

St. Mary's Past Students' Association

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2021

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Mentorship Programme Goes Virtual!

Launched in 2004, the SMCC Mentorship Programme is currently in its 17th year of operation. The programme aims to provide a means for past St. Marians to share their experience (both academic and life) and professional knowledge with our F.5 students, better preparing them for further studies and longer-term career choices.

While it was customary for the mentors and mentees to meet in person in the past, this year, due to limitations imposed by the ongoing pandemic, the event turned into a virtual one, with the kick-off ceremony held on 28 November 2020 over Zoom. 39 students signed up for the programme, and 18 alumnae registered to be mentors. The mentor-mentee ratio promised better opportunities for the two parties to make acquaintance with each other.

Throughout the year, mentors and mentees will meet a couple of times online. Based on the interests of the mentees, mentors will guide them and help them to discover themselves and their aspirations. The new virtual format will allow more flexibility for mentor-mentee interaction, and we



Mentors during online briefing meeting prior to seeing their mentees in breakout rooms.



are excited about the new chemistry. The school extends sincere gratitude to all mentors who have contributed their expertise and time to guide and nurture junior St. Marians to sustain the proud legacy of St. Mary's. We also thank Ms. Amelia Tsang who stayed on the Programme as Advisor even after her retirement.

Past students who are interested in taking part in the Mentorship Programme may send an email to the Careers Mistress, Mrs. Queenie Mui, at queeniewong@smcc.hk. Nominations will be solicited in early September.

SMCC SCHOOL DRAMA AND 120TH ANNIVERSARY SCHOOL CONCERT

The prevailing COVID-19 pandemic caused massive disruption to the normal school routine. Though preparations for the annual School Drama have started since the beginning of the academic year, rehearsals have unavoidably been suspended. In view of the situation, the school will be calling off the Drama Week, originally planned for April this year. Similarly, the 120th Anniversary School Concert originally re-scheduled on 29 June 2021 at the Cultural Centre, will be further postponed by a year. We shall keep you posted on any new development, and we thank all students and teachers who have been contributing to the preparation of both activities. Keep well and stay creative!

Interview with Sr. Agnes Law, Past Teacher and New School Supervisor

A Lifelong Passion in Education

We were happy to have the opportunity to talk to Sr. Agnes Law, the new School Supervisor of St. Mary's Canossian College, who was also past teacher from 1976 to 1982. She shared her passion in education with us.

"I enjoyed playing basketball with the students," that was a surprising comment shared by Sr. Agnes with us during the interview. "When I taught at St. Mary's, I was not much older than the students," she recalled with a hearty laugh. "I enjoyed spending time with them during lunch or after school, and basketball was one of our favourite activities," said Sr. Agnes. "Certainly, I wasn't a very good athlete, but we had a great time on the court!"



*Warm greetings from
Sr. Agnes Law to everyone.*

Sr. Agnes had a deep connection with St. Mary's. "I started my religious life at the St. Mary's Convent in 1972 after graduating from university, and started teaching here in the evening school in 1975. I moved to the day school in 1976, and taught Geography and Chinese apart from Religious Education," shared Sr. Agnes, who is very thankful for these first few years of experience as a teacher at St. Mary's. "I learned about the importance of understanding my students in order to foster a good relationship with them," she said, "and that principle has guided me through my career life."



Sr. Agnes (right) with other sisters-in-charge in 1977.

In 1983, Sr. Agnes left St. Mary's and was assigned by the Canossian Missions to teach at other Canossian schools to broaden her experience. In the late 80s, she became the Principal at Sacred Heart Canossian College (Chinese Section) in Macau. "Macau presented a totally new environment for me, and a challenging one as well. I was just in my early thirties, a very young Principal compared to my peers who were in their sixties or seventies... you can imagine the doubt in their eyes! Yet I enjoyed

my time in Macau. People there were very friendly. I still remember the janitor who brought me soup every Wednesday afternoon to make sure that I could replenish my energy!" she recalled. "It was the time when I understood the importance of people relationship in managing a school, and learned how to foster a smooth working relationship."

