



Foundation AGM: Chairperson's Report

15 September, 2018



Opening

Thank you for joining the 14th Annual General Meeting of the Foundation on 15th September 2018. I would particularly like to thank Melaine, Principal of the Secondary Section (SS) and Doris, Principal of the Primary Section (PS) together with your team for your unfailing support in the past year.

Voice of Maryknoll and the Position of Maryknoll in Hong Kong

About 10 days ago, there was a newspaper report regarding "Tong Fai" charged by the aided primary schools in Hong Kong and Maryknoll Primary was said to be charging 'the highest Tong Fai'. This report further suggested that schools charging "Tong Fai" over a thousand dollars per year will defeat the true meaning of "free education" as students with financial difficulty will be deprived of a chance to join such school. This statement is misleading and definitely UNTRUE for Maryknoll. While we are charging \$600 per month, no girls will be deprived the chance to study at Maryknoll because they cannot afford to pay our Tong Fai. Our supervisor of the Primary section, Amy Ho, has taken this opportunity to address the specific point of "Tong Fai" and to set out how we conduct ourselves at Maryknoll Primary under the guiding value and mission to provide "all round quality and affordable education to all". As Sr Jeanne has put it, Amy's response is 'an accurate and well thought out' response to the media and has been posted on the website of the Primary section. I hope that you will take some time to read it.

Maryknoll has chosen to remain an aided school. Remaining an "aided school" means we collect no school fees but rely mainly on the subventions from the Government for our operation. It also means we do not choose our students but accept and teach whoever comes to us. Even with limited resources, Maryknoll Convent School has never stopped providing excellent and high quality education and educational environment for our students.

We have to accept that the subvention from the Government can only cover "standard items" of the school operation. Maryknoll has never been contented with just providing "standard" items for our students. In both Primary and Secondary Schools we have many 'above standard' items which the School have to be responsible for out of the "Tong Fai" such as our swimming pool. When our Maryknoll Sisters built the school campus and Convent in the 1930's, they have included a swimming pool which the students have access to. In those days, Maryknoll was probably the first and only school with such "up standard" facilities. Even up till now, not many schools have a swimming pool.





In Primary, we have managed to turn to a full day school without the need to cut classes because we turn the convent (where the Sister used to live) into a school building for our senior primary students. We changed the Chapel into an extra school hall for students so they don't need to walk down to the main campus for assembly. We paved the garden next to the swimming pool to become a basketball court to provide extra space for students to play and practise. We have a beautiful school ground covered with azalea which required lots of maintenance. Not all the classrooms have air conditioning subvented. We have at least 22 sets of air conditioners installed for the comfort of our students with the costs of purchase and maintenance covered by our own fees. The extra hall, the extra playground, the swimming pool, the gardening, the extra air-conditioning are all "non-standard" items which the School has to be responsible. And all this comes from our Tong Fai.

"Tong Fai" also supports important staffing resources which are above the standard, including our additional teachers, pastoral care assistant, school office administrator, part-time teacher-librarian and security guard service. All these are for the benefit of our students.

We may have charged a higher fee than other aided primary schools but we do have a genuine need and the amount we collect are well justified in particular if you consider what we have provided for our students.

Our Secondary section also have over and above standard facilities (such as the 21st Century classroom – A/V system at the hall, the extra lift, etc). Again, maintenance of such would not be covered by government subvention and the School has to pay out from its own pocket.

Even as an aided school with limited funding, Maryknoll always aim to provide the best for our students. Where Government do not provide and Tong Fai cannot cover, our resourceful alumni will come in to play. At present, the Trust is funding the extra teachers, extra office staff, the CP and EP for both sections as well as many other items.

Despite all the financial difficulties we may face, Maryknoll is committed to adhering to our core value to serve and to provide quality and affordable education. And we should be proud of ourselves.

While we strive hard to provide extra with limited resources, there are aided schools (who used to have similar values as ours) decided to jump the boat and to join the fee charging league. This is disheartening. I always wonder why we can hold on to our values, they cannot. We must come forward to let people know if Maryknoll can do it, they can too. We must share our values, our belief, our mission and vision with others and try to make an impact on them.

For numerous times, I have asked myself questions and now I throw the questions to you: What does Maryknoll stand for in this society today? How should we position ourselves in the community? How can we impact other people with our values?





Sr Jeanne has commented that “There will always have some person(s), organizations questioning what we have and do?”

As the School Sponsoring Body (SSB), we need to reflect on our Vision and Mission, expand our horizon and work out some long term strategies for the Foundation. It would mean developing a strategic position for the School as an aided school, developing and enhancing communication strategies to give a clear message about what we represent and what we do. We will explore the need of a Maryknoll Voice in the education sector in Hong Kong and the impact that a top aided school could create (with or without the league of similar schools). We hope that we may be able to shape relevant Government Policies and the public perception of who we are.

Last year was a fruitful year and we have accomplished a few missions which I would like to share with you as well:

Restructuring of Subcommittees

There has been a restructuring of the of subcommittees. With the Communications Committee (CC) and Membership Committee (MC) forming their own IT support team (to manage the Foundation website Foundation database respectively), the IT Committee was dissolved.

