



# St. Mary's Past Students' Association

## NEWSLETTER ♦ February 2008

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### Message from our Patron, Ms Catherine Wong

Dear Alumnae,

In the last half year, as I have worked more closely with our alumnae, I could not be more convinced that St. Mary's is a school full of blessings. One main reason is, as I have witnessed firsthand, our alumnae, that is you, love your school - passionately and fervently. In so many ways you have shown her your care and concern. Many of you come back to visit, to take photographs of yourself on momentous occasions in your life's achievements like graduation or getting married or to see your teachers. Some of you have given donations to set up scholarships or other school developmental needs. Many have sacrificed time for organizing activities, publishing newsletters, keeping track of and bringing together alumnae, acting as mentors for your juniors, or providing professional advice and services on accounting, architectural and legal matters, etc., etc. And for all these, we, I in particular, really feel blissful!



St. Mary's is also blessed by having a team of devoted staff members who always give their best. I have the most unfortunate task of breaking the heart-wrenching news which happened just recently. Our dear Mrs. Karen Lui, the pillar in our General Office, had been taken by God. Her sudden demise undoubtedly has been a great shock to us all. She had been, besides being there for every administrative task, big or small, acted as the contact person for PSA activities or drama ticket sales. I personally feel that I have not thanked Karen enough for her contributions while I could. This loss of a trusted and devoted member of our staff makes me feel even more appreciative of all that you have done for your alma mater, which, I will never take for granted.

May I also thank God for His provisions and plans for our big family! I, with the dedicated staff of St. Mary's, am in the course of steering St. Mary's in the best possible direction so that the staff and students work together to realize their potential and ability. I place my trust in God knowing that St. Mary's has your love and support to overcome difficult times. May God continue to bestow His blessings upon you all!

Ms. Catherine Wong  
Principal, SMCC

## Message from our Patron, Ms Maria Cheung

*This is God's will for you: He wants you to be holy. (1 Thessalonians 3,4)*

Dear Past Students,

2008 will be a memorable and remarkable year of grace and gratitude since the Canossian Missions is going to celebrate the 200th anniversary of their congregation. Moreover, this year is also the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the canonization of St. Magdalene of Canossa. While you might not take part in any of the celebration activities, I hope you would have occasions to reflect on the spirituality of our Foundress "Charity in Humility, Humility in Charity". Would it also be a chance to recall your old school days?



During this centennial year, the whole Canossian family would share the joy of celebration or attend masses on May 8. Some of you may even plan a pilgrimage to Verona. But even if you cannot do so, I would suggest you spend some time to study deeply the life and spirituality of St. Magdalene of Canossa again. The best way to celebrate this special year is to imitate and follow the footsteps of our Foundress -- to live in charity and humility.



St. Magdalene of Canossa has given us an example of holiness. Following her life of morality and material poverty, and her dedicating herself to the abandoned and the poorest, we are also called to bear witnesses to Christ in serving our little brothers and sisters. We are taught to be more compassionate and sensitive to those in need.

St. Magdalene responded to God's love and offered her life. We too have many chances in our daily lives to do good for others. How do we practise charity against hatred, selfishness, violence and isolation? The more we respond to God's love, the closer we would be to God and our holiness. We may not do great things but surely we could do tiny things with a great heart.

Let us respond to God's invitation: to become holy.

Ms. Maria Cheung  
Principal, SMCS



### In Memory of Mrs. Karen Lui

The Exco is sad to announce that our dear friend at the School Office, Mrs. Karen Lui, who had helped the PSA so much over the past years in matters big and small, had returned to God peacefully on 15 January 2008. On behalf of all alumnae, we'd like to send our heartfelt condolences to Karen's family. We are truly thankful for having worked with Karen, and we shall always miss her.



## PSA News - Mai Po Tour

Sixty PSA members with their families and friends visited Mai Po on a sunny Saturday afternoon on 1 December 2007. We met up at the campus and headed to a hundred miles away to the far end of New Territories by coaches.

