way, but it is true. Those in charge of you at school are trying their best to guide you safely through the difficult years of your early life. Pay good attention to the good advice given you; it will help you to live a good and happy life.

It is our fondest wish that all our boys should grow up to be great and famous men – and surely some will. But what we wish even more is that all should grow up to be good men, - men with determination to do what is right whatever happens; men with courage in doing good, with sympathy for other people’s troubles and strength and patience in their own; men with hatred of injustice to others, but with patience when injustice touches themselves; men with acknowledgement of other people’s rights without being too anxious about their own; men with strength to fend for themselves.

All this looks a rather formidable task, but in its accomplishment you are not alone. God is your helper. Without His help you cannot succeed, but with His help you cannot fail. That each and every one of you should be a success in school and after school is our fondest parting wish.”



We are fortunate that a member of the staff of the evening school, Brother Thomas Lavin, agreed to set down some of his memories of the time. Here they are.

“I arrived in Hong Kong in August 1965 and was assigned to teach at La Salle College. Brother Casimir had just succeeded Brother Felix as Brother Director and there were 12 Brothers in the Community. As I got to know my way around, I came to realize that there were actually two schools operating each day in the La Salle building. There was the College itself which was a full-day school and finished around 3.00pm. Then later in the evening another group of students arrived to attend “The La Salle Evening Secondary School”.

In the 50’s and 60’s in Hong Kong there was a severe shortage of school places and the Government encouraged schools to become double session or, in the case of big private schools, even triple session.

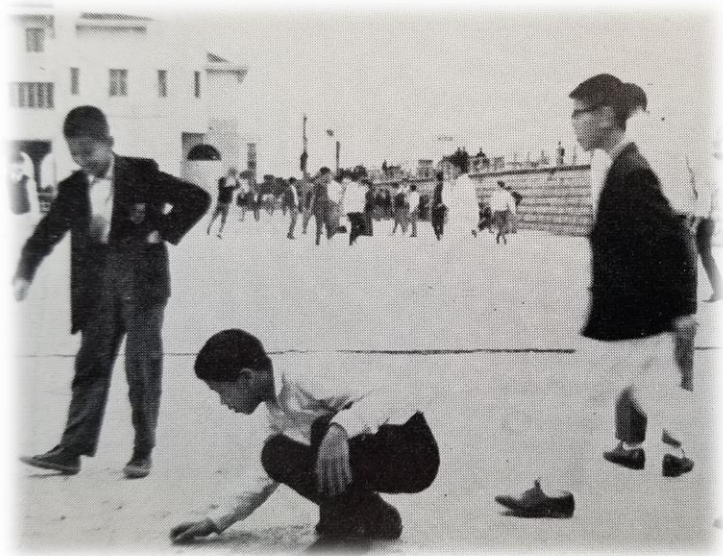
The Brothers, in seeking to provide more places, decided not to convert La Salle into a double session but rather set up a separate private evening school. Opened in 1964 with a lay founding



Principal it had no difficulty attracting students. More than 500 enrolled in the first year. However, the school faced two immediate problems. It struggled to find enough qualified teachers and the time available each evening was insufficient to cover the required exam syllabi.

At the end of the first year, August 1965, the lay Principal resigned and Brother Casimir, the Director felt the Brothers should take full responsibility for the evening school by appointing a Brother as Principal. He turned to one of the more experienced Brothers in the Community, Brother Herman, to fill the post. Brother Herman was teaching full time in the College but had also been helping out with the Bible Knowledge classes in the evening school. He was familiar with the running of the school and the main issues which needed to be addressed, namely the number and quality of the teaching staff and the teaching time available.

Brother Herman lost no time in seeking solutions to these issues but not without ruffling some feathers in the process! He appealed to the College staff to teach on a part-time basis in the evening classes. Many were happy to oblige as a little extra income was always welcome. It also ensured that the teaching standard was as good as at La Salle. He also welcomed Brothers to take some classes and three of us responded. I helped in the teaching of Bible Knowledge. I remember the evening boys were on average a bit older. Quite a number were from low-income families and needed to work to pay their fees. Many of them had difficulties with English as the medium of instruction compared to the day boys but they were a lot better behaved and eager to learn. Occasionally I meet Old Boys from the Evening school and they are full of gratitude for the opportunity they were given to study in La Salle.



