



# Preface

At the closing ceremony of the Year of Evangelization on the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord 2005, Bishop Joseph Zen officially declared that the closing ceremony is not the end of evangelization, but rather the commencement of a new evangelization culture.

The envisaged new evangelization culture calls upon all members of the church from all walks of life and circumstances to actively participate with one heart and one mind in various ways and means in the evangelization mission of the church, and thereby bring to even greater fruition the evangelization endeavours first begun by the numerous missionaries over one hundred years ago.

We are grateful to Fr. Louis Ha, archivist of our diocese, for having prepared for us a fully illustrated pamphlet entitled "The History of Evangelization in Hong Kong - Wun-yiu, Ting-kok, Yim-tin-tsai", just when we are about to promote a new evangelization culture in the Year of Evangelization. This pamphlet draws heavily on Fr. Ha's professional research on the history of the missionaries in Hong Kong, and provides enlightening background information to the missionary activities in the three villages in the New Territories. Fr. Ha's pamphlet also helps us to capture vividly the evangelizing zeal of the missionaries and boosts our confidence in evangelization.

After the missionary activities in the New Territories had been well established, the missionaries gradually turned their focus to Kowloon which was experiencing a rapid increase in the population about hundred years ago. The Rosary Church, the St. Francis of Assisi Church and the St. Teresa's Church which are celebrating respectively their centenary, 50th and approaching 75th anniversary this year are the fruitful outcomes of the missionary activities began over a hundred years ago in the Tsimshatsui, Kowloon Tong and Shumshuipo areas.

To encourage us to carry on with the evangelizing zeal of the missionaries in the past one hundred years, the Diocesan Ad Hoc Committee for the Year of Evangelization once again obtained the kind assistance of Fr. Ha to publish an extension to the current series "The History of Evangelization in Hong Kong". It is ardently hoped that the planned publication will provide us an added impetus in launching the new evangelization culture and bring about a fruitful evangelization in Hong Kong.

Fr. Ferdinand Lok  
Chairman

Diocesan ad hoc Committee for The Year of Evangelization  
Feast of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, 1st October, 2005.



This pamphlet is a continuation of the one published in May this year - "History of Evangelization in Hong Kong: Wun Yiu, Ting Kok, and Yim Tin Tsai". This will focus on the work of the Catholic missionaries from the New Territories to Kowloon areas.

Starting from the 20th century, population in Hong Kong began to increase quickly and Kowloon was developed as the base in backing up commercial activities in Hong Kong Island. In this regard, industrial, commercial, and residential districts gradually prospered and thus the work of evangelization was also spread to Kowloon.

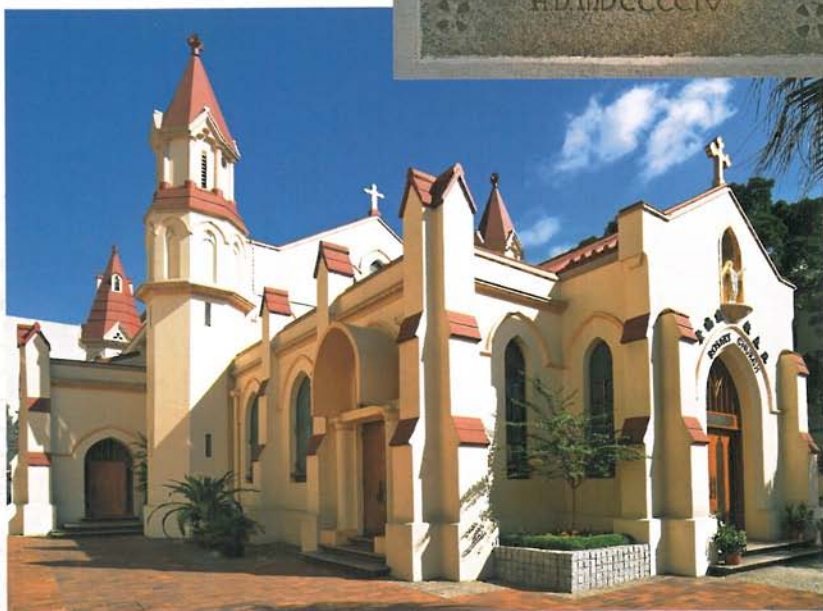
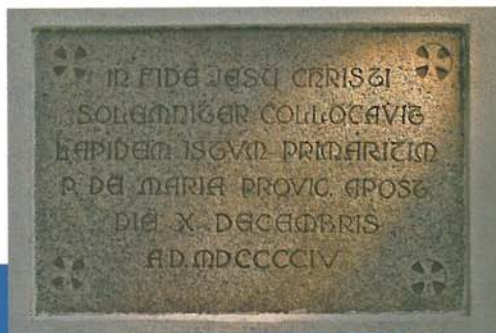
The first to be established was the Rosary Church in Tsim Sha Tsui. The priests in this church actively evangelized in the adjacent areas, covering Hung Hom and Yau Ma Tei as well as moving northwards to include Kowloon City, Kowloon Tong, Sham Shui Po and so on. Not long afterwards, churches were respectively built in these areas and were separated from the Rosary Church to become independent units. From the 1950's, St. Teresa Church in Kowloon Tong surpassed all churches in Kowloon area to become the biggest church in size as well as in number of faithful. The former location of St. Francis of Assisi Church was situated in Kowloon City as early as the 1860's but it went through several relocations until it finally settled at its present location in Shek Kip Mei nearby the site of disaster two years after the fire in 1953.

