



# C O R R I connections

*Inspiring a spirit of excellence, Nurturing a culture of compassion*

2020 | Issue 1

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# BLESSING OF THE REJUVENATED CHAPEL OF ST. ANTHONY

**Actions Speak Louder than Words** – St. Anthony of Padua

Symbolically situated in the heart of SACSS and SACPS, the Chapel of St. Anthony is a sacred space that serves as a constant reminder of St. Magdalene's vision – that is, "to make Jesus known and loved". With God as the firm anchor of the school, this vision is the tenet of our Canossian Education. The Chapel has witnessed numerous faith formation programmes, including Masses, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and Novena Devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.



2019 in particular, was indeed a milestone year for the two schools as they celebrated their 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Aside from the various events and celebrations, one of the most meaningful projects the staff and students are most happy and proud of, is the newly renovated Chapel. Riding on the Ministry of Education's repainting and redecoration project, the Chapel went through a major facelift – its first in over 20 years since the school moved to the present campus in 1996. The facelift included:

- an overhaul of the audio-visual system and lighting system
- the installation of the air-conditioning system
- the repainting of the interior and exterior walls of the Chapel
- the cleaning works on the stained-glass panels which filter coloured streams of sunlight on the 20 pews which were originally retrieved from Middle Road when the school shifted to Bedok in 1996
- the installation of a new statue of St. Anthony just outside the Chapel

On 4 November 2019, with most of the works completed, the Chapel, together with a newly-installed statue of St. Anthony were blessed by Fr Johnson Fernandez at a special mass that was celebrated. Nuns, staff of both the St. Anthony's Canossian schools as well as leaders of the various Canossian schools and some members of the School Management Committee attended the special blessing. The mass and blessing were particularly significant as the occasion also marked the formal transition of the secondary school's leadership with the retirement of Mdm Mak Lai Ying and the passing of the leadership to Ms Fiona Koh in the presence of the Canossian nuns and other stakeholders. It was a meaningful celebration of the Eucharist and a befitting closing of the school year.

By Ms Amanda Choo and Ms Sharon Yu

*Charting new pathways,  
Serving with love*

## PASSING THE BATON



Mdm Mak Lai Ying, who has led the school since 2014 retired at the end of 2019.

A passionate, visionary and dynamic principal, she passed on the baton to Ms Fiona Koh Tyng Yuann, an alumna, former Vice-Principal at Marsiling Secondary School and a parishioner from the Church of St. Ignatius.

**“I aspire to deepen the school's efforts in developing students' self-identity, aspirations and self-worth to enable them to lead and serve with deeper impact in creating value for others. I will also want to strengthen the ties amongst the students, the teachers, the parents, the alumni and the Canossian schools.”**

– Ms Fiona Koh

## A TRIBUTE TO MDM MAK LAI YING

Prior to joining St. Anthony's Canossian Secondary School, Mdm Mak had already built an illustrious career. Her first foray into principalship was at Jurong Institute before she went on to MOE HQ to lead the National Education Branch. She subsequently led Nanyang Girls' High School and started the Integrated Programme (IP), partnering Hwa Chong Institution.

Thereafter, she carried her vision and fortitude to Hong Kong to set up the secondary section of the Singapore International School – from securing a suitable site for the school building to offering the rich curriculum that engaged students.

Her spirit of adventure and passion for the betterment of students continued

to influence her leadership here at St. Anthony's Canossian Sec School. Under her leadership, the school piloted the Student Learning Space (SLS) and Subject Based Banding (SBB) to promote greater opportunities for personalised learning in order to realise our students' potential and fight against the stigmatisation of streaming. She also rallied together and celebrated the talents and drive of students, teachers, and members of the Canossian Community through annual themed publications, such as *Metaphorically*, *Amore Senza Fine* and *In Tandem* to chronicle our finest moments of resilience and achievements, hopes and dreams of the school and celebrate the successes of our alumni. With these publications, she captured the Canossian spirit and etched in

print the memories for generations of our students and staff to come.

Additionally, to support the growth of Catholicism and the Canossian spirituality of staff and students, the chapel was thoughtfully upgraded to create a sanctuary of peace and prayer. Expenses were not spared to celebrate and nurture the different talents and gifts that our students bring. Students' talents in the literary, visual and performing arts were showcased through the Night Festival event and the mini art galleries. Inspirational quotes from the bible and our foundress have been placed around the school to remind all of us that we are in the presence of God, and to encourage our spirit.



