

The Chairman's Report 2016

Opening

Welcome to the Foundation AGM and thank you for coming. The two special edition newsletters to members produced by our Communication Committee would cover most of my speech today. The 'Relay For Love' issue was jointly produced with the FSA. And the other issue focused on the four strategic focuses that the Foundation, as school sponsoring body, has set for our Schools. I encouraged you to read them both as they contained important information that members of the Foundation should know.

This has been a very rewarding year for the Council. Without sounding boastful, we have achieved considerably in terms of collaboration and setting strategic directions that will launch our School forward. Thanks to my teammates for their hard work.

Relay for Love

Relay For Love (RFL), which took place on March 12, 2016 at the Kowloon Tsai Sportsground, was a fund-raising event jointly organized by the Trust and the Former Students' Association (FSA) to mark the inauguration of the Maryknoll Convent School Educational Trust Sports Fund. We raised over one million dollars with RFL! Most importantly, the success and meaning of the event went beyond the funds raised, and highlighted the extensive participation and collaboration of the Maryknoll family. We have over 700 runners, from age 6 to 80, participating in the event including student athletes from Primary 1 to Form 5, alum runners from fresh grads to graduates of the 60s or 50s and their families and friends. We enlisted participation of parents from both sessions, former and current Principals, former and current teachers, Maryknoll Sisters (our dear Sister Marilu) and staff members of Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital. In organizing of the event, we have more than 80 volunteers consisting of current and former students from different eras. It was worth noting that the million we raised did not come from a few major donors but over 1,000 donors with donations ranging from a few dollars to a few ten thousands. RFL's success reflected the joint efforts of the entire Maryknoll family and of the bright Maryknoll spirit. From this event we learnt that we could always mobilize members of the Maryknoll family for their support when there was a good cause. I would urge the management of both sessions to remember that we will always be where you need us.

The Four Strategic Focuses

In 2005, the Foundation took over from the Maryknoll Sisters as the School Sponsoring Body (SSB) of Maryknoll Convent School and the "core values" of the Sisters have hence become our Vision and Mission. It is therefore the role and duty of the Foundation to oversee the actualization of the MCS Vision and Mission and to lead the operation and strategic development of the School.

Last year at the AGM, you were told that a Task Force led by Doris Kwan and made up of 7 members including the Supervisors and Deputy Supervisors of both Sections was formed. It was tasked to review and to set out the overall directions for the future development of the School. After nearly one year of hard work, which included meetings with Principals and key teachers and studying over 90 school reports, research articles, journals and books, our team came up with a report on four Strategic Focuses that will take our School forward:

To serve: home, country and the world

To pursue excellence

To realize full potential

To be forward looking

The draft report was shared with Principals and key teachers, the members of the Educational Trust and IMCs of both sections. It was well received. On June 23, 2016, exactly one year after our 1st meeting with SSB managers (June 23, 2015) the Foundation Council endorsed the four strategic focuses as direction for the development of the School.

On 12th July 2016, all teachers from both Primary and Secondary, the Chairperson and Trustees of the Educational Trust, the President and Exco members of the FSA gathered at the Primary Auditorium for a presentation and discussion of the Strategic Focuses.

These Focuses were not something new but “core values” of the Maryknoll Sisters, distilled and adopted from our Vision and Mission. They are identified as important values that would perpetuate the uniqueness of our School as one of the leading schools in Hong Kong.

1. To serve: to home, country and the world.

Continue to promote service as a way of life for Maryknollers, our duty to home, to country, to the world, and to provide experiences that enable students to grow as individuals and contributors to society

We start our four strategic focuses with “service”, because “service” is the “core among core values” of the Maryknoll Sisters. Over 90 years ago, the Maryknoll Sisters came all the way from the United States to Asia to **serve** people in the third world. To serve is not the act of becoming a servant; it is the mindset of always being ready to help with love and compassion. This core value has been passed onto us and has become a way of life for Maryknollers. When you meet a Maryknoller, you will know she is a Maryknoller because a Maryknoller is always willing to go any extra mile for you.

Who do we serve? The answer would be **everyone** and **anyone**. In our School Song we sang, “To home, to country, to the world, we call this our first duty.” Home means people close to you; Country means Hong Kong, China, your place of living, your community; and World is the greater World. So it is our duty to serve the greater world, just like the Maryknoll Sisters.

A Maryknoller is expected to be loving, compassionate and willing to serve. This is what we want our students to become. It is this value that makes our School so unique and so much better than many well-known schools in Hong Kong.

2. To pursue excellence

To pursue excellence is to instill in our students and teachers, a strong growth mindset where they are inquisitive, resilient, reflective and responsible in all their pursuits, aim high while staying humble, seek out opportunities for improvement, and celebrate both participation and achievement

You will note that we chose the word “pursue” instead of “achieve” excellence. We emphasize the process, the journey and attitude towards excellence. The word “excellence” has different interpretations for different people. Our definition of “excellence” is not about coming first or getting the highest exam

results. Our view of “excellence” means knowing the abilities, talents and strengths of our students and developing them to their full potential. We have high expectation of our students and want to stretch them beyond their comfort zone. In other words, we empower them to achieve their personal best.

