



St. Mary's Past Students' Association

NEWSLETTER February 2017

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Welcome Back to School

Happy Reunion on Alumnae Day

St. Marians have always shown a strong attachment to their Alma Mater. Our historic buildings continue to hold the foot prints and memories of generations of young girls bonded under One Heart and One Way. While alumnae often returned to visit their school and teachers, they are unable to bring their family or friends along due to security reasons. Thus the Exco of the PSA discussed with our two Patrons, and made arrangements with both schools to open the campus on Alumnae Day every year, so that past girls can have an opportunity to happily visit their Alma Mater along with their family and friends.



On 3 December 2016, over 600 alumnae, friends and family members came to St. Mary's to enjoy a wonderful gathering that brought old memories and new experiences. During the open campus session in the afternoon, 200 visitors strolled around different corners of the campus while reminiscing their primary

school and secondary school days. As dusk approached, more past students came back to join the Alumnae Day Poon Choi dinner. With the help of God, we had good weather on the day, thus were able to set all 45 tables in the basketball court. Adults and children all shared a wonderful evening together under the stars over delicious traditional Poon Choi. We even invited the Sisters from the convent upstairs to join and share our fun!



Students helped to collect donations for new stage lighting.

Taking advantage of the occasion, an appeal was also made during the dinner to raise funds for our new stage lighting system. With the help from our student helpers, \$30,000

was collected from our generous guests, and the sum has been passed to the school.

The Exco of the PSA would like to thank our two Patrons and the school management for enabling us to make the event such a success. A big thanks also to the teachers-in-charge and students helpers who showed

their great hospitality. Special thanks to the school janitors who tirelessly helped us during the day. Last but not least, our sincere thanks to all past students for their support, participation and donation, making the Alumnae Day another unforgettable experience!



*Over 500 participants sat around forty five tables to enjoy the evening.
The Chairperson, in front of the big steps, addressed the group before dinner started.*



A wonderful dining ambience for St. Marians.



Memorable gathering of classmates and friends.



Young guests were equally happy and excited.



Steaming Poon Choi...who can resist?

Interview with Retired Teacher – Ms. Catherine Wong

At the close of the Year of the Monkey, we had the opportunity to catch up with Ms. Catherine Wong, School Principal of St. Mary's Canossian College from 2007 to 2015, and invited Ms. Wong to share with us her life after retirement. Ms. Wong, or Mrs. Lee as known by her students at Pui Tak Canossian College before she joined St. Mary's in 1997, was the first laymen to become School Principal of St. Mary's Canossian College.

"I'm not sure if my post-retirement days are interesting enough to tell," laughed Ms. Wong. "People say that the ten years after retirement are the "Golden Years". I'd really like to make the best use of these years and do what I enjoy the most," she said. And what was Ms. Wong's favorite activity? Travelling!

For those who may not be aware, Ms. Wong was previously a Biology teacher. "But I've always wanted to learn more about the history of human civilization, and especially to learn more about the life of Jesus," Ms. Wong



Ms. Wong sends her greetings to all.

explained. "Hence we went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land during Christmas of 2015 with my husband and some other friends. Every place and church we visited was either heart-warming or heart-rending. We visited the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth where Mary was visited by Angel Gabriel. Right on Christmas Day, we visited the Grotto of Nativity in Bethlehem, we saw the Star sign under the altar which marked the birthplace of Jesus. We were even fortunate enough to attend a Christmas Mass jointly celebrated by seven priests in the small Grotto opposite the Star!" Ms. Wong recalled.

"Then in Jerusalem we went to the Tomb of Holy Mary. I felt so moved there at the remembrance site of the person of whom the school I managed is named after! I literally cried out loud as I was in total awe of the blessings God had bestowed on me. He had given me such an important school

under the name of Jesus' Mother to look after," said an emotional Ms. Wong. "I'm now attending a series of seminars to learn more about the places in Jerusalem. We will certainly visit the Holy Land again in the future!"

In 2016, Mr. and Mrs. Lee went on a few more interesting trips, and the most memorable one was a tour to re-visit the footsteps of the Canossian Sisters who started the Mission in Wuhan, Hubei province. "The tour was called 武漢尋根之旅, and was led by Sr. Theresa Chien, who is also a



Ms. Wong in the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth.

