



St. Joseph's Institution

Looking Forward Since 1852

PRESS RELEASE

St Joseph's Institution Unveils New Heritage Gallery to Commemorate Singapore's Bicentennial and Tercentenary of its Founder

7 August 2019 – St. Joseph's Institution (SJI) is unveiling a new heritage gallery today, in commemoration of Singapore's bicentennial year and the Tercentenary¹ of the Founder of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools – St. John Baptist de La Salle. Named **Missio 1852**, the gallery showcases 167 years of Josephian history and Lasallian heritage, tradition and community in Singapore. This project is supported by the National Heritage Board and the Singapore Bicentennial Office.

La Salle Brother Gregory Thomas Lim, FSC, will officiate the opening of **Missio 1852** with the ringing of the original brass school bell from the former SJI campus at Bras Basah Road. 95-year-old Brother Gregory is the oldest La Salle Brother in Singapore and was a former teacher who taught Moral Instruction and Bible Knowledge in SJI and St. Patrick's School in the 1970s.

"Missio' is the Latin word for 'mission'. Being the first Catholic school founded in Singapore, we have chosen this name to remember our beginnings, to celebrate our school and to continue believing in the Catholic, Lasallian education that SJI provides for all Josephians to become people of integrity and people for others", says Principal Fr. (Dr) Adrian Danker, SJ, an alumnus from Class of 1981.

This mission began in 1852, when six Brothers, in the footsteps of their founder St. John Baptist de La Salle, arrived from Europe to provide for the educational needs of the poor in Singapore, at the invitation of a French Catholic priest, Rev. Fr. Jean-Marie Beurel, MEP. The school was to become the first missionary establishment of the La Salle Brothers in the Far East. Fr. Beurel who was working in Singapore in the 1840s, offered a former chapel for the Brothers to run their school. On 22 July 1852, St. John's School, as SJI was then called, started as a free school at Bras Basah Road that depended on the support of the public. As the enrolment for the school had increased significantly, the cornerstone for the new school was laid on 19 March 1855 (Feast of St Joseph). From this date, the School was named St. Joseph's Institution.

For over 167 years, SJI has nurtured thousands of men and women who have served the society locally and globally. **Missio 1852** celebrates the contributions and achievements of the school and of these alumni who have served the society in different ways throughout the century. **"Missio 1852 will be an avenue for all Josephians to learn about the history, developments and milestones achieved by the school, where they can situate themselves within the SJI story and develop an appreciation of the SJI education for the present and future."**, says Mrs Nevina Ho, Head, SJI Heritage gallery project.

¹ The Holy See has declared 2019 a Jubilee Year* in honour of the 300th anniversary of the death of Saint John Baptist De La Salle, Patron of Christian Teachers. The Jubilee Year began on 17 November 2018 and will conclude on 31 December 2019, the end of the Tercentenary and Year of Lasallian Vocations. (www.lasalle.org/en/2018/05/1719-2019-300lasalle/)

A School of the De La Salle Brothers

Enabling youth in a Lasallian community to learn how to learn and learn how to live; empowering them to become men & women of integrity and men & women for others.

38 Malcolm Road, Singapore 308274

Telephone: (+65) 6250 0022 • Fax: (+65) 6253 3640 • Website: www.sji.edu.sg

The highlights of *Missio 1852* include:

1. **Profiles of distinguished Josephians** – Thousands of illustrious Josephians have graduated from the gates and halls of SJI since 1852. Amongst them include Former 7th President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam, DPM Teo Chee Hean, Mr Philip Yeo, Prof Leo Tan Wee Hin, Prof Jeremy Monteiro, Justice Chan Seng Onn, whose profiles are featured in *Missio 1852*.
2. **The Brothers' Logbook** – The La Salle Brothers meticulously kept annual logbooks such as these, detailing notable events like inter-school competitions, important visitors to the school, spiritual bouquets and civics group meetings. It was the practice for the Brother Director to keep a diary/logbook to record key events throughout the school year, to help him when he prepares the annual report to be sent to Rome.
3. **The Founder's Banner** – As part of the school's emphasis on rituals and symbolism, this Founder's banner was frequently used in events like the celebration of the apparition of our Lady of Fatimah in the 1950s. Out of the traditional three banners used, only this one remains. These banners were originally stored away in a camphor wood chest in the Brothers' Quarters.
4. **The Grandfather Clock that has survived the Japanese Occupation** – This clock once stood on the verandah of the Brothers' House and called all therein to prayers and class. During WWII, shrapnel damaged the clock and the marks have been preserved in its restoration. Holes on both sides indicated where shrapnel entered the clock, hit the back of the pendulum and exited on the opposite side.

Missio 1852 is open to students and staff during school hours during term time. To celebrate the opening of the Heritage Gallery, *Missio 1852* will be open to SJI alumni on 3 Saturdays in August – 17, 24 and 31 August 2019, from 10 am to 2 pm. (visit www.sji.edu.sg for details)

St. Joseph's Institution (SJI)

Founded by the De La Salle Brothers in 1852, St. Joseph's Institution (SJI) is an independent Catholic school, whose mission is to nurture students to learn how to learn and to learn how to live, so that they can be empowered to grow into men and women of integrity and men and women for others. For more information, visit www.sji.edu.sg
