

## Maryknoll Convent School Foundation

AGM 20 October 2012

### Chairperson's Report 2011/12

1. The Foundation is the embodiment of the Maryknoll Sisters' faith in Maryknollers to maintain their mission in education.

#### Role and Responsibility

2. In the early years of the millennium, the Sisters called on former Principals, teachers and Maryknollers to form a body corporate to take over from them as "sponsoring body" of our school. The Foundation thus came into being in 2005.
3. The Sister have entrusted and empowered Maryknollers with the responsibility of nurturing young girls with Christian values and developing their potential to the full. The aim is for them to have high moral standards, to be socially and environmentally aware and to be responsible and contributory members of our community. This is a commitment that we loyal and caring Maryknollers embrace as a privilege and an opportunity for service to our *alma mater*. We pledge our best endeavours to guide our school in the spirit of the Sisters' time-honoured vision and mission: **to provide quality education affordable to all, regardless of creed or colour, social or economic status.**

#### Matters of Moment

4. ***Incorporation of school management*** - For some time, Government has mandated that schools should be managed by Incorporated Management Committees ("IMC") comprising all stakeholders: the Principal, teachers, parents, alumni as well as the school sponsoring body and some independent individual(s). The object is to make for cooperation in corporate partnership for effective school operation.
5. In this connection, Council has worked hard over the past year or two to prepare a draft IMC constitution on a framework provided by the Education Bureau ("EDB"). This was presented to EDB in May and at the time of writing this report, we are awaiting their comments. When these are to hand, we will arrange full briefings for all parties concerned.
6. Meanwhile, we have touched base with our Former Students Association and the Parent Teacher Associations (Secondary and Primary) for informal liaison and initial understanding of Government's requirement of them. To steer and coordinate preparations, we have set up a working group under Vice-chairman Amy Ho to assist the Principals and colleagues, to ease their burden in the quite complex process.

7. **Review of Memorandum and Articles** (“M&A”) - Hitherto, the Foundation’s M&A have only relatively simple provisions to cover its relationship with the School Management Committee. In anticipation of the establishment of IMCs, one each for Secondary and Primary Section, a task group convened by Vice-chairman Maura Wong has reviewed the M&A. The aim is to ensure proper interface between the IMCs with the Foundation as “school sponsoring body” and to facilitate continuing smooth operation of Council as the “governing body” of the Foundation.
8. The recommendations have been cleared by Council and are now under consideration with our Legal Adviser for preparation of an amended version. When ready, it will be put to Foundation members at an Extraordinary General Meeting.
9. **MCS Trademarks review** - Over the years, Maryknoll has registered a series of icons/logos as trademarks, for protection against unauthorised use or duplication. Recently, the Sisters have assigned them to the Foundation and we have a duty to guard against abuse or misuse of them.
10. Some months ago, the Valentino Group asked for consent to use the “**MCS**” trademark for certain of their fashion items in Hong Kong. In the event, on legal advice and after much negotiation, we entered into a licensing arrangement with the Group with firm and clear conditions that our logo must not be brought into disrepute. This protects the Foundation’s position as the exclusive owner of the legal rights to the trademark in Hong Kong while allowing the Valentino Group its use for a specified period of time.
11. This prompted us to ask the business entrepreneur on our Council Irene Li to head a group for review of all MCS icons/logos. This process has now been completed, with fine-tuning of our requirements for such icons/logos, devising clear guidelines for use and creating a stock of all samples in use. This should serve us well for the future.
12. **Succession planning** - To date, our membership stands as follows:

Executive + Honorary	48 + 6 members
Life + Ordinary	348 + 1 members
Associate	1 member

To be effective and efficient, the Foundation needs a stream of loyal Maryknollers and a fine balance of members from different generations for continuity and fresh initiatives

13. For this purpose, we have tasked a Membership Committee led by Councillors Ophelia Ngan and Janet Chang to search for Maryknollers from different walks of life available and willing to return for service to our school. This is a most important task as we must have new input, not only in Council but also in the IMCs soon to be in place.

14. ***Communications and perception*** - From the outset, Council has considered it necessary to provide the Maryknoll “family”, parents and the public at large with factual and timely information. This was originally a core group within Council with support from some members of the Former Students’ Association. Since 2010, it has been reconstituted on a broader membership and a wider brief, using different channels to project and foster the Maryknoll spirit, organising events or interviews with Maryknollers whose stories may inspire others.
15. This is now our Communications Committee (earlier styled “Promotion of Positive Perception” Committee) steered by seasoned Councillor Kenzie Kwong with a mandate to:
- present properly to the community the ethos and philosophy of the Maryknoll mission;
  - reach out to alumnae across the years to re-engage with the school and current students to consolidate the Maryknoll spirit;
  - advise Council on public and media relations and on IT matters.
- They have actively participated not only in discussions but also in such projects as redesigning the Foundation website.
16. A particularly noteworthy, and most heartening, feature of this group is how younger Maryknollers of quite recent vintage have rallied to this cause. The committee is working with the Membership Committee on how best to update alumnae data for better liaison and to preserve and maintain the archival items and records of the school.
17. ***Liaison with our school*** - While school management and operations are matters for the School Management Committee and the Principals and their colleagues, Council keeps a caring watch by reference to school reports and records and by issue of general and strategic guidelines where due. We also help by facilitating and coordinating *via* Vice-chairperson Amy Ho such services as the Educational /Clinical Psychological support (funded by the Maryknoll Educational Trust) for both Sections of our school and by initiating a mentorship programme for senior secondary students. These projects, now well established and smoothly run by our Principals and their colleagues, have a life of their own.
18. ***A topical issue*** - There has been considerable community concern over the subject of Moral and National Education (“MNE”). Before the commencement of the year 2012/13, we took the initiative to inform parents and teachers fully of our position on this subject, as outlined below. Letters to parents have been issued and posted on our school nets.
19. Maryknoll has been offering religious and moral education as well as general studies to promote among our students positive moral and ethical values and to encourage critical analysis and independent thinking. In this context, we are not adopting MNE but will continue to teach religious and moral education as before, using what we have been using, doing what we have been doing.

20. Meanwhile, our students will be able to learn about China from such subjects as Chinese Language, Chinese History, Liberal Studies, General Studies, Geography and Economics. We will also watch out for advice and guidelines from the Catholic Diocese.

### **Major Task Ahead**

21. I had mentioned in my report for 2010/11 that while Maryknoll maintains the Sisters' tradition and philosophy in education, it has to evolve with local education reform and keep abreast with good practices, here and elsewhere.
22. We have, therefore, instituted a group to be coordinated by Councillor Francine Kwong to revisit and review the role and direction of our school. The intention is to prepare our school to meet the challenge of the times and to advance with community aspirations. Right now, we are considering how best to go forward. In time, we will be involving all stakeholders in the process.

### **Note of Appreciation**

23. For the record, I extend sincerest thanks to all members of Council for advice and assistance during the year. To the members retiring, we hope you will stay in touch and continue to bless us with your wise counsel.

### **Concluding Observations**

24. It should be evident that much has been done but there is still more to do. We appeal to all Maryknollers to join forces with the groups and committees of the Foundation, and in time to serve in Council. We must not fail the Sisters in their trust in Maryknollers to carry and pass on their torch of truth to future generations.
25. I see this my swan song as it is my firm belief that there is a conflict of interests between the roles of Council Chairperson and Supervisor of school, the former being the head of the body monitoring the performance of the latter. It has been a rare privilege for me to have held the chair in Council and I thank all members, past and present, for their unfailing support and patient tolerance.

Helen CP Lai YU