From 1989 to 1993, to better prepare her to be a school manager, Sr. Agnes was sent overseas for further studies by the Missions. She obtained her Master's Degree in Education & Development in the UK, and completed her training on Canossian Spirituality at the Canossian Formation Centre in Verona, Rome. Equipped with her new knowledge, Sr. Agnes returned to Hong Kong and joined the task force with Sr. Rosangela to convert the Sacred Heart Canossian Commercial School, a post-secondary institution, to Sacred Heart Canossian College of Commerce, a tertiary institution. She then became the Principal of the College in 1994.



With her students in a class photo.

In 1995, while she was busy with her Principal work, Sr. Agnes was again presented with the opportunity for further studies in Mainland China in order to get familiarised with the Chinese education system before the 1997 handover. “I studied part-time at the Beijing Normal University and completed my PhD in Comparative Education, researching on the differences between the education systems in rural and city areas, as well as inside and outside of China, with special focus on moral education” said Sr. Agnes. “My theory was ‘interactive education’ – that moral education should be interactive with the context of social environment, students’ needs, and teachers’ development,” shared Sr. Agnes. “It became very challenging towards the end, due to unexpected work arrangements. I had to complete my studies a year in advance, therefore I needed to put my final papers together in just two months... an incredible feat indeed I must say,” she laughed.

Sr. Agnes then took up principalship at Sacred Heart Canossian College from 1999 until her retirement in 2010. Life after retirement was as eventful as ever. “I took over as Principal of Sacred Heart Canossian College of Commerce again from Sr. Rosangela in 2010 due to her ill-health. In the years that followed, many changes took place, and eventually the College served its historic purpose and ceased operation in 2014. Though it was sad to handle the closure, I was fortunate to be one of those who experienced the full circle first hand,” said Sr. Agnes.

As a member of the education community in Hong Kong, Sr. Agnes has been actively engaging in curriculum and teacher development throughout the years and she is currently serving as supervisor or manager of many Canossian schools. She recently became the School Supervisor of St. Mary’s Canossian College in the 2020-21 academic year, picking up the baton from Sr. Cynthia Chan who was retiring.



Sr. Agnes with Ms. Janet Wong, Principal of SMCC

“I’m very excited to return to St. Mary’s after all these years,” said Sr. Agnes. “I have fond memories here, and appreciate the opportunity to be able to contribute. Learning and teaching is very different from the old days. While it is commendable that St. Marians are studious and academically capable, I would also encourage them to have more other learning experiences to expand their horizons, cultivate creativity and boost self-confidence. The school can play a key role in enabling this,” explained Sr. Agnes. “I’m pleased to know that the school leadership team shares the same goal, though in face of the uncertainties brought by the pandemic and social changes, I understand that the challenge is ever more daunting. I would offer my best support any time,” said Sr. Agnes.

While taking a walk on campus, Sr. Agnes shared that her favourite spot is the St. Michael statue. “I’ve always been inspired by St. Michael. He is the Archangel who protects us against the wickedness and snares of the devil. In the same way we protect our students from harm,” she explained. “That way our girls can have a safe environment to grow up as contributing members of the society. And that’s what Canossian education is about.”

It is our pleasure to be able to share Sr. Agnes’ life experience and passion with you, and we thank Sr. Agnes for her time. From the basketball court to the St. Michael statue, Sr. Agnes continues to be engaged with our Alma Mater. May God bless her and take good care of her at all times.



Striking a pose at her favourite spot!

Interview with Mrs. Kapo Lee

A Wink of 38 Years

We heard about “Time flies like a wink of an eye”. It does, but rarely, even if scientifically possible, would a wink last for 38 years - yes, Mrs. Lee Hung Ka Po, overview

孔老師 as most of us know her, has retired from St. Mary’s in September 2020, having started her teaching career here back in 1982. Yet, it feels like a wink to many of us! What is it like as she looks back these 13,000-plus days?

The story begins ...