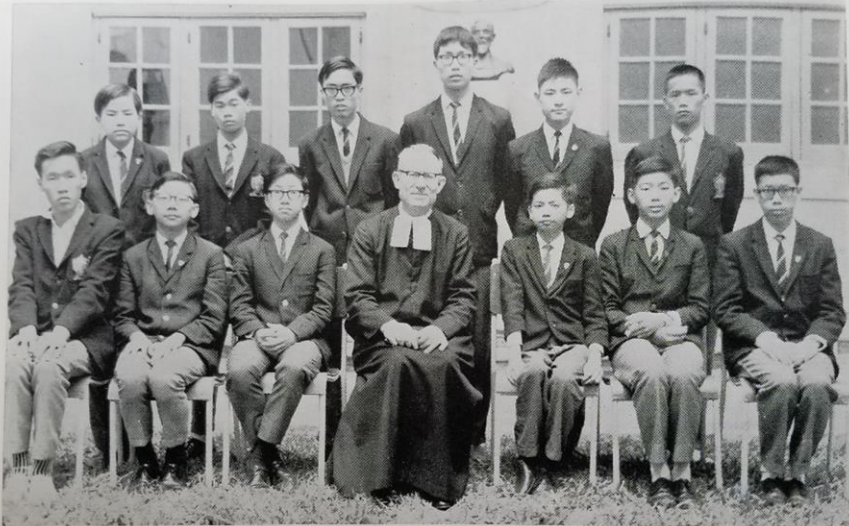
Brother Herman's approach to solving the time problem was much more daring. From an early evening start he advanced the opening time to 3.30pm! The effect of this was dramatic. The evening boys were now arriving before the day boys were dismissed and were taking over the sports facilities. This caused logistical problems to say the least even in the mid 1960's. But much more significant was the fact that the early afternoon opening gave the impression that the evening school had now become the La Salle College PM session. This worked wonders for the morale of the evening students and for the drawing power of the school. Indeed, there was a surge in numbers from an initial 500 to nearly 800 in its third year. The downside was that the earlier start time meant that College teachers had to go almost directly to the evening classes. This affected their availability for after-school teacher meetings and for extra-curricular activities. The College management took a rather dim view of this situation and tensions began to emerge. Teachers, including myself, tried to arrange our timetables to minimize its effect but with limited success.

Brother Herman, in his own way, was quite a visionary. He had already seen La Salle College give birth to a new Lasallian school in Sheung Shui, N.T. which was opened in 1965. He could

see that the solution to the sharing problem of staff and facilities at La Salle Road was to move away altogether and open another secondary school on its own campus. But where and how? Brother Herman, being a good Lasallian, trusted in Providence and was no doubt praying hard that the good Lord would lead them to the promised land. And this is indeed what happened in the person of Mr. Chan Bing Pui. He approached the Brothers in 1967 and offered to fund a new school in the name of his father Chan Sui Ki. The Brothers accepted the offer and the Government allotted a site in the Homantin hills. It was willing to fund 80% of the cost of the new school if the Sponsoring Body, that is the Brothers, paid the balance. The Chan family agreed to pay this which amounted to HK\$500,000 and were given naming rights.

In December 1968 work began on the site and the classrooms blocks were ready for commencement of school on September 3, 1969. Brother Herman was appointed Principal and 951 students enrolled in the founding classes, most of whom had been transferred from the Evening School. The official blessing and opening were performed on February 12 1970.

“La Salle Evening Secondary School” had now found its new and permanent home and Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College is happily celebrating 50 years of outstanding service to Hong Kong education in 2019.



THE CONFIRMATION CLASS 1965





## Brother Chris writes from South Sudan



I came to Yambio town yesterday. It was about an hour long flight from Juba, the capital city. It was really an adventure. I travelled in a Cargo plane. There were loads of vegetables, spare parts of trucks and vehicles, tyres, groceries, oil canes, mats etc. We were forty passengers sitting on two benches on either side. At the centre was the pile of goods. No seat belts, no announcements, no air-conditioning. We boarded from the rear side where cars and trucks are usually loaded into the plane. It was all very very interesting. And, somehow, I enjoyed the spectacle. People seem to have adopted the attitude that "if it is your day you die, otherwise be happy!"





I admired the faith of the people. No complaints. Instead they were happy that they had reached home. Upon our arrival we just grabbed our luggage and walked out. There was no airport. The plane just landed on the plain red sand field. I enjoyed the whole process.

Yambio is very small with a population of about 40,000. The Solidarity Teachers Training College is small, simple and pleasant. There are about two hundred students following a two years course.