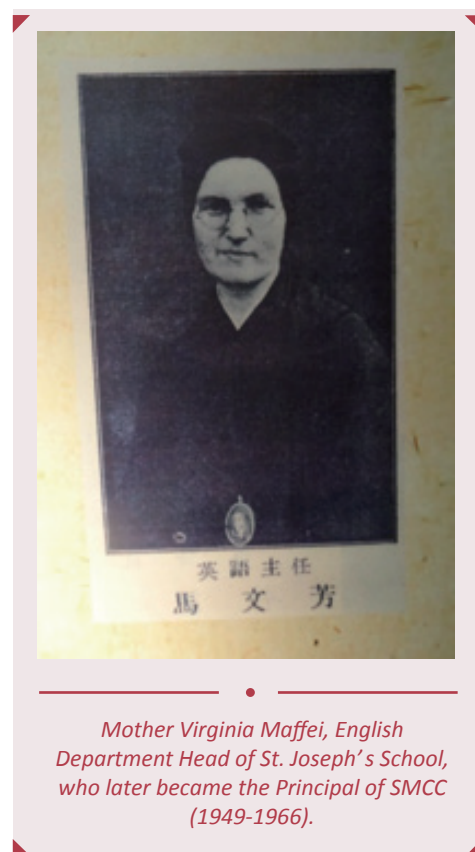


Ms. Wong by the River Jordan.



fellow St. Marian,” Ms. Wong said. “The highlight of the tour was the visit to the No. 19 Middle School of Wuhan (武漢市第十九中學). The school was previously St. Joseph’s School (漢口聖若瑟女子中學) founded in 1911 by Mother Vicenzina Bellocchio (柏博愛修女) from the Canossian Missions,” explained Ms. Wong. “What is more, I was most touched and delighted to find out that their English Department Head Mother Virginia Maffei (馬文芳修女), was in fact the Principal of St. Mary’s Canossian College from 1949 to 1966,” she said.

Like St. Mary’s, St. Joseph’s School began as a junior school for girls, and then expanded to offer secondary classes. The Canossian Sisters operated the school for four decades before returning her to the government in 1952, and now it is a school for girls and boys. “The main school building is a Renaissance-style structure which was completed in 1925. It is well-preserved and is still being used for classes today. I can see so many architectural similarities with St. Mary’s – the high ceilings, the wooden window shutters, the marble floor, the stone pillars, just to name a few!” Ms. Wong remarked. “The statue of the school’s founder Mother Vicenzina Bellocchio is still standing, and a history archive about the origins of the school is neatly maintained,” Ms. Wong continued. “I was very pleased to see that the teachers and students showed interest to



Mother Virginia Maffei, English Department Head of St. Joseph’s School, who later became the Principal of SMCC (1949-1966).



Statue of Mother Vicenzina Bellocchio, Foundress of St. Joseph’s School.

know more about the Canossian Sisters that had left them with such a beautiful learning environment,” said Ms. Wong. Today, No. 19 Middle School of Wuhan remains as one of the top secondary schools in the municipality.

“The trip left me even more appreciative of the work of the Canossian Sisters who have, often through very challenging circumstances, contributed to bring quality education to so many different parts of the world,” Ms. Wong said thankfully. “I’m also extremely grateful to God for giving me the St. Mary’s experience in my life – I had such great mentors, wonderful colleagues, diligent students, trusting parents and dedicated alumnae. I sincerely thank everyone for their support,” Ms. Wong said.

Naturally, the retirement from St. Mary’s does not end Ms. Wong’s relationship with the Canossian family. Amidst her busy travelling schedules, Ms. Wong has been leveraging her experience to help as a member of the Education Office of Canossian Missions, assisting the Sisters to oversee and coordinate the development of Canossian schools in Hong Kong. She is also the School Supervisor

of Canossa College in Quarry Bay and a school manager of four other Canossian schools. Days are certainly still busy for Ms. Wong, especially when we know that she has already planned her next trip – a visit to Iran in March 2017!

Ms. Wong, thank you so much again for what you have given St. Mary’s. Enjoy your trips and may God bless you wherever you are!



School News – School Drama – “Colours”



This April our Alma Mater will present a new musical play that will certainly bring colours to our lives! The latest production **“Colours”** is a musical drama written by Geoff Oliver, based on ideas suggested by the Core Production Team. The imaginative story tells of how colours were discovered and introduced into a grey and divided world, bringing enrichment and enlightenment to the two rivalling tribes there. It features 11 musical numbers written by our student composers, and several dance sequences also choreographed by students.

The Drama Week will be from 22 to 29 April (Mon to Sat)* with the Gala Night on 28 April (Friday). Performances will start at 7pm in the SMCC School Hall. Tickets are available at \$100#, \$180#, \$250 and \$500 each. For reservation please visit the school’s website ([link](#)) or contact Ms. Queenie Cheng of the School Office at 2724 2771.

* No performance on 23 April (Sun), 25 April (Tue) and 27 April (Thur).

Not applicable on 28 & 29 April.

The upcoming musical play “Colours” will showcase the new stage lighting recently installed in the School Hall. This new system enables the stage team to achieve many effects which would not have been possible in the past.