Today, in the 21st century, the missionary work of the Catholic Church in Kowloon has now been divided into twenty-two districts, stretching from Hang Hou, the eastern end of the Kowloon Peninsular to the western end at Cheung Sha Wan. The present prosperity was resulted from the development of the work done by the three churches described in this pamphlet. If the readers can pay personal visits to these churches of historical importance, they would certainly experience the merits of the hard works by the missionaries and would also encourage themselves to follow their footsteps.

# Tsui Sha Tsui

After the Opium War, by the Treaty of Nanking (1842) and the Treaty of Peking (1860) the Ching government submitted Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsular south of Boundary Street to the British rule. Catholic missionaries previously working in Macau came to Hong Kong and focused their work of evangelization only in Tai Po, Sai Kung, and the areas which were under the rule of the Ching government, other than taking care pastorally of Catholic British soldiers from Ireland and the Portuguese Catholics from Macau who were working in Hong Kong.

*The Rosary Church which celebrates its centennial establishment (2005). Above picture is the foundation stone laid in 1904, embedded inside the church above the main entrance.*



Chim sha Tsui

Chim sha Tsui  
七海  
Tso  
五  
Tso  
大

From 1970's to 1980's, British government in Hong Kong started to build roads in the southern part of Kowloon Peninsular. On the one hand, the industries and fishery in Hung Hom and Yau Ma Tei began to develop; on the other hand, business districts, residential blocks, and mansions were also constructed in Tsim Sha Tsui, which was lying closest to Hong Kong Island. The Cannossa Sisters from Italy, who have been serving Hong Kong for over 20 years, have established their convent as early as 1887 and built a school as well as a clinic in Yau Ma Tei to be used as their base in serving districts in Kowloon. Three years later, they set up another evangelizing station in Hok Yuen Street in Hung Hom and established a school called "The Angel of Cannossa". The present school building was reconstructed in 1958.

The works of evangelization by the Cannossa Sisters were well appreciated by the missionaries and the faithful. A Portuguese Catholic (Dr. Anthony Simplicio Gomes) even subsidized the sisters in purchasing a piece of land near to Austin Road, close to the shore and moved the former shabby school in Yau Ma Tei to the present location of St. Mary's School. A house called "Emmaus" was also built for conducting students' extra-curriculum activities.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Boxers Movement in Mainland China was causing anti-foreigners and anti-Christianity sentiments. In planning for military intervention, the British government transferred British soldiers from India to station in Kowloon for imminent action, and among these soldiers, there were over 200 Catholic faithful. Fr. John M. Spada (1867-1950) who lived on Hong Kong Island was sent to Kowloon once per week to celebrate Sunday Mass for these soldiers by means of using a sitting room in "Emmaus". Even though these soldiers stayed here for a very short period of time, Masses continued to be celebrated in Kowloon on every Sunday since then.



