

THE BISHOP'S TRIBUTE TO THE LA SALLE BROTHERS

In his sermon on Thursday, January 7, during the Mass of thanksgiving for the return of La Salle College building, His Lordship the Bishop commemorated not only the immediate occasion of the celebration, but also the great work done by the La Salle Brothers of the Christian Schools in the 85 years that they have spent in Hong Kong.

"We are here," His Lordship began, "to commemorate the re-opening of La Salle College and to offer God our most sincere thanks for it. The Brothers feel happy at being able to make again full use of their beautiful premises and thus carry out, with these greater facilities, the task of educating their pupils. We heartily congratulate them; we feel honoured for being invited to share their joy, and wish that this day may mark for them another era of new achievements and successes."

BISHOP RAIMONDI'S HOPES FULFILLED

His Lordship then recalled the unceasing efforts of the first Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong, Mgr. Timolean Raimondi, "to establish Catholic schools in the Colony, and the successes he achieved, chiefly with the help of the Christian Brothers."

Bishop Raimondi "was convinced that education requires a moral basis and that religion is the basis of all morality. On this principle he held very firmly, and did not hesitate to fight against difficulties and objections, no matter from what quarters they were raised."

"The arrival of the La Salle Brothers in 1875 and their immediate success added new power to the Bishop's conviction. They more than fulfilled his hopes. . . . Their beginnings were humble, but God blessed their efforts and the reputation their school gained in a short time gave it an eminent place among the leading schools of Hong Kong."

BROTHER AIMAR BUILDS LA SALLE

His Lordship next reviewed briefly the early history of the Brothers in Hong Kong—the matshod school in Glenealy, the first solid school building in Robinson Road, the earthquake that forced the abandonment of that building, the purchase of

the old Club Germania in Kennedy Road, where the successes of St. Joseph's College, during the last forty years, do not need to be emphasised.

"The plan for a large college in Kowloon was for a long time cherished by the Brothers, and never abandoned, though events delayed its realization. . . . When Brother Aimar, a man of farsighted vision and steadfast energy, was Director of St. Joseph's College, the problem was faced with typical thoroughness. Having found a suitable site for a school in the hills of Kowloon, he acquired it, in

April 1928—an area of ten acres, at the cost of \$120,000 . . . and the foundation stone of La Salle College was laid by Archbishop Costantini, then Apostolic Delegate to China, in November 1930. The new College was opened for classes in 1931, and the chapel blessed by my Predecessor. It is recorded that Bishop Valtorta expressed to the Brothers his satisfaction by saying: "Great though my hopes and expectations of the Christian Brothers were, I never dared to expect such a magnificent building as La Salle College."

THANKS OF THE DIOCESE

"His praise was fully true and deserved, and has been since repeated by all. And I am glad to witness that the admiration and gratitude of my Predecessor and myself for the La Salle Brothers have always been shared by all members of our Catholic community and by the whole Colony of Hong Kong."

"It is indeed most gratifying to see that not only the thirteen hundred pupils who attend this college at present, feel indebted to their teachers, but also that past pupils, educated by the

Christian Brothers and carefully prepared for a successful career in life, do not forget the days passed in their colleges and constantly treasure the valuable lessons and stimulating examples received from their teachers in the classrooms and outside. This goes to show how the Brothers can endear themselves to their students and how past pupils look eagerly forward to occasions for expressing their lasting gratitude.

SECRET OF BROTHERS' SUCCESS

"Of course, the secret of the Christian Brothers' successes is well-known to us.—Their model is Christ, the Educator; and following the lead of their holy Founder, they are trained to realize the nobility as well as the difficulties of their task. They know they have to be like good sowers who throw generous handfuls of the good wheat into the furrows of their pupils' mind; like skilful gardeners who tend their plants and flowers with loving care and understanding. . . .

"Students are indeed like flowers blossoming in the spring of life, men in miniature, who need to be guided and raised above human, spiritual and moral mediocrity.

"To their pupils, the Brothers offer the perennial example of an unblemished christian life and of religious observance—an example in itself more fruitful than spoken words. They endeavour to copy in themselves the examples of Christ, the true and perfect teacher; and by their holy vocation they are inspired to be and to act well above all personal interests or material gains.

"To them, therefore, beautifully apply the words of the Holy Scripture: Bright shall be the glory of wise counsel as the radiance of the sky; starry-bright for ever—who have taught many way (Dan., 12, 3)."

SYMBOLIC OPENING



His Lordship Lawrence Bianchi, Bishop of Hong Kong, opens the exhibition of La Salle College boys' artistic work that symbolized the return of the College to its own building after ten years of exile to temporary quarters.