But a new committee - Trademark Committee was formed. Perhaps - Irene Li , our covenor will be giving her introduction to this new committee later.

In short, the Foundation is the legal owner of a number of trademarks which include the beautiful floral pattern of our Primary uniform (which we have allowed the Trust to produce floral products for fund raising), the school name “MCS” and “Maryknoll Convent School” and our School crest . These Foundation Trademarks represent the reputation of our school and they are our very valuable assets. Therefore, we have established guidelines for giving consent to people who want to use our mark.

For many years, we have established procedures in dealing with requests from alumnae to use our trademarks to produce souvenirs /merchandise. Last year a group of alumni approached us for consent to use our mark “MCS” for their choir group namely “MCS Alumni Choir”. As the existing guidelines do not apply to the trademark being used in this situation, a new set of guidelines for using “MCS” or “Maryknoll Convent School” by alumni groups were drafted and approved by the Council on 10 February 2018. For all applications for use of our trademark (whether for use on products /merchandise or use as a name of organization or group) will have to seek approval from the Foundation. As we expect there will be more workload, the Trademark Committee was set up to deal with trademark related matters and all applications for the use of trademark will be processed by them. The “MCS alumni choir” is one of the first groups we have granted our approval to use “MCS” under the new arrangement.

In addition, the Schools will recognise those approved alumni groups / organisations and will give concessionary rate for rental of school facilities.





Appointment of Supervisor and SSB Managers

It is the role of the Foundation, as the School Sponsoring Body, to appoint Supervisors and Sponsoring Body Managers (SSB Managers) to sit on the Incorporated Management Committees (IMC) of both the Primary and Secondary Sections of Maryknoll Convent School and the term is for five-year. As reported last year, 7 of the 8 SSB managers would have the end of their 5 years term this summer and a number of the SSB managers including our 2 supervisors Helen and Maria will be retiring after their end of term. A Succession Planning Core Group (SPCG) was set up to prepare for the new appointments. A new set of appointment guidelines for Supervisors and SSB managers prepared by the SPCG and approved by the Council in February were adopted for appointment process. After having the opportunity to meet with all the candidates and hearing their views about our vision and mission and passion about serving as SSB managers in the IMC, new Supervisors and SSB Managers for the next five years were appointed at our Council meeting in May and all appointments have also been approved by EDB.

May I take this opportunity to introduce Ophelia Ngan who has succeeded Dr Maria Lee as our Supervisor for SS and Amy Ho who has succeeded Mrs Helen Yu as Supervisor of the Primary Section. The other SSB managers reappointed for the SS: Doris Kwan (deputy supervisor), Maggie Chau, new faces - Cordelia Chung, Christina Chan, Christina Lee, of course our Sr Marilu who is appointed as representative of Maryknoll sisters. For PS, apart from the 2 Christinas, Nancy Fok was reappointed and we have a new face Jenny Leung who has just become a mother.

I would like to invite all of you to join me to express our sincere gratitude to the retiring Supervisors and SSB Managers who have all worked tirelessly for the betterment of our School, and to meet and welcome the incoming SSB Managers. We are excited that they have agreed to take on these roles, and we are confident that our School will continue to go from strength to strength under their leadership and guidance.



Engagement with Members

For succession planning, we have decided to take active steps to engage our Foundation members and get them to understand more about the Foundation. The members orientation took place in October 2017 was a success. Through the joint efforts of both CC and MC, over 100 members (some non members as well) attended. The profiles of attendees showed that participants came from different era ranging from graduates in the 60's to recent graduates. Many of our members have provided their personal contacts and have offered their help/ expertise in different areas. For now, many members of our subcommittees were recruited from the attendees of the Orientation. It seems that if we reach out to our members they will reciprocate to support us.





Follow up on the success of the Orientation Day, the Engagement Committee of MC organised a High Tea gathering on 5 May at the new Cookery Room, the purpose of which was to enable our EM to know each other better and to continue our drive to further engage our members. This event was well attended by EMs, some members of the IMC of both sections as well as team members of the subcommittee. The day's program include a bonding session with participants dividing in groups to decorate a cake, a quiz session focusing on the structure and interaction amongst the school related units including the Foundation, the IMC, FSA, Trust , the membership structure, the 4 strategic foci etc. The final program of the day was a sharing session by the participants who were all keen to know more about the Foundation and the school. We have also collected a lot of invaluable views and suggestions which we can improve on. We will continue to engage - I am sure MC will think of some more engagement programmes, so stay tuned.



Round Table Meeting

Round table meeting involving 3 alumni bodies and the schools' administration was held on 24 March 2018 at an offsite venue.

For the first time, representatives of the Foundation, the Trust and FSA sat together with Principals of both sessions and the Supervisors [elect] to discuss topics which each party would like to share and discuss. The topics include administration, communication and alumni matters. We had good exchanges amongst the parties which helped foster trust and understanding. I believe we will have more regular meetings in future. With the 95th anniversary coming up, I will be inviting all parties for another sharing session to collaborate efforts in the planning of the celebration.

With this, I have completed my report, thank you.