“I enjoyed reading, or even studying, since a very young age. Not quite a norm back then, my mother sent me to a nursery near home at the age of two as I was talking a lot and started trying to write. I had a pleasant time at the nursery, with good and inspiring teachers to the extent that I have decided, yes, at two, to become a teacher!” Mrs. Lee recalled.

“I am also very grateful to my parents. My father did not go to secondary school, and, with only two universities at the time, HKU and CUHK, girls usually went for a banking job or became air-hostesses after leaving school, which was also practical in my family as I have three younger siblings. My parents encouraged me go for my own choice, on the condition that I could not regret that in the future. I studied hard and my academic performance were good enough for me to be admitted to the Faculty of Arts at HKU. Although I went to a good English secondary school, I decided to study Chinese Language & Literature at HKU, as I believe that my knowledge and interest in English could help present the grace and elegance of the Chinese language,” she said. “Therefore, it often amused me when my students got shocked to know that I could speak English!” Mrs. Lee shared in laughter.



*A life-changing letter :
Mrs. Lee still kept the letter of
appointment at St. Mary’s.*

the school secretary rang and informed me to sign the contract the following day! It was quite a daunting experience for a young girl who has yet to graduate, and to this day it still feels kind of surreal to me. Sr. Ida has been a great leader, and she inspired me a lot as I took up various roles in school management over the years,” Mrs. Lee said.

Start of a new journey, more than a teacher

Believe it or not, Mrs. Lee’s seating location in the staff room remained the same since the beginning, despite renovation or furniture replacement and upgrades throughout the decades. During her first year, apart from being a class mistress, Mrs. Lee was also one of the advisors to the school magazine and the Chinese version of the student newspaper “暉”. “Mr. Oliver was one of my ‘neighbours’ in the staff room. We chatted about various things, including whether the house system could go beyond the Sports Meet and the Swimming Gala to enhance engagement and collaboration among students. With the agreement of Sr. Ida, drama became the first activity to go from

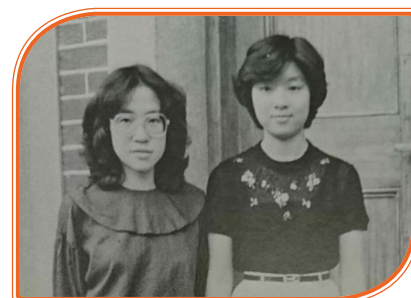


*Mrs. Kapo Lee has retired ...
but still looking young!*

From HKU to St. Mary’s

Fast forward to May 1982. It was a common practice for school principals to seek advice and recommendations from university professors for possible candidates in teaching positions, alongside usual advertisements. One day, Mrs. Lee received a phone call at home from one of her professors, asking her to ring Sr. Ida, the then School Principal of St. Mary’s. As she had not officially graduated yet, she was surprised to receive the request for an interview the following afternoon, not to mention that she actually had to attend an exam in the morning!

“I still remember every detail on that day. I came through the entrance on Austin Road, and was impressed by the entrance hall with the spiral staircase. The school touched my heart since that moment. The interview with Sr. Ida and Mrs. Winnie Hung (the then Vice-Principal) lasted for over two hours. Early the same evening,



*Mrs. Lee (right) in one of her first photos
in the school magazines. She was one of
the editorial advisors in 1982-83.*

class-based to house-based in 1984, which gradually became a school-based annual event in the late 1980s, something we all enjoy so much throughout the years,” Mrs. Lee recounted.



Mrs. Lee and Mr. Oliver (front row, fifth and seventh from the right) had been close partners in school drama productions since the 1980s.

“That’s how I started engaging with the drama production. While Mr. Oliver focused on the creative and artistic direction as well as stage production, I took care of the administrative side such as the preparation of the house programme, ticketing, seating arrangements, receptions logistics,” Mrs. Lee said. “And I also looked forward to the annual task of translating the synopsis of the play into Chinese because I enjoyed presenting Mr. Oliver’s idea in Chinese,” she added, “although at times this turned out to be quite a challenge!” she laughed. This role became even more intense as Mrs. Lee was appointed advisor to the Student Council in 1991.