To pursue excellence we need to have a growth mindset – a mindset of always wanting to be better. If our students want to be better, they will find ways to improve and eventually they will become better.

We also want our teachers to have a growth mindset and wanting to be better. If we have **excellence** teachers, we will have **excellence** students.

3. To realize the full potential

Optimize the conditions for students to realize their potential to the full by proactively seeking out the best available academic and non-academic opportunities, based on individual students’ needs and gifts, and an appropriate balance of support and challenge

It is our mission to help our students to realize their potential to the full. Every student comes to us as “a seed” with potential for growth. If given the essentials – soil, water, sunshine – every seed can sprout. However, we want the seeds to more than simply sprout; we want them to develop to their full potential, to fully blossom. In other words, we want our students to flourish. We recognize that every person is different and unique. We believe everyone must have some strength or talent which is different or better than someone else’s. Our mission is to bring the best out of our students based on her ability and strength. We are not just aiming at producing academic achievers or 5**students or top athletes. We aim to produce students who are best at whatever they are good at. A very good educational concept to achieve that is: ‘Support, Stretch and Challenge’ (拔尖提中補底). With this learning and teaching approach, the appropriate balance between support and challenge is important. For students that are not ready, challenging them will be demoralizing. For students in the middle, teaching without stretching leads to complacency. For those with high ability, inadequate challenge may lead to disengagement. Hence it is important to cater to different level of learner diversity appropriately.

4. To be forward looking

Be forwarding looking in leading the school, developing teachers and staff, and most important of all, creating learning and development opportunities for students, preparing them for the globally connected VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world

Forward looking means planning for the future. This should be the mindset of everyone or else we will be left behind. Forward looking is in our heritage and plays an important part in the history of Maryknoll. The Maryknoll Sisters are trailblazers and pioneers of their times. If the Maryknoll Sisters were not forward thinking, we would not be here today.

When Maryknoll Sisters came to Asia to serve, they know the best way to help was to provide the means to self-help. What was better than giving people

education? Having chosen education as their mission objective, they started a small kindergarten with 12 students in 1925 – the beginnings of Maryknoll Convent School.

The birth of the Foundation is another example of how forward looking the Maryknoll Sisters are. When the Sisters are getting no younger, many having returned to the Motherhouse, they planned for succession and set up the MCS Foundation. The Foundation thus received the baton to take over from the Maryknoll Sisters as the School Sponsoring Body.

The Sisters have entrusted us with the School, built out of their forward looking mindset, so must we be forward looking enough to continue to steer it ahead. Today, we live in a very complicated world. To be forward looking we must prepare our students and teachers to be ready for the challenges of this new era.

I would like to draw your attention to what "forward looking" in practice means:

- i. To create 'learning and development opportunities' to impart with 21st century learning skills, namely the 4Cs - Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration and Creativity;
- ii. To offer experiences to our students beyond the classroom, expose the students to issues of the wider world – so our students have broad perspectives, willing to take risks, and are equipped to cope, thrive and contribute in a globally connected, volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world.

The same goes for our teachers who live and teach in a VUCA world. An educationist once said in this era “individuals have to learn, and they have to learn all the time.” Thus, we are fully supportive of teachers’ development. Just as we nurture each individual student according to their gifts, we would develop teachers based on individual needs and responsibilities within the School structure.

Next Steps

The School’s two IMCs will be implementing the four strategic focuses at their planning and operational levels. Rest assured that the Foundation will continue to observe the development and implementation of these focuses through our annual meeting with the SSB managers.

Succession planning for the Foundation

We talked a lot about being forward looking for the School, the students and our teachers. As SSB, we have to be forward looking too and work on succession planning continuously. Our Communication and Membership Committees have a lot of new blood this year. In our last Council meeting, we had a brief discussion on this topic and it was decided that for the coming year, succession planning will be one of our main projects. Succession planning is not just about finding the next right candidate to succeed a post, be it a Councilor or an IMC manager; it is a path of growth for capable and younger Maryknollers to know about the Foundation and join us in serving the School.

Retirement of Primary Principal

With the retirement of Mrs Josephine Lo in summer of 2017, a Principal Selection

Committee (PSC) was formed for the selection of our new Principal. The PSC consists of 5 members: the PS Supervisor, 2 representatives from the SSB and 2 representatives from IMC.

On 23rd June 2016, Father Brain Barons and Mrs Dorothy Chan were appointed as SSB representatives in accordance with Appendix 3B of the Foundation Constitution. Miss Amy Ho and Ms Kenzie Lau were appointed as IMC representatives.

Movement of SSB Manager

Dr Doris Au returned to Canada and resigned as SSB Manager of the Primary IMC. Dr Antoinette Lee was elected to replace Doris at the SSB bye-election, which took place earlier today. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Dr Doris Au for her dedication and service to the School and of course to welcome Antoinette aboard as PS SSB Manager.

Finally I would like to give a vote of thanks to all my high caliber and professional teammates involved in the RFL project as well as members of the Task Force that gave birth to the strategic directions for the School.