“Many of our existing lights were decades old and no longer serviceable and for some we could not even get replacement light bulbs,” explained Loban Mr. Oliver, champion of the project. “The trend in stage lighting these days is to use computer controlled LED lights which have several advantages over existing analogue lights. Firstly they use less than half the amount of power. Secondly colour change is obtained at the press of a button so we no longer need to attach colour filter gel to the lamps, a tedious and time-consuming job as every past lighting team member would remember. Also a wide

variety of colours can be mixed through the computer panel so the artistic options are immensely enhanced. Most importantly the lights are safe and easy to operate and are student-friendly!”

The new lighting system will allow St. Marians to show their colours in more imaginative ways than ever. Our Alma Mater sincerely asks for our support in this meaningful development. Please fill in the Donation Form below and attach a crossed cheque made payable to “The IMC of St. Mary’s Canossian College”, and mail to St. Mary’s Canossian College, 162 Austin Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon. Please mark “Stage Lighting” on the envelope.



Mr. Geoff Oliver spearheaded the upgrade project.

Call for support! Fundraising for New Stage Lighting



Control panel of the new lighting system.

Donations of HK\$100 or above are tax-deductible.

For further enquiry, please contact Ms. Queenie Cheng at 2724 2771 or queeniecheng@smcc.hk. Thank you in advance for your support. Live St. Mary's ever more!



Drama snapshots from the 1960s (left), 1980s (middle) and 2000s (right). Do you recall the performances?



New Stage Lighting for School Hall

DONATION FORM

To facilitate the school's processing, please reply before 31 March 2017. Thank you!

Name of donor:			
Year of Graduation:	Form 5 under HKCEE _____ OR Form 6 under HKDSE _____		
Membership No.		Mobile No.:	
Email Address:			

Please where appropriate.

I would like to make a donation of HK\$ _____ to support the provision of new stage lighting for the School Hall. Here is a crossed cheque payable to "The IMC of St. Mary's Canossian College" with cheque no.: _____.

I would like to get a tax-deductible receipt for my donation.

Name to appear on receipt: _____

Mailing address: _____



Alumnae Day 2017

The PSA is delighted to announce that the Alumnae Day this year is scheduled on **25 November 2017 (Sat)**. With the support from school management, the campus will be open on the day and past St. Marians can invite friends and family to visit your Alma Mater! Details of other planned activities will be announced in the next issue of the newsletter. Do mark the date now, and stay tuned for more update!

In Loving Remembrance...

Ms. Frances Tang (鄧淑娟老師), primary school teacher at St. Mary's from 1956 to 1994, returned peacefully to God on 17 October 2016 in Hong Kong, at age 85.

Ms. Tang's relationship with St. Mary's spanned over half a century. She was a teacher of Needlework, Chinese, Social Studies and Health Education. She was also a dutiful and hardworking student at St. Mary's since primary school, and upon graduation from secondary school, Ms. Tang furthered her studies at Grantham College of Education, and then returned to teach at her beloved Alma Mater. For 38 years, her teaching and her gentle manners inspired numerous budding minds, guiding them as they develop into elegant young ladies. After retirement, Ms. Tang enjoyed a quiet life with her family. Loved and respected by students, colleagues, friends and family, Ms. Tang will forever stay in the memory of those she encountered.



Mrs. Kitty So (蘇太), clerical staff of St. Mary's Canossian School since 2002, returned peacefully to God on 28 January 2017.

Mrs. So was a very dedicated staff and was much loved and respected by colleagues, teachers and parents. Helpful and creative, she had always been talented in decorating the school for different festive occasions and various liturgies, providing a meaningful and celebratory atmosphere for teachers and students. Cheerful and considerate, Mrs. So was also a respected leader of the school janitors, and had always maintained a good relationship with everyone. She will be dearly missed by all.

*~ Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen. ~*

PSA News

Notice of the 2017 Annual General Meeting of St. Mary's Past Students' Association

Date : 18 March 2017 (Saturday)
Time : 3:00 pm
Venue : Geography Room, 2/F Marian Building

All members are welcome.

Agenda:

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting held on 12 March 2016
2. Chairman's Report
3. Adoption of the Financial Report for the last financial year ending 31 August 2016
4. Adoption of the revised Regulations for the Election of the Alumni Manager for the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) of St. Mary's Canossian College
5. Adoption of the revised Regulations for the Election of the Alumni Manager for the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) of St. Mary's Canossian School
6. Election of office-bearers for the Council (College)* for the term 2017-2019
7. Election of office-bearers for the Council (School)* for the term 2017-2019
8. Formation of the Executive Committee of the SMPSA for the term 2017-2019
9. Any Other Business

Note: The following documents can be downloaded from www.stmaryspsa.org :

- Revised Regulations for the Election of Alumni Manager for the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) of St. Mary's Canossian College
- Revised Regulations for the Election of Alumni Manager for the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) of St. Mary's Canossian School
- Proxy Form
- Nomination Forms

** Only Life Members who are past students of the designated school are eligible to vote for the resolution.*



*Thank you for your continuous support to the PSA.
The Exco wishes you and your family a Happy Year of the Rooster!*

