

H. K. TANG KING PO COLLEGE

25 Kennedy Road,
Hong Kong.



HONG KONG
21 - XI - 1972

My dear Confreres,

On the afternoon of 5th October 1971 our well-deserving confrere, Fr. Patrick Corcoran, passed peacefully to God.

His death came as a shock to us all, particularly so to our boys and to the many in Hong Kong and the Philippines who knew him. If however the good confrere had spoken of his ailments, we would have been aware of his heart condition. As things stood, he worked on courageously to the end as an exceptionally able teacher in the classroom and a zestful promoter of football on the playing pitches locally. He was a boys' priest, and many is the youth who recalls with regret his sudden departure from their midst. May he rest in peace!

Fr. Patrick Corcoran was born on 10th June 1928 into a family of genuine Irish folk at Limerick Junction, Ireland. His high regard for courtesy, his refinement, and his merry laugh proved that. So too his love for books of worth, his appreciation of good music, his zest in hard-fought games, his belief in goodness.

From a secondary school of the Irish Christian Brothers he came to our Aspirantate in Pallaskenry — Ballinakill, Ireland, and thence to the Novitiate at Beckford, England, where he made his Religious Profession on 15th September 1950. After his course of philosophy at Shrigley, England, he was sent to our incipient mission in the Philippines where he spent two years of full-man dedication at Tarlac and one at Mandaluyong. Very shaken in health, he was sent back to England for his studies in Theology.

Taking a year off to rehabilitate, he took to his studies in Melchet Court; and on 3rd July 1960 he was ordained priest.

Many a motto of Don Bosco's reflect the great slogan of St. John de la Salle's: "Good teachers make good schools, and good schools make good men!." Our Society has been blessed with good teachers, and will (please God!) continue to be so. But a teacher of Fr. Corcoran's calibre and versatility is not commonly found among us. His classroom was a place of delight — to himself and to his boys. His clarity of exposition, his native wit, his warmth and enthusiasm made it so; and the comforting results in the public examinations were what might be expected. In the decade he spent at Salesian School, Hong Kong, (1960-1970) the reputation of that young school reached tremendous heights; this in no small measure due to the incomparable teacher it had in the top forms.

A welcome break was made in that decade. Summer 1965 saw Fr. Corcoran back in Ireland on furlough. "In patria per salute" says the official observation. Indeed, Fr. Corcoran returned with the intention of taking out a degree in London University. He had already done some work in that direction, and very successfully. When at home, however, his condition of health had him consult a doctor. The verdict was that he should pack himself away to hospital and forget any such heavy work as studies. This Fr. Corcoran did.

On 21st August 1966 he came back to us, seemingly bubbling over with verve and well-being. Back to Salesian School he went. God only knows the sacrifice it meant to him as his family had been persuading him — and not without very valid reason — to stay on in his native Ireland. He came back, but he must have known that the sands were running out at a rate. In 1970 he asked for a change of House. A restlessness had come on which should have been more deeply read. With the boys Fr. Corcoran was still at home, but no longer very much with himself. A quieter House was finally assigned him, but one where reputation as a school of the first order was yet to be built. Fr. Corcoran bent to the work with the same good generosity, and was establishing himself as the peerless teacher and good sportsman. But the impaired heart was giving out.

On the morning of 5th October 1971 while his boys were awaiting him in their classroom, Fr. Patrick's heart was failing out. He passed away in the afternoon, despite the doctor's valiant efforts.

The funeral was a veritable triumph; nor is his tomb ever without fresh flowers from those who remember him with gratitude.

We, his confreres, trust in the good mercy of God towards Fr. Corcoran's soul and are confident that he is high above in the delights God has prepared for His good and faithfully friends.

Asking your generous suffrages, Confreres,

Yours in Don Bosco,

Rev. J. FOSTER
Rector