We interviewed Ms Fiona Koh who has just taken over the leadership from Mdm Mak and she had this to say:

*Through my many conversations with Mdm Mak, I was given the gift of her perspective and saw what was important to her: that her staff and students grow in excellence, self-discipline and love. I also learnt that her high expectations stem from deep care and a profound belief that we are all capable of doing and being better. She feels that things can be done more efficiently, more thoughtfully, more meticulously, if we care more, look harder and think deeper.*

*I also learnt that Mdm Mak's decisions and reckoning have always embodied integrity, strength of character, compassion and verve. Never have I been to a school that functions without a bell, not even in Singapore's premier schools and institutions. And even while Mdm Mak has challenged her staff towards excellence, she has never neglected the formation of the heart and the whole person. She knows their strengths and areas for growth and uses situations to create teachable moments to build character. She has given much of her time to get to know each member of her staff personally, beyond their school commitments and challenges to include their well-being. This commitment was similarly extended to the students through the members of staff in the Student Development Team, form teachers and subject teachers, committing time to know the students and respond to their learning and socio-emotional needs.*

*Mdm Mak has won the admiration of students and teachers with her transparency and authenticity, the high standards she set, her obvious regard and love for the school and the manner in which she conducts herself. In Mdm Mak's unassuming and honest ways, she has taught me that while status can bring awards for achievements at certain points in time, it is one's stature that will uphold the individual for all seasons. As an alumna and a staff of the school, it is my privilege to have been mentored by her. The school's current achievements and comfort, in many ways, owe a debt of thanks to her for her leadership. Thank you, Mdm Mak.*

**Charting new pathways, Serving with love** *continued from page 3*

# VERITAS

## THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE



Ms Koh expressed how she wants the school to continue to build on this mission and explore renewed forms of expression of the Canossian ethos of bringing light, blessing, healing and enlivening in response to the signs of the times. This, she said, can be achieved through deepening our efforts in clarifying students' self-identity, spirituality and aspirations to help them find *The Way*. In doing so, the school hopes to awaken their love, raise their confidence and open their spirit to serving others with deeper impact and wider outreach. The school will also work towards strengthening the fraternal ties amongst students, staff, the Canossian schools and the community so that through each

member, we experience *The Truth* that God loves us; that each of us is worthy; that each of us is made for goodness. By these efforts, we as a Canossian community can experience the fullness of *Life* to grow and respond as One Love, One Mission, One Canossian.





We also interviewed students, particularly those who have been under Mdm Mak's leadership over the last few years. Here are some Canossian students' reflections on the leadership transition at SACSS...

*Mdm Mak wasn't just an educator. She was a principal who strived for the betterment of SACSS, for the benefit of every student. She created and nurtured an environment that allowed for maximum learning to take place. She was an admirable leader who came up with creative solutions to solve problems. We appreciate how Mdm Mak stayed on task and was a good role model for students. She was always learning and growing. For example, she often practised cycling around the school and wasn't afraid of getting injured. She also constantly advocated the importance of reading and was one of the first few to be in the hall reading each morning. We wish her all the best in her retirement years.*

*It feels really great to welcome Ms Fiona Koh, an alumna of the school as our new principal – she has done the school proud and is most certainly an inspiration to all of us! We look forward to Ms Koh's leadership in guiding SACSS towards new growth. Via, Veritas, Vita!*

By Tiara Irsafina, Rabitah Adawiyah,  
Victoria Lam and Jane Chan (4.6)

*Charting new pathways*

## FULL SUBJECT-BASED BANDING (FULL SBB)



**SACSS has been selected as one of the 28 pilot schools for Full SBB from 2020. From January this year, we offered our Secondary 2 Normal Academic students the opportunity to do Geography, History and Literature at the Express level.**

Students can study various subjects at different levels, depending on their ability in each subject. From Secondary 1, students can study some subjects at a more demanding level if they demonstrate an aptitude for that subject. As their abilities develop, students may take on subjects at various levels at different points in time. This allows our students to take responsibility for their learning, while they discover, develop and deepen their strengths and interests, as well as develop positive mindsets to learn for life.

With Full SBB, we want to better recognise the strengths and interests of our students, to help build their confidence and develop in them an intrinsic motivation to learn for life, as well as guide them to chart their varied development pathways, which will enable them to lead purposeful lives.