*Fr. John M. Spada*



As time went by, the inhabitants on Kowloon Peninsular continued to increase. Many of them were Portuguese Catholics who earnestly and positively petitioned for building a church. Hence, the foundation of Rosary Church was laid while its construction was commenced on 10 December, 1904. The opening of the church was planned on a date after five months and its consecration was to be performed on 8 May, 1905, the Feast of Our Lady of Pompeii. Since the generous donors of the Rosary Church, Dr. Gomes and his wife Helen, venerated Our Lady of Pompeii in south Italy, they wished to celebrate its opening on this feast day in memory of Our Lady of Pompeii. Pompeii was a small town that was completely buried

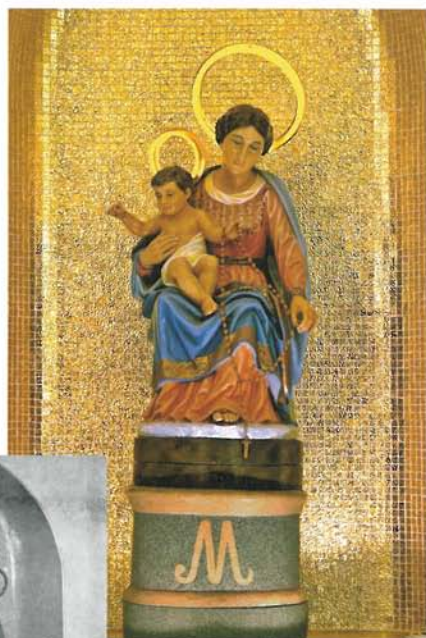
overnight by volcanic lava and ashes during the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in the 1st century. It was only in the 19th century that archeologists planned to excavate this town. At that



*The bronze monument in memory of Dr. Gomes' donation was embedded on the wall to the right outside the church.*

time, a lawyer named B. Longo (1841-1926) spent great efforts in building a basilica in this re-developed area in promoting the Rosary prayer. Later it was turned into a place for pilgrimage. Thus, a title was given to the Blessed Mother as Our Lady of the Rosary. In 1980, this lawyer was also beatified as Blessed Longo. Likewise, it was the wish of Dr. Gomes to name the church in Tsim Sha Tsui as the Rosary Church because he also aimed at promoting the Rosary prayer. However, reality was contrary to his wish since the construction of the church was completed after the 19th, so the consecration ceremony had to be deferred.

The statue of Our Lady holding the Infant Jesus situated behind the main altar was called Our Lady of the Rosary. Originally, her left hand was downward and holding the rosary beads for St. Catherine of Sienna (1347-1380) who knelt to her left side. The Infant Jesus was also holding the rosary beads for St. Dominic (1170-1221) who knelt on the right side. (See black/white photo insert) In the past, the statues of these two saints were put together, but after the church went through several renovations, these statues were lost.



*The former statue of Our Lady holding the Infant Jesus with St. Dominic and St. Catherine at her sides.*

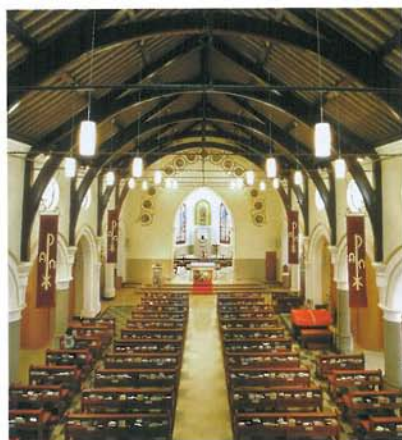




*Fifteen meditative mysteries of the Rosary prayer started from "Annunciation"*

On the arched wall above the main altar were fifteen round icons portraying the fifteen decades of the Rosary prayer for meditation, and respectively illustrating each of the five decades of the Joyful, Sorrowful, and the Glorious Mysteries, starting from the "Annunciation". The late Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) added to this prayer five Luminous Mysteries which can be five creative themes that the Rosary Church may consider to include since it bears the important task of promoting the Rosary prayer.