Mai Po is renowned as a birdwatcher's paradise. In autumn and winter, thousands of migratory birds fly to Mai Po, including some globally endangered species such as the Saunders' Gull and the Black-faced Spoonbill.



*The group enjoyed a happy afternoon of close encounter with nature*



*Experienced guides from WWF introduced us to the wonders of the reserve*

We split into four groups

and each group was led by a WWF experienced guide. Throughout the 3-hour tour, we went to four zones including Mai Po's birdwatching hide, the *Gei wai*, the Round Table boardwalk, and the Wildlife Education Centre. Thousands of birds flocked in the blue sky, by the riverside and on tree tops. It was really an amazing sight!



*Water lilies can also be found at Mai Po*

We learnt so much about birds and plants, including water lilies and mangroves. All in all it was a very pleasant trip and everyone enjoyed this wonderful encounter with nature and wildlife.



*We spotted the rare black-faced spoonbill... can you see them too?*

## PSA News - Membership Data

Thanks to the continuous effort of our tireless Membership Secretary, we now have an active member database of 4,865 past St. Marians, spanning across 10 countries! Among them, 3,120 are contactable via email, and 1,122 opted to receive the newsletter by email.

Please note that information in our database may be shared with the school, or released to reunion organizers on special request. If you do not want your information to be shared, please inform our Membership Secretary at [stmaryspsa@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryspsa@gmail.com).

Year of Graduation (F.5)	No. of Members
1930-39	2
1940-49	4
1950-59	126
1960-69	348
1970-79	490
1980-89	524
1990-99	1,634
2000-present	1,737
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,865</b>

## PSA News - 2008 Alumnae Day Bowling Party



When was the last time you had a bowling game? 1967? 1978? 1992? Those were the days! On this year's Alumnae Day, the PSA is organizing a Bowling Party to let everyone re-live those wild and fun times!

We have reserved all the 19 lanes at the Hong Kong Bowling City at EMAX in Kowloon Bay on the afternoon of 8 March 2008 (Saturday). For a whole 3 hours, we can play unlimited games and bowl till we drop! With up to 8 persons, you can book a lane for your own team. Come dressed with a team uniform as well and you may even win the "Best Team Look" award!

Tickets are at HK\$200 per head, covering snacks, drinks and rental of bowling shoes. We encourage you to team up with your family and friends to form teams of 8 to book a lane (and enjoy a slight discount!) Lanes are limited so do act soon. We look forward to seeing you at the party!

### 2008 Alumnae Day Bowling Party

- Date : 8 March 2008 (Sat)  
Time : 2:00 - 5:00 pm  
Venue : Hong Kong Bowling City at EMAX,  
Hongkong International Trade & Exhibition Centre (HITEC)
- Price : HK\$1,500 per lane (maximum 8 players per lane)  
HK\$200 per player  
HK\$120 per child under 12  
Child under 3 - free of charge
- Reservation : Please fill in and return the Registration Form on the last page and reply before 20 February (Wed).

For enquiries, please contact our Social Convenor Ms Juliana Wong at 9034 6207, or email to [bowlingparty@stmaryspsa.org](mailto:bowlingparty@stmaryspsa.org).

For location map and transportation, please visit <http://www.emaxhk.com/transport.html>.

## Teachers' News - Sr. Ida Sala

Sr. Ida's name is familiar to generations of St. Marians. Coming to Hong Kong from Italy, after teaching for eleven years in England, Sr. Ida joined the School in 1958 as a teacher, and then returned in 1979, until she retired in 1990 after serving as the College Principal for eleven years. Since her love for St. Mary's and for her past students never abated, Sr. Ida's connection with our School has already spanned exactly half a century!



*A beaming Sr. Ida says hi to all*

Sr. Ida particularly enjoyed her life as a teacher in St. Mary's. "In the 60's, Hong Kong was not what it is today. Refugees were pouring in from the mainland China, in their hundreds of thousands. Mother Virginia Maffei, the School Principal at that time, herself a Missionary in China, expelled in 1949, was dedicated to welcoming them and offering their children the opportunity to study in a good Catholic School. I was truly impressed by the keenness of these young women to study and to learn and by their excellent behaviour," said Sr. Ida.