Moving on, we will be offering our 2020 Secondary 1 Normal Technical students the opportunity to do the Humanities subjects at a more challenging level in 2021. Additionally, our 2021 Secondary 1 students will be offered Character and Citizenship Education, Art, Design and Technology, Food and Consumer Education, Music and Physical Education at a common level. Within a class, teachers will also differentiate their teaching methods to meet the varying learning needs of their students. This common learning experience creates a valuable setting for students to mingle, build meaningful friendships, and appreciate different perspectives.

By Mrs Nancy Phua and Ms Wang Siew Ping

*Serving with love*

## UNITED IN COMMON ENDEAVOUR CULTURAL LEARNING JOURNEY TO MYANMAR

For more than 10 years now, the Canossian Sisters and lay missionaries have lived among the Burmese girls, building a school and accommodation in Thanlyin, as well as a vocational school in Nyaung Shwe. However, the lack of local connections in Myanmar as well as concerns about safety prevented our school from visiting the country with a large student group. In 2019, with the help of Mr Stanley Tan, the founding member of the Mainly I Love Kids (MILK) Fund, our then-Principal, Mdm Mak Lai Ying, and HOD CCE, Mr He Junhao, visited Inle Lake in June to foster connections with local businesses and schools, and to pave the way for a delegation of students and staff from SACSS to visit at the end of the year.

The plans came to fruition when, a group of 33 students and 5 teachers, accompanied by Sister Jessica, eventually set off on their inaugural Cultural Learning Journey to Myanmar from 10 to 15 November 2019. The trip had two main objectives.

Firstly, we wanted to build lasting connections with the Canossian Schools in Myanmar, thus helping our school's staff and students understand the needs and challenges of the missionary work of the Sisters there.

Secondly, it was important to learn from the local community in Inle Lake how they work together to conserve their environment and achieve almost zero waste in their hotels, restaurants and schools through their various education projects.

The team was warmly received at Yangon International Airport by Sister Angela, Principal of Canossa School in Thanlyin. After an hour's drive, the group arrived at the beautiful school grounds and were greeted by an impressive array of colourful local dances and music performances hosted by the school children.

The school compound housed a dormitory, a kindergarten, a high school as well as a teacher training institute. After a tour of the school, the girls formed smaller groups to chat and play games. As night fell, a communal singing session was held featuring hymns familiar to both the Burmese and Singaporean students. United in common endeavour, the girls from both Canossian Schools found so much in common despite being from different countries and backgrounds.

The next few days saw the group visiting various cultural sites while they were hosted at the picturesque and peaceful Inle Princess Hotel. The hotel is fully self-sufficient, making their own paper and pottery, and growing their own food to be served at the restaurants. All waste is recycled and

most items in the hotel make use of sustainable resources such as natural filtered water served in glass bottles and bamboo toothbrushes. With boats as the main mode of transport in the vast Inle Lake, our students learnt how to appreciate living in natural surroundings and enjoy each other's company amid the natural habitat.

They also visited Inle Heritage Hospitality Vocational Training Centre (IHHVTC), an hour's boat ride through Inle Lake. Arguably the best vocational school in the region, IHHVTC offers training through its unique work-and-study programme. The 5-star resort is fully operated by hospitality trainees. Hosted by a team of young, confident and well-spoken trainees, the group witnessed how the simple aspirations for meaningful learning experiences and employment are realised.

The highlight of the trip was the service-learning project that our girls conducted as part of the exchange programme at Mudita School. Founded by a German Monk, Mudita School brings in volunteer teachers from around the world to create a self-sufficient modern education centre catering to more than 200 novice monks and underprivileged children in the region. Our students joined in their classes, and later conducted English, Music and Craft lessons. They also participated in a Cultural Exchange project where students from both schools came together to prepare a German, Singaporean and Burmese dish each – culminating in the sharing of a meal.

The learning journey to Myanmar was both inspiring and humbling for the team. Indeed, our youthful hearts were filled with ardour, yearning for truth and wisdom. There was much to learn from the Myanmar in their ingenuity and passion for learning!

*By Mr He Jun Hao and Ms Nicole Quek*



# THE STAFF VALUES IN ACTION PROGRAMME



## **Doing small things with great love** – Mother Teresa

Our Foundress, St. Magdalene of Canossa, appreciated the uniqueness and diversity of every individual, and dreamt of a world where everyone would be loved and respected. Inspired by her, the school embarked on a Staff Values in Action (VIA) activity on 30 December 2019 to serve in three organisations that cater to persons with intellectual disabilities, the elderly and poor families.