The community consists of Religious from different Congregations. We are ten. There are four men including two La Salle Brothers and six nuns.

Nationalities: two from New Zealand, two from Ireland, one from Italy, two from the US, one from Nigeria, one from India, one from Australia.

All are above 65 years of age. I am the youngest at 52.

Internet access is very slow. There is no electricity supply. We depend upon solar power. When we have bright sunlight we have good power. Some nights have to be spent without power. Life is very interesting and everyone is highly committed. I started teaching computers from today, just the basics. Many students have never seen computers in their life. It's really a great mission for these poor young adults.

I have to be careful with malaria. I have started taking antimalarial tablets and hope they will protect me.

Please keep us in your prayers. I keep you all in my thoughts and prayers as well.



## Tercentenary Thanksgiving Mass

The Thanksgiving Mass in remembrance of the passing of our Founder, St. La Salle, was held on a very appropriate day, the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019. It was the United Nations World Peace Day as well as the start of our annual Lasallian International month of Peace which all our schools observe so well.

It was also appropriate because Hong Kong was and is undergoing severe social unrest, taking the form of numerous demonstrations, violence and vandalism. Our city badly needs an acceptable sense of justice and peace.

The Mass was celebrated in the spacious surrounds of the La Salle Primary School Hall. Five priests con-celebrated, all old boys.

Fr Edward Khong was the chief celebrant, and he harks back to the 'exile' days in Perth Street where La Salle College was compelled to relocate by the British Army after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. La Salle Primary School brings back many precious memories for him, not least because he worked as an office clerk there right from its opening in 1957.

A number of special features became highlights of the occasion.

First, at the Offertory, was the special offerings of school handbooks and ties, symbols of our mission and of the ties that unite our Lasallian family.

Then there was the placing near the altar of the relic of St. La Salle together with a new painting by our long-time artist, Francisco Borboa.

The 7 recently arrived Brothers were introduced, Brothers Armin, Dennis, Rey and Michael from the Philippines, Brothers Francisco and Luke from Thailand and Brother Jude from India. And, perhaps a first for Hong Kong, all the Brothers made a public renewal of their vows, the candle being lit by our LEAD Visitor, Brother Armin.

The Preparatory Committee, the MC, the Choir, Altar servers, Readers, and the Ushers all did a great job.





## In Memoriam

The second anniversary of the death of Brother Thomas Favier was remembered by means of a memorial Mass held in St. Joseph's College Chapel on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019. Father Galbiati was the celebrant. Brothers as well as some students and quite a number of old boys and friends of Brother Thomas were in attendance. In his Homily, the priest recalled the good work done by Brother Thomas and how he deserves his eternal rest now in the Lord's presence.



## Basketball Tournament

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2019 and, we believe for the first time, all five of our Lasallian secondary schools came together for the finals of a basketball tournament. The games were hard fought, intense and exciting. At the end of the day, Chong Gene Hang College and La Salle College battled for final honours. The honour went to the boys of Chong Gene Hang College after a pulsating encounter!



## Our 'New' Brothers

### Brother Dennis Magbanua



Brother Dennis was born in the Philippines in 1969. He has had a varied and interesting ministry, both as a teacher and educational administrator. His most recent posting, before coming to Hong Kong, was as President of the University College of St. Benilde in Manila.

In Hong Kong, Brother Dennis has taken over as Director of the La Salle Brothers Community in Kowloon. He is also giving a hand to De La Salle Secondary School, NT. He will take up more responsibilities as time goes on.

Brother Dennis is much into IT. Some people in the Philippines call him Mr. Apple! He is also keen on sports like basketball and frisbee.

### Brother Francisco Chadang

Brother Francisco hails from Thailand, the land of smiles. When you meet Brother Francisco, you will agree with this. He was born in 1984.

Before coming to Hong Kong, Brother Francisco was involved in the formation of young Brothers as well as in teaching.

Currently, he is the Secretary for the Lasallian East Asia District (LEAD) and also lends assistance to the La Salle Primary School.

He is a good cook, especially of spicy food!



### Brother Michael Cua



Brother Michael comes from the Philippines and was born in 1984. Like Brother Dennis, he is interested in cyber technology.

Since Brother Michael is of Chinese origin, he is also interested in learning the Chinese language.

Currently he is the Chief Information Officer for the Lasallian East Asia District (LEAD) and is also giving a hand to both Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College and Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) Primary School.