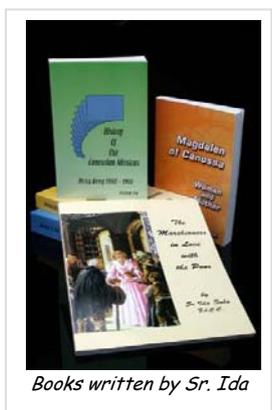
The flourishing of drama play in St. Mary's could also be traced back to the early 60's when Sr. Ida wrote a play about the life of our Founder, Magdalen of Canossa, and staged other school plays. She also encouraged the setting up of the Blessed Magdalene Club, now renamed as the Magdalen of Canossa Club, with the aim to inspire the students to follow in the footsteps of our Foundress to love and serve one another and bring relief to the poor. Other activities were also introduced, like sports, science clubs and debating societies, just to name a few. "It was a pleasure to see the enthusiasm of the students and their commitment to whatever they undertook," said Sr. Ida.



*Sr. Ida in her office with Mrs. Winnine Hung in 1983*

After a seven-year experience as Principal of Sacred Heart and five years at the Rome Headquarters, to her great joy, Sr. Ida was again assigned to St. Mary's, this time as Principal. "It was a rewarding time, made precious by the cooperation of an excellent staff and by the students." said Sr. Ida. She was an exacting Head but she loved the pupils and always tried to be honest and fair to everybody. Sister

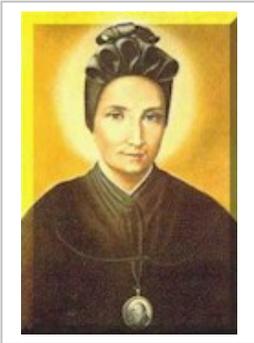
shared with us one episode which took place in the early 80's. "I was told that the students of Form 6 had done something wrong and stupidly I believed it, without checking the facts. Then I realized that the report was not correct. I knew that I must apologize so, without hesitation, I went to the class and admitted my failure. May be students in Hong Kong were not used to that (in England it was the normal thing to do), guess what? As I was about to leave the class, the girls stood up and began to sing 'She's a jolly good fellow'! Oh...that was really beautiful!"



*Books written by Sr. Ida*

After retirement, Sr. Ida kept busy by researching and writing the History of the Canossian Missions in Hong Kong and China. Her work resulted in the publication of three volumes, a copy of which she graciously presented to the PSA, together with two other books she wrote on the life of the Foundress Magdalen of Canossa. She currently resides at the Canossian Convent on Caine Road, and gets regular visits from past students and occasionally joins annual dinners and events organized by St. Mary's and Sacred Heart. Sr. Ida can be contacted at [salida@netvigator.com](mailto:salida@netvigator.com). Drop her a line when you have a moment...that will certainly give her great pleasure!

## School News - Canossian Missions 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



The Canossian Missions celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their congregation in 2008. The year also marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the canonization of our Foundress St. Magdalene of Canossa. Two thanksgiving masses will be held on 8 May 2008 (Thur), both open to past students: **School** - 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. at the SMCC School Hall; **Provincial** - 3:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. For further information please contact Sr. Veronica Fok at [veronicafok@smcc-canossian.org](mailto:veronicafok@smcc-canossian.org).

## School News - School Drama "Disenchanted Fairy"

Great news for our drama fans! The school has invited Mr. Oliver to return to spearhead the latest drama production this spring. Titled "Disenchanted Fairy", the drama is a brand new play written by Mr. Oliver. Casting has already completed and preparations are currently in progress. The play will be performed during the Drama Week from 19-26 April 2008. Get more information later from the SMCC website.