Even though it underwent several renovations, both the exterior designs and the internal structures of this church had not been changed. However, due to reforms in liturgy and technological advancement, facilities in the church for performing liturgy prior



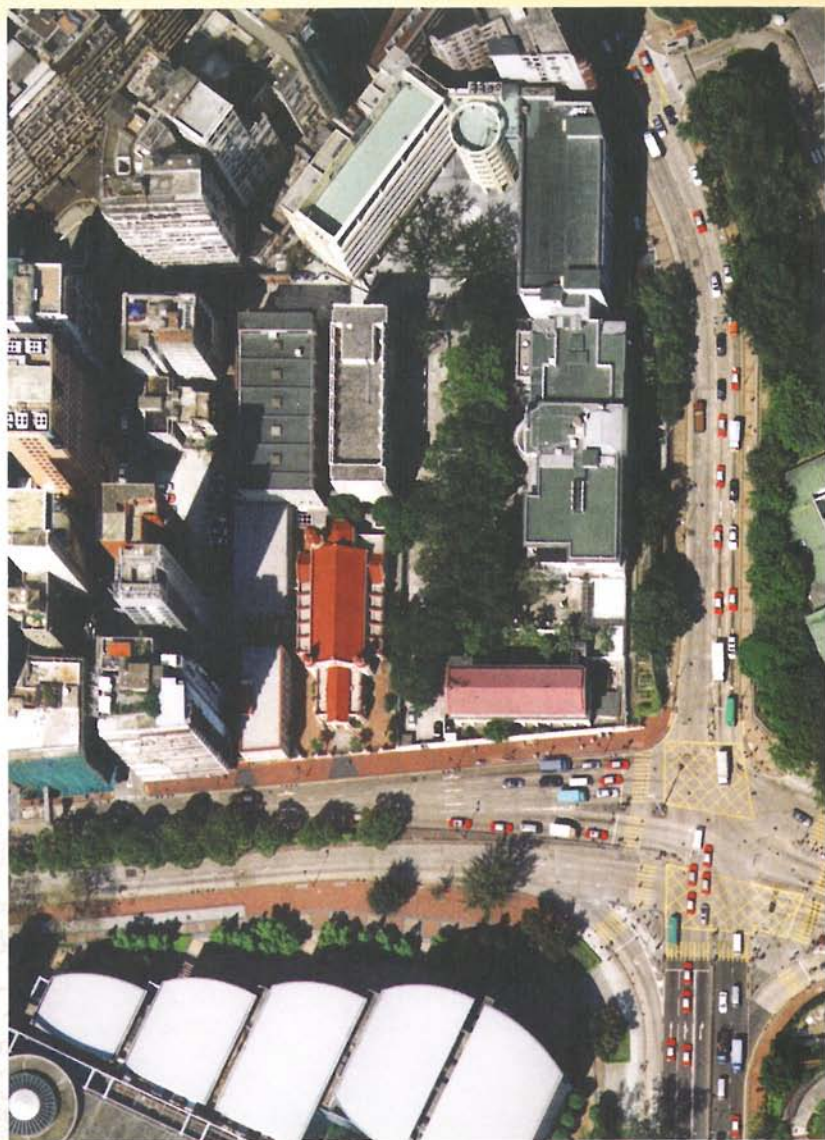


to Vatican Council II in the 1960's, have been altered. The most apparent alteration was the disappearance of the pulpit which was hinged to the stone pillar on the left side of the former altar. Instead, a baptismal font was solemnly placed at the most prominent spot after entrance to the church. Behind the altar, stained glass windows with abstract impression created an atmosphere belonging to the future. In its interior, girders of the roof showed a clear profile while the dark brown arch and angular structures combining the wooden colour of the kneeling stools, reflected a paradoxical feeling of warmth and detachment.



*The baptismal font*





*Aerial view of Tsim Sha Tsui (2004) In this photograph, the