### **Brother Jude Dasan**

Brother Jude was born in India in 1985. We are fortunate that he was sent to us as a replacement for Brother Chris Soosai.

Before coming to Hong Kong, Brother Jude was a full-time teacher, especially of Mathematics and Religious Studies. Now he has been assigned to La Salle College, Kowloon.

Brother Jude is quite tall and a keen sportsman, being particularly skilled at volleyball and basketball.



### **Brother Rey Mejias**



Brother Rey comes from the Philippines. He has had a varied career before coming to Hong Kong as teacher, school principal and director of novices.

Brother Rey has been assigned as Director of the Brothers' Community at St. Joseph's College, Hong Kong. He is a strong believer in life-long learning and is currently pursuing a doctorate programme.

### **Brother Luke Thatsaworn Nonthiboot**

Born in 1994, Brother Luke is the youngest of our 'new' Brothers. He hails from Thailand. He is fresh from his formation and studies in the Philippines.

He has been assigned to St. Joseph's College Hong Kong.

Brother Luke likes sports, especially football. And he is also well able for spicy food!





*Roots to secure our past      Wings to fly high in future*

### **Jubilee Song**

**Golden now the voices call,  
To hearts that are forever young;  
Forever young in heart and mind,  
They harken to their Mater's call,  
The stand together brave and tall.**

### **Chorus**

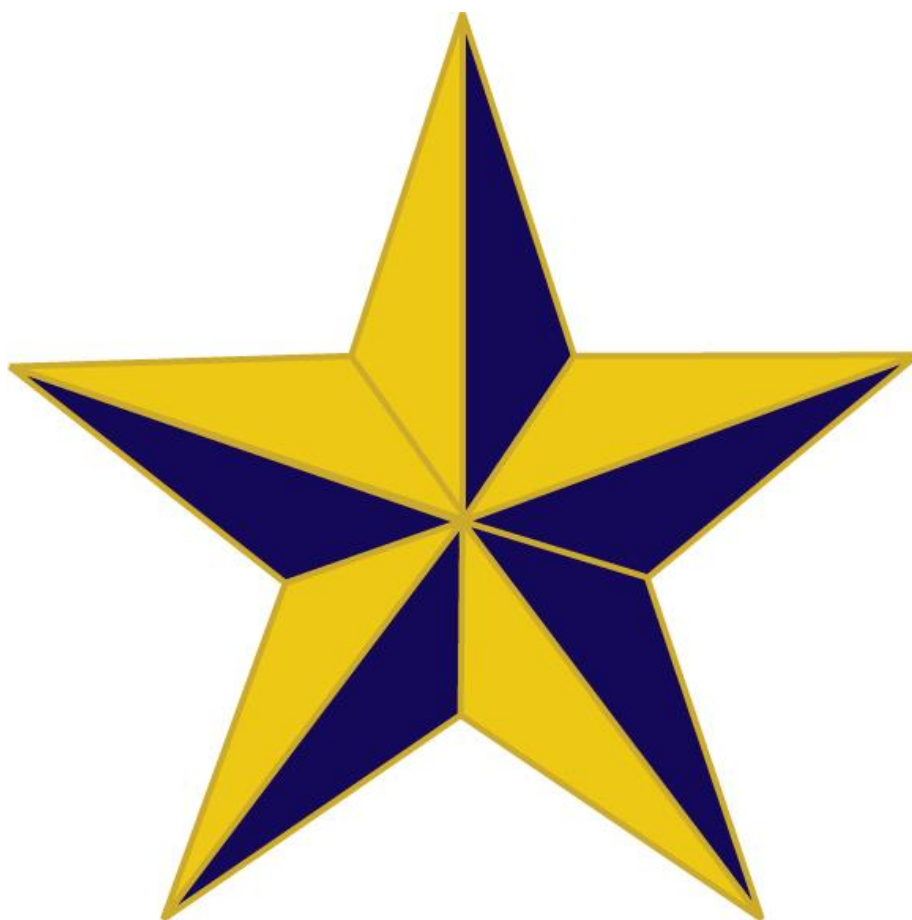
**List to the echoes from afar  
And heed the chiming bell  
Look to skies and sparkling star  
And make the chorus swell**

**Let us raise the banners high,  
Flying high our noble cause;  
Spread the spirit of our joy,  
At home, in school, where're we be,  
We are the boys of Chan Sui Ki.**

**Roots and Wings is now our chant,  
Rising up o'er vale and hill;  
The glories of our past secure,  
Tomorrow we will brightly tread.**







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