## School News - International Education Forum Held in Shanghai



*Ex-principal of Shanghai No. 3 Girls' High School introducing St. Mary's to the forum participants*

In November 2007, Ms. Amelia Tsang (Vice Principal, SMCC) and Ms. Catherine Wong (Principal, SMCC) took part in an International Education Forum on "A Comparative Research on Chinese and Foreign Girls Education" organized by the prestigious Shanghai No. 3 Girls' High School in Shanghai. Ms. Tsang conducted an English lesson which was highly regarded by observers, and Ms. Wong presented a paper on "The Exploration of the Training of Thinking Skills for Girls" amongst 12 other papers presented by principals of schools from different

countries including the U.S., New Zealand, Australia and Singapore, and scholars from universities in China. Both Ms. Tsang and Ms. Wong found the experience rewarding, being able to learn about developments in various educational issues from prestigious schools around the world.



## Opt to receive soft copies of the PSA Newsletter?



To help save paper and administrative costs, we encourage members with email access to opt for receiving electronic versions of the PSA newsletter instead. Please email the Membership Secretary at [stmaryspsa@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryspsa@gmail.com) if you'd like to help us out and opt not to receive the mailed copy. Thank you in advance.

## Class Reunion News

The **Class of 1978** is planning to have their reunion dinner either on 2 Aug 2008 (Sat) or 3 Aug 2008 (Sun). Those who would like to join please contact Betty Ko [bko28@netvigator.com](mailto:bko28@netvigator.com) / Susie Ho [ssyho@doj.gov.hk](mailto:ssyho@doj.gov.hk) / Catherine Shum [ckyshum@yahoo.com](mailto:ckyshum@yahoo.com).

Organizing a reunion for your class? Let our Membership Secretary know and we can include your news on the newsletter and the website! Email to [stmaryspsa@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryspsa@gmail.com).

### **Notice of the 2008 Annual General Meeting of St. Mary's Past Students' Association**

**Date** : 29 March 2008 (Saturday)  
**Time** : 4:30 pm  
**Venue** : Staff Common Room  
1/F Main Building,  
St. Mary's Canossian College

#### **Agenda**

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting held on 17 March 2007
2. Chairman's Report
3. Adoption of the Financial Report for the last financial year
4. Any Other Business

**Note:** Proxy forms can be downloaded from [www.stmaryspsa.org](http://www.stmaryspsa.org).



**Thank you for your continuous support to the PSA.  
The Exco would like to wish you and your family a  
Happy Year of the Rat!**

**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**2008 SMPSA ALUMNAE DAY**  
**BOWLING PARTY**  
**8 March 2008 (Saturday)**

(You can also download this form from [www.stmaryspsa.org](http://www.stmaryspsa.org))

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PSA No. (if any): \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Form 5: \_\_\_\_\_

**Enrolment** Please  where appropriate.

I would like to enrol and reserve the following places:

<u>Price</u>	<u>Number of lanes/players</u>	<u>Amount</u>
@HK\$1,500 per lane (up to 8 players only)	_____	HK\$ _____
@HK\$200 per adult	_____	HK\$ _____
@HK\$120 per child under 12	_____	HK\$ _____

**Total: HK\$**

*(Please reply before 20 February 2008)*

1. Price includes light snacks, a drink and bowling shoes rental.
2. Enrolment will be on a first-come, first-served basis.
3. You will receive a confirmation via email or telephone by 3 March 2008 (Mon).
4. Please make the cheque crossed and payable to **“St. Mary’s Past Students’ Association”**.  
*(Due to recent changes at the school office, you are kindly requested to settle payment only by cheque this time to facilitate our administration. Your cooperation is much appreciated.)*

I would like to collect my ticket(s):     From the school office     On site at  
Hong Kong Bowling City

Kindly return this reply form together with your cheque(s) to  
**St. Mary’s Past Students’ Association, 162 Austin Road, Kowloon (Attn: Ms Juliana Wong)**

For enquiries, please contact our Social Convenor Ms Juliana Wong at 9034 6207, or email to [bowlingparty@stmaryspsa.org](mailto:bowlingparty@stmaryspsa.org).