Needless to say, another important aspect of Mrs. Lee’s journey at St. Mary’s is her transformation from Miss Kapo Hung to Mrs. Kapo Lee, marrying fellow colleague Mr. Philip Lee in 1984. Today they are enjoying a busy post-retirement life, both offering their expertise to support various teaching needs in the Canossian family.

亦師亦友

相信很多正在閱讀這篇訪問稿的校友都與孔老師培養了亦師亦友的情誼。她就像一座橋，維繫了聖瑪利人與學校的關係，對學校的發展和成長可說是功不可沒。

「對於能在一所百年老校任教三十八年，並參與學校不同的行政工作，我實在與有榮焉。回看這些年來，我感受較深刻且較憂慮的是，當生活高速電子化及虛擬化，縱使知識不斷膨脹而同學們也依舊勤奮，她們對學習的渴求和興奮度卻有所下降。與此同時，人際關係也疏離了，當大家面對真實的人或物，反而不知所措，不太懂得表達自己，難以跟別人建立心靈的聯繫。寄望同學們往前能夠學懂將知識和能力內化，好好融會貫通，活出自信又璀璨的人生。」

「其實師生關係屬於『朋友一倫』，同樣以『道義事業相勉』、『相規以善，和而不同』為相處之道。我期待老師和學生能夠互相尊重、互相信任，在校園內外都可以建立永固的深情。」

雪泥鴻爪

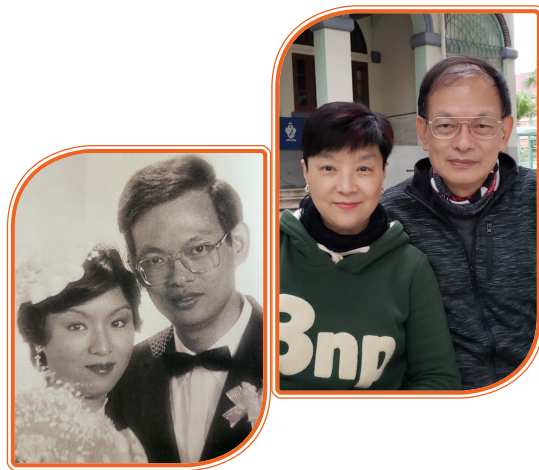
孔老師常常提醒同學們要忠實地面對自己，要堅守心中的赤誠，要勇敢地活出光明的人生。「我非常感謝這三十八年來我在聖瑪利遇上的全部校長們、同事



Mrs. Lee receiving the retirement souvenir plate from Principal Ms. Janet Wong.

們和同學們，他們讓我達成了要當老師的人生志願。除了『感恩』以外，再沒有其他詞彙可以適切地刻畫我當下的心情，我將畢生感激並珍惜曾經在聖瑪利留下的美好足跡和甜蜜回憶。」

我們在此以孔老師節錄自蘇軾詩作《和子由澠池懷舊》的「泥上偶然留指爪，鴻飛那復計東西」作結。相信她在我們心中的留痕不會如雪跡般溶化掉。祝願孔老師如大雁般展翅，邁向美滿人生中嶄新的一頁。



Mr. Philip Lee with Mrs. Kapo Lee in 1984 and 2021.
The knot is still tight after 37 years!

雪
泥
鴻
爪

Happy Retirement

Four staff members celebrated their retirement at the end of the 2019-20 academic year.



Mrs. Kapo Lee



Ms. Rainbow Tse



Ms. Tammy Yeung



Mr. Rex Ho

- **Mrs. Kapo Lee** joined St. Mary's as Chinese teacher in 1982. Apart from her teaching work she had also been heavily involved with student activities, including being the advisor of the Student Council since 1991. She had also worked closely with Mr. Geoff Oliver in the production of the annual school plays since the late 1980s. Mrs. Lee was retiring after 38 years with St. Mary's.
- **Ms. Rainbow Tse**, our School Accountant, joined the General Office team in 1991 and retired in December 2019 after 28 years of service. Apart from handling accounting matters of the school, Ms. Tse had also helped processed transactions regarding the Past Students' Association, and we are thankful for her assistance and support throughout the years.
- **Ms. Tammy Yeung**, who is also a past student of St. Mary's, started teaching at her Alma Mater since 1992. She was Mathematics teacher, and had also played various liaison roles assisting the Parent Teacher Association as well as the Past Students Association. Ms. Yeung served 28 years at St. Mary's.
- **Mr. Rex Ho** also joined St. Mary's in 1992, and was Laboratory Technician in the General Science and Integrated Science labs. He had also been actively involved in our school drama production, helping teachers and students backstage in technical support. Mr. Ho was retiring after 28 years of service.

