

Kia Ora, Greetings.

I would like to thank Mr. Raymond Ho for inviting me to share with you a few thoughts as a means of introduction as the new Principal of La Salle College, Kowloon.

Firstly, a little about myself. I was born and grew up on a dairy farm in the Province of Taranaki, North Island, New Zealand. My parents came to New Zealand in August 1950 from Ireland. I am the middle child of 5 children - two brothers & two sisters. After completing Primary school I attended Francis Douglas Memorial College, New Plymouth, a boarding school in the Province run by the De La Salle Brothers. At the end of Form 7 I moved to Auckland to study Economics & Geography at Auckland University, a foundation Degree for a Rural/Urban Planning. However while remaining in contact with the Brothers and helping at a homework centre at De La Salle College in Mangere, Auckland, I eventually joined the Brothers in 1980.

I have worked in Lasallian schools in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Adelaide, and Sydney. I worked in South East Asia in formation in the early 1990's where I spent time teaching English in Vietnam.

From 2000 to 2003 I was the VP Curriculum at a new Lasallian school in Bankstown, Sydney. In 2003 I moved back to New Zealand to become the Deputy Principal of De La Salle College, Mangere (Auckland), and then Principal in 2005. De La Salle College, Mangere, is the largest catholic school in New Zealand, a highly successful school punching above its weight and being nationally recognised through academic achievement, cultural achievement, and of course its national status for Rugby Union.



I will now turn to some thoughts in regards education and what I see as my role at La Salle College, Kowloon.

Max Webber, the German sociologist, suggests the word charisma refers to “*a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which s/he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman powers or qualities.*” We all know of people who have charisma, people who have that extra special dimension to their personalities which fits this definition. These are the people we are prepared to believe in and to follow. When they speak out we listen.

It is part of the role of a Lasallian school to encourage young people with leadership potential to develop the appropriate skills. Quality, service-oriented, and entrepreneurial leadership doesn't just happen.

Given the global challenges the world faces, every gram of leadership, at whatever level in every human organization, has to be nurtured so that it can engender positive change. Human flourishing has to be a

central focus of education: talent well used grows social capital, which we all rely on to make the world a better place.

*Leadership that moves a situation from good, to better, to best will happen more effectively when it is based on spirituality, values and ethics.” P. Lynch 2009 Light New Fires.*

Historically schooling has primarily focused on the teaching of content meeting the needs of a working population in a knowledge based society. Today however, society requires a ‘*knowledge plus*’ working population more able to integrate, synthesis, and critically analyze; more able to relate and tolerate; more able to innovate than regurgitate or imitate; more able to develop competencies and skills rather than acquire knowledge (Delores, UNESCO). Today effective schools provide authentic learning experiences that extend the boundaries of understanding and at the same time build the requisite competencies and skills in students needed by a particular society for its sustainable future.

By creating greater meaning in their learning experiences students become more accomplished in their academic achievements.

Global research has identified characteristics of what makes a school a good school. These schools are founded on quality relationships between teacher and student. When schools foster a belief that all students can achieve, and when these schools support teachers to collaborate and accept responsibility for the success and failure of their students; when these schools engage their parents and communities; when these schools offer learning support and enrichment experiences, then students from these schools universally astonish themselves, their teachers, and their families with their achievements.

As we embark on a new decade at La Salle College, Kowloon, it is my intent to work closely with the whole school community for we at La Salle College need to develop a vision for 2020 education to ensure that La Salle College is able to prepare strategically for the needs and expectations society (commercial, professional, civic) will have of us in 2020. Whilst Hong Kong scores highly in Mathematics and Science in the international ranking instrument, PISA, with achievement outcomes for secondary students second to Finland in terms of quality and equity for all students in all schools, it is important that we continue to adjust to retain this cutting edge and to develop the other competencies required for an innovative society, for it is in the quality of education of its young people that Hong Kong will depend in the future to retain its earning potential.

Change does not just happen, effective change requires strategic implementation. As a staff we will need to build time to have conversations around what 2020 education will look like and what will be required of us. I can then bring skill to strategically plan for the necessary development in curriculum and property needs so that we can attain these deliverables by 2020. It is my intent that La Salle College, Kowloon, retains its exemplary status within SAR through cutting-edge educational thought, innovation, leadership, and achievement.

*Let things be so arranged that the strong may have something to strive for and the weak not be overburdened.*

Once again thank you Mr. Ho for the invitation to introduce myself. I would also like to thank all the old boys who have been in touch to welcome me to the College, and for the great work, contribution, and loyalty of our old boys which I find most impressive. You know you are always most welcome at your alma mater - indeed I hope I can expect to see you visit.

With God's blessing may you and your families be well, enjoy good health, and peace.

Br. Steve

Principal