The staff were divided into 3 groups. One group spent the morning at MINDS Tampines Training and Development Centre (TTDC) which is a day care that caters to adults with intellectual disabilities. The day began with a morning walk round the estate as the beneficiaries participated in the exciting hands-on activities together with our teachers. After the walk and a short break, teachers guided the participants through various puzzles and sit-down activities, including colouring. The beneficiaries were presented with the SACSS 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary colouring book, *Amore Senza Fine*, so that they could continue their artistic activities while learning more about our school.

Over at Willing Hearts which operates a soup kitchen that prepares, cooks and distributes 6500 daily meals to various needy beneficiaries, our staff volunteered and helped with tasks such as chopping vegetables, packing food and cleaning up. It was a tiring yet fulfilling experience as we had the opportunity to interact with other volunteers who actively serve at Willing Hearts and had a chance to hear how such effort feed the soul. Our staff also volunteered by driving their vehicles to deliver packed food to various assigned locations.

Finally, at Sunlove-Kampong Chai Chee Senior Activity Centre (SAC), there was joy and laughter as the elderly enjoyed various games and listened to their favourite “oldies” performed by our teachers. Prizes were awarded to those who participated in the “Guessing the Picture” game. The elderly also received a personalised polaroid photo to commemorate the Staff VIA event. A lunch spread was also catered for the elderly.

Indeed, it was a meaningful day of camaraderie among colleagues as we went about doing small things with great love and forming new friendships as we look forward to organising another session in 2020.

*By Ms Amanda Choo and Mr Seck Hon Meng*



## BREAKFAST INTERACTION SESSION



Jointly organised by the school's parent support group, better known as the Canossian Co-Educators (CCE), the session was organised to engage the parents of our lower secondary students.

This covered insights into the current syllabus of core subjects presented by the respective Heads of Department (HOD) and Subject Heads (SH). The subjects presented include Mathematics, Humanities, English Language, Mother Tongue Language and Science. From the sessions, parents gained insights into how they might be able to support their children at home. The interaction offered parents the opportunity to seek clarification and identify their child's learning needs.

The session was also a platform for CCE members to share with parents how their involvement as parent volunteers have benefited their children leading to positive attitudes and better school attendance.

Parents were encouraged to volunteer their time and skills to help create a warm, caring and nurturing educational environment for the development of their girls. We are positive that these breakfast interaction sessions will prove to be a great opportunity for parents to bond with their children, and guide them on their educational journey.

*By Ms Pauline Choy*

## TO SERVE WITH LOVE



*"Those who love are never tired as love knows no burden"*

*– St. Magdalene of Canossa*

SACSS makes it a point to build partnerships with various stakeholders. These include both overseas and local partners. In ensuring that we provide a holistic and fulfilling learning journey for our students and staff, we aim to enrich experiences by working collaboratively with others.

As part of the programme for the hosting of students and educators from foreign schools and educational institutions, SACSS has built a long-term partnership with some of our sister schools, in particular the Meiko Gakuen Junior and Senior High School.

In February, SACSS played host to 45 students and 5 teachers from Meiko Gakuen. They were treated to an upbeat welcome by the Percussion Band and then adjourned to the Indoor Sports Hall (ISH) for a student and staff exchange programme which included performances by the SACSS Angklung Ensemble and in reciprocation, some dances by the visiting students. The visitors then went for a school tour before returning to the ISH for snacks. We invited the guests to play traditional games such as *pick-up-sticks*, *five stones*,

*chapeh* and *kuti kuti*. These games were taught by our SACSS Girl Guides.

Later that morning, as students went for a common lunch break, the Vice-Principal and teachers of Meiko Gakuen joined SACSS staff for a Lo Hei session to celebrate the Lunar New Year and this was followed by a tour of the school's facilities which included the Keyboard Lab, Library, Art Studio, Maths Activity Room and the Science laboratories. The visitors also visited the Greenery Trail where different types of herbs and spices, vegetables and fruits are grown. The tour ended at the SACSS Chapel. It was an enjoyable and fulfilling visit and we look forward to hosting our sister school again in 2021.

*By Ms Pauline Choy*



*Published by*

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