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2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Report 2017

Greetings from La Salle Residence, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. Peace and Joy is within you.

I am writing this report at La Salle Residence in Petaling Jaya as I had to return to Malaysia to reapply for a new passport as my passport got wet and the immigration in Hongkong advised me to renew my passport. In a way it is a blessing in disguised as the unexpected return to Malaysia on 21<sup>st</sup> June gave me the opportunity to attend the wake for Brother Felix Donohue RIP and be at the Requiem Mass the following day. He was my English teacher in 1963+64. I served as a teacher at La Salle PJ in 1976-77 where he was Brother Director. He was my mentor when I was headmaster and director from 1980 to 1990 and when I became the Visitor of Malaysia-Singapore-Hongkong (1991-99), I invited him to be my personal assistant and district bursar. I am very thankful that I could join with his many friends and former students who came from far and near to bid him the final farewell.

This is an exceptional year for me. Normally at this time I will be busy at LSSC Changjiao preparing for the Summer Programme but instead I am back in Malaysia. It was just 2 days ago on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June that I wrote to inform my students and their parents as well as the villagers of Changjiao that this summer's programme is cancelled as most probably I will not be back at LSSC Changjiao on 8th July for the registration of students. I want to thank all, from Malaysia, Hongkong and China, who had volunteered to be a member of the teaching team for Summer 2017. I have cancelled this summer's programme but your generosity in volunteering is much appreciated. God willing we will meet again to be at the service of youth and nation in the spirit of De La Salle.



Misty morning at Baijiang in Changjiao – The roof top of LSSC

I mentioned in my 1<sup>st</sup> Q report, I was in the Philippines on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb to attend the Senior Brothers' Assembly and after the assembly I decided to stay back to have a cataract op done to my right eye at our De La Salle University Medical Centre at Dasmariñas. I stayed at the Brothers' Residencia at DLSU-D after the op and while recuperating, I set about writing my book "PinPhonics: An Alternative Approach to Reading in English for Students in China". The first draft is more or less ready however the person I had identified to do the translation into Chinese is very busy so I have to be patient. Now that the Summer Programme is cancelled, I can delay printing the book.

This year we were late in running the post Winter weekend classes and had classes for 5 weeks only from 6<sup>th</sup> May to 4<sup>th</sup> June. We also decided to take in new students before the summer and so registration was opened to Primary 3 students, Primary 6 students, Lower Secondary 3 students for just one day on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April intending to limit the intake to just about 60 students. Double the number of students turned up during the 4 hours of registration in the morning. As you can see in the accompanying photographs, we had to run extra classes in covered space beside our main teaching hall. Thank God, most of the new students were disciplined and studious and with a few parents assisting, the 5 weeks went by smoothly. The progress made by some primary students was remarkable and I am sure they will learnt well when I can get back to Changjiao and LSSC resumes its free English tuition classes after the summer.



New students lining up



Attendance taken



You sit here



Class stand please – Good morning





Lesson in the shed



Lesson in the hall

I am delighted to report that in spite of the unusual weather changes of dry hot days, dull rainy days and sudden thunderstorms that resulted in 3 flowering spells for most of the pomelo trees, the number of fruits that survived the unusual weather conditions is remarkable. The unpredictable weather made weeding, fertilizing and spraying of insecticide more difficult and most farmers were downhearted fearing that there would be fewer fruits per tree but to their amazement and surprise when the wrapping fruits began in mid June there are more fruits hanging on the trees. It is estimated that there will be an increase of around 40% in output this year and if the price is stable there will be good harvest and respectable income for every family this September.



Pomelos ....



Ready to be wrapped





Wrapped fruits ....



A 5 year old tree fruiting

This is my 16<sup>th</sup> year in the village. It is time to “let go” and let the villagers take charge of their own affairs. At the end of May, I cut off my night lights and the whole of Baijiang was dark for a few days. Then some families put on their porch lights and we are not completely in darkness now. A rich villager who has a house in the village but does not live in the village had assured me last year that he will take over the lighting but the villagers had not approach him ... because my lighting was still on! I hope when I get back to the village next month the new lights are installed.

It is the same with clearing the watering and drainage system. At the end of last year, they noticed that I had not been working on it nor did I employ anyone to do the job. This year some villagers “informed me” that the watering and drainage system needs attention ... I did not take any action. Finally two families who were most affected took the initiative to clear their section which was the most problematic. Some times the best action is not to do anything so that those affected will take action to solve their own problem. The words of Tagore comes to mind ... Give them fish you owe them a living. Teach them to fish they make a living.

China’s National Children’s Day 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017



All dressed up for Children’s Day



Performing on stage





The SunWu Gong dance



Receiving gifts ... school bags, umbrella, books etc



BD speaking on Children's Day



Village leaders, teachers and donors.

The weather is also affecting LSSC. The heavy rain and thunderstorm caused a landslide and the retaining wall at the back of the house. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time it has happened. The water pipes to my house and to 3 other families broke. I immediately activated our emergency well water system. After a day without water, two members of the families affected came and together we rejoined the pipes ... I have learnt to wait just as they were waiting to see if I will employ someone to do the repairs. When there is a real and felt need, people will work. I will have to see how to fix up the collapsed slope when the dry season sets in.



Dislodged water pipes



Locating damaged sections





Landslip – collapsed retaining wall



Rejoining broken pipes

LSSC started as a free English tuition centre, then in response to village students needs introduced a university fees subsidy programme that has funded 26 students through university and is still supporting 4 students in the university. Those of you who have been following this mission will know that Ls Salle Student Centre also operated as La Salle Service Centre in reponse to community needs and help transform the rice farming village to a financially viable pomelo orchard farming village.

This year, the local government also made use of our grounds to give medical service to the villagers. LSSC is considered “neutral” ground where every villager feels free to come. So our village doctor approached me for permission ... 欢迎 没问题!





Medical service at LSSC



Villagers gathering for check-up



Wondering .... Should I be examined?



Doc and nurse in attendance





Weight taken ... step on!



Blood pressure ...breath normally!



Blood sample taken.



Waiting for ECG to be administered



I am still in Malaysia waiting to get a new passport. The local Dabu authorities are also trying their best to apply for a long stay permit for me. So I wait.

A big thank you to all who have encouraged me, supported me financially and morally and prayed for me these 15 years I am on mission at LSSC Changjiao. God willing our free English Tuition Classes at LSSC will resume when schools in China begin their new academic year on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September.

Take care and God bless.

As always with love in the service of youth and nation through De La Salle.

BDLiao  
2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017



Iron palm flowering



Iron palm bearing fruits!!!

There are 5 Iron Palm trees at LSSC. Folklore says that the Iron Palm bears flowers only once in a 100 years. The 5 palms at LSSC has been flowering every year since 2012. This year it is exceptional. 4 palms bear flowers and one bears fruits!