On behalf of all past St. Marians, we send our deepest gratitude and best wishes to all the retiring staff members. May they enjoy a happy and healthy life full of God's blessings!

Marians in Faith

"Marians in Faith" is a self-initiated religious group aimed at strengthening SMCC alumnae's faith in God.



An online spiritual programme has been scheduled on Palm Sunday, 28 March 2021, from 5:00pm - 6:30pm over Google Meet. Topic of the event is **"The History and Spirituality of Christian Fasting"**, with Fr. Vincent Woo as speaker. Those who are interested to join please register now at <https://forms.gle/mzuGs4FAMTxnfhs5>, or scan the QR code above.

Please visit the Facebook page of Marians in Faith for more details.



Notice of the Annual General Meeting 2021 of St. Mary's Past Students' Association

Date : 20 March 2021 (Saturday)
Time : 3:00 pm
Venue : SMCC Hall

Prior
Registration
Required



All members are welcome.
Please register your attendance in advance.

Agenda

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 31 October 2020
2. Chairman's Report
3. Adoption of the Financial Report for the last financial year ending 31 August 2020
4. Election of office-bearers for the Council (College)* for the term 2021-2023
5. Election of office-bearers for the Council (School)* for the term 2021-2023
6. Formation of the Executive Committee of the SMPSA for the term 2021-2023
7. Any Other Business



In accordance with the hygiene and security measures of SMCC and SMCS, members who plan to attend the AGM must register in advance by completing the Registration Form, and returning it to us on or before 17 March 2021 (Wed). **Access will only be granted to those who have successfully pre-registered.**

The following forms can be downloaded from www.stmaryspsa.org.
Registration Form / Proxy Form / Nomination Form / Candidate Form

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

Want to make a donation to your Alma Mater?

On behalf of our Alma Mater, we thank you in advance for your generosity in support of your Alma Mater. Your donations will be pooled to support campus maintenance and development needs of SMCC and SMCS.



As the Education Bureau requires that all donations must be approved by the Incorporated Management Committees and properly documented for record-keeping, cheques are the preferred way of payment. Please make the cheque payable to "The IMC of St. Mary's Canossian College" or "The IMC of St. Mary's Canossian School", marking "General Donations" at the back. If a receipt for tax deduction purpose is required, please also indicate the name to be put on the receipt and the address for mailing. For further enquiries or other donation arrangements, please contact the school offices for assistance - Ms. Dolphin Li at 2724 2771 (dolphinli@smcc.hk) for **SMCC**, and Ms. Macy Ho at 2368 4204 (macyho@smcs.edu.hk) for **SMCS**. Thank you again for supporting our Alma Mater!

Mailing of Newsletters

For hygiene and environmental reasons, with immediate effect, we shall no longer mail out hard copies of the newsletter to members with email access. For those residing overseas, mailing has to be suspended until further notice due to postal service limitations during the pandemic. Please access the newsletters from the SMPSA website to keep updated. Thank you!



God Is Love

Love it was that made us, and it was love that saved us
Love was God's plan, when He made man, whose divine nature is Love
Born of God's love we must love Him, that's why He made us to love Him
But only when we love all men, can we partake of God's love
But only when we love all men, can we partake of God's love

Love is a wonderful thing, joy in our hearts it will bring
Where there's true love there is God
And where there's God there is Love

*The Exco of the PSA
wishes everyone a
healthy and prosperous
Year of the Ox.*

*May God bless our
Alma Mater, showering
His Love upon all sisters,
teachers, staff, students,
parents and alumnae
throughout the year.*