



**In Memoriam – Fr John Moran, S.J.
(August 22, 1905-April 30, 1991)
Taught at Wah Yan College, Kowloon, 1949-1988**

A. From the Sunday Examiner, May 10, 1991

Father John Moran S.J. died in St. Teresa's Hospital on 30 April 1991 after a short illness.

Father Moran was born in Dublin, Ireland, on 22 July 1905 and educated by the Dominican Sisters and the Jesuits.

He entered the Jesuits in Ireland in 1923 and, after novitiate, university studies and philosophy, volunteered for the mission of the Irish Jesuits in Hong Kong.

He arrived in Hong Kong in the Autumn of 1931 and went to Shiu Hing, then a mission of the Portuguese Jesuits, to learn Cantonese.

The following year he was back in Hong Kong at the South China Regional Seminary in Aberdeen.

He returned to Ireland for his theological studies and was ordained priest there in 1939.

He was back in Hong Kong just before the outbreak of the Japanese war. At first he spent some time in the Aberdeen seminary and then for the rest of the war period moved to the French enclave of Kwong Chau Wan on the south coast. He remembered his years spent there as being some of the best of his life.

Recalled to Hong Kong at the end of war, he was chaplain in the Queen Mary Hospital and then went to Canton.

By the Autumn of 1949, all except four Jesuits withdrew from Canton. Father Moran taught for a while at a feeder school for Wah Yan College in Nelson Street, Kowloon. He then took over editorship of the Far East Messenger, a monthly magazine started by Father Terence Sheridan SJ. It ceased publication in 1953.

In 1952 Father Moran moved to the newly-built Wah Yan College on Waterloo Road. The room he moved into he was to occupy for the next 39 years until his death.

He joined the teaching staff and continued to teach long after his official retirement.

Father Moran is particularly remembered for his gentleness and kindness to all and for the hospitality he extended to visitors.

He spent many hours hearing confessions, being in his confessional at practically every Mass said in St. Ignatius Chapel.

His simplicity of life was legendary among his fellow-Jesuits.

A few years ago he suffered a stroke which severely impaired his memory. A few days before his death he was admitted to St. Teresa's Hospital with breathing problems.

A funeral Mass, presided over by Cardinal Wu, was celebrated at Wah Yan Kowloon on 6 May.

**SUNDAY
EXAMINER** 10 May 1991
Catholic News in Hong Kong

B. Photographs, 1952-1988



FORM I A (56-57)

Top row. Cha Mau Sing, Chan Hwung Chuen, Yu Wan Sang, J., Sun Tai Keung, J., Francis Lie, Frank Fung, Ng Ping Cheung, Chiu Wah Kwong, Kwan Ying Wai P., Lam Sing Kiu, A., Chan To Ming, Leung Woon Chuen.
3rd row. Fok Kee Sau, Chan Chiu Yin, Cheung Chi Keung, Liu Kwok Chi, Choy Siu Ying, Cheung Che Keong, M., Tse Ting Cheung, C., Tse Chung Sang, P., Lai Ping Kuen, M., Lau Ping Yuen.
2nd row. Lee Wen Hao, Poon Tak Ming, J., Lee Ping Hon, J., Ho Ping Kwong, Lai Tat Chung, B., Poon Hon Wai, P., Chas Ming Lee, Yang Yu Hum, Auyang Siu Lee, Lo Kwong Chi, P., Lam Wing Cheung, S.
Seated. Ho Shu Yip, Wu Tse Wai, Fung Ding Keung, D., Ip Kam Hung, Fr. Moran, Sun Sai Chong, Fan Key Yam, Lee Sing Lim, P., Ho Chue Kwong.

F1A, 1956-1957



THE STAFF

1952-1953, Staff – 2nd row from top – 1st right



1987-1988, Staff – 2nd row from top – 1st right



"I Baptize Thee"

1954-1955, baptizing students



Fr. Moran.

1969, meditating



1963-1964, happily bicycling

Mr. and Mrs. C. K. Leung.



1968-1969, attending a wedding



1971-1972, chatting with the boys at the chemistry lab



1977-1978, with Mr Ho and students



From “Jesuits in Hong Kong, South China & Beyond” by Fr Morrissey, S.J. p 767 – year unknown – front table – 2nd left

C. The following obituary is from The Shield 39 (1991)

R.I.P.



**IN
MEMORY
OF**

**FR. JOHN MORAN, S.J.
(1905-1991)**

LIGHT-HEARTED, FAST AND FREE

Words: FR. HAROLD NAYLOR, S.J.

Any student who studied here from the years 1949 to 1988 will remember MO LUN San Foo. He walked very fast, with a twinkle in his eyes. He taught very rapidly to cover the course in time. With a smile on his face and for any excuse, he would give the class a free period! He did not like imposing himself on others, and nothing gave him greater joy than to see people free — to be able to play.

He had taught Religious Knowledge classes from the days of Nelson Street in 1949. He used to teach Form Six English, and all will remember his teaching of grammar and his dictation exercises. Since the Sixties, he taught Form Four, and though in 1971, when he reached the age of full retirement, he still continued to teach a few periods each day until 1988! Soon after, he had a stroke, when his younger brother, Professor of Church History in Melbourne, Fr. Val Moran had passed away. After His recovery from the stroke, he hardly ever came down from the Fathers' Quarters. He was very quiet, and apart from sleeping and eating he spent most of the day praying in the Chapel.

He was born in Dublin 1905 and studied at Belvedere College, before joining the Jesuits in 1923. He volunteered for work in South China and came to Hong Kong in 1931. He returned to Ireland to study Theology in 1934 and was ordained a priest on 24th June, 1937. He returned to Hong Kong and spent

some years in Guangzhou before coming to Nelson Street in 1949. He was in the same room in Wah Yan for 38 years! His life was very simple, and so were his tastes. He read much, mostly novels, and used to smoke ten cigarettes a day until 1971 when he gave up smoking completely. To the very end, he kept his style of life eating very little, but always drinking cups of coffee — perhaps as many as twenty a day!

Fr. Moran served in many capacities during his long life. He was Editor of the school magazine “The Shield”. He was Editor of the “Fast East Messenger”. He was a Chaplain in Hong Kong during the war and he was a faithful supporter of the Scouts — going out to say Mass on Sundays when they were out camping. In the Community, for many years, he looked after any guests that came to stay with us. He was always very kind and showed great care and concern for them.

He spent much of his time hearing Confessions. It could be said that he heard Confessions at almost every Mass said in the School Chapel until 1988, as many Catholics will remember. His heart was set on helping people to be good Catholics. As Jesuits we remember him as the “saint” of the Community. He was always there, smiling and welcoming, helpful to all, always listening kindly, with never a harsh remark, and always devoted to his prayers.

He said Mass fast. Everything he did was fast. He would smile whenever he could finish ahead of time. He sometimes omitted the sermon at Mass, to make it easier for people! His work is now done — all examinations are over. He died of a heart attack in St. Teresa’s Hospital on 30th April, 1991, after being in hospital for two days. However, two years previously, he had had a stroke and was almost an invalid for the past two years in Wah Yan. There is now freedom and holidays for him, and the joy and the play of everlasting life, which he taught and longed for.

His funeral mass was held in St. Ignatius Chapel at 2 p.m. on 6th May, 1991. There were over 300 people present, over one third of whom were teachers and students. Cardinal Wu with Archbishop Dominic Tang presided with about 50 priests, with the attendance of a good number of Brothers and Sisters. Of the thirty teachers present, six had been taught by him and five were fully retired, knowing him forty years ago.

We are grateful to have known such a wonderful Priest and Teacher, who served so faithfully and generously in Wah Yan College, and in the Church for so many years. He will be gratefully remembered by all of us. May he rest in peace.



D. Memories

By the way, I don't think I can talk about English teachers without mentioning Father Moran, who was my form master in 1A. When I started that year, I really knew nothing about English grammar. The drills we went through on voices, tenses, diagramming sentences, etc. proved to be indispensable for me when it came to writing something that made sense. He more than anyone else laid a foundation for me, and for that I am eternally grateful.

And who could ever forget his use of Doris Day's "Whatever Will Be, Will Be" to teach direct and indirect speech?

When I was just a little girl, I asked my mother, what will I be? (Direct)

When I was just a little girl, I asked my mother what I would be. (Indirect)

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Looking back on my Wah Yan years, I'd have to say Form 1 was the most significant with respect to my later life and career (as a civil servant in San Francisco). The lion's share of the credit must go to Father Moran, who was Form Master and English teacher. I did not have much contact with him outside the classroom, but do remember that he was kind and patient when teaching us.

It was what he taught, and how he did it, that had such a profound effect on me. When I started the year, I really had no concept of the rudiments of the English language. Whatever training I had received was haphazard. Somehow, within one school year, he inculcated in me just about all the rules of grammar that would serve me for the next half century.

He did not spend a lot of time on vocabulary, figuring that we could always go to the dictionary, but he drilled us on the basic rules of grammar: voices, tenses, verb conjugation, and sentence diagramming and construction. It was this last that did the most good, as it is not merely a matter of writing confidently, but being able to think clearly when putting pen to paper.

At the time, I did not see the point of this constant drilling, but subsequently I realized that it was the only way someone as ill-prepared as I was could have been taught.

The best tribute I can pay to Father Moran, the most influential teacher I ever had, is to write this, because when I look back on what I have written, I see the results of his lessons in every sentence.

The above reminiscences are those of Rodney Auyeung Siu Lee ('61)

I am one of the students who owe it to Fr Moran for what we are today.

I do not remember if I was in form 2 or form 3 when Fr Moran was teaching us the Bible. He taught us in Cantonese. He told us when he first came to Hong Kong, he was sent to the seminary in Cheung Chau (?) where he learned Chinese for several years (?) Though he had an accent, Fr Moran knew a lot of Chinese words I did not know. He often told us he preferred listening to soccer games broadcast in Chinese because the Chinese sentence structure was more direct and he could easily grasp the situation in hand.

When I was in form 3, Fr Moran tried to help me, a lost sheep. Every morning at 7 or 7:30 for at least 30 minutes for several months, he would take the time to teach me catechism in a private room. I was subsequently baptized. I also remember Fr Moran taught us grammar. When he was teaching a particular part of speech, he would want us to use it a lot in our composition. This time, he was teaching us the gerund. In a composition, I practically and profusely used all kinds of gerunds, in my estimation, 90% of the sentences having gerunds. As a result, I got an unthinkable 100% for my competition. As some of you may remember the way he pronounced some words with an accent. He pronounced immediately "immejiately"; obediently, "obejiently"; and literature "literarchore". Sometimes when we laughed, he tried to soften his accent. Fr Moran used to hand out candies/chocolates to commend students if they had done well in a test or dictation. I guess a lot of us were happy recipients.

Fr Moran hated the communists. In 1973 when I was in Hong Kong, I asked him to go for lunch at the YMCA across the street from our school. During lunch, he talked a lot about the communists and showed his dislike. Did this have anything to do with his former stint on the mainland?

In or about 1982, I told him in correspondence that I had misplaced my copy of the 1961 Year Book. He immediately sent an old copy to me. After that, we were not in contact, mainly due to my laziness. I was sad when I later learnt that Fr Moran had Alzheimer's. He was not teaching but was still helping in the church. Often times when he was going to his room in WYK, he ended up in somebody else's. Fr Moran subsequently passed on in the early 1990's (?) and was buried in the Happy Valley Cemetery(?). I regret that I have not yet gone to pay respect.

Gabriel Lau Ping-Yuen ('61)

Compiled by Wong Hin-Shing, with the assistance of Yu Fong-ying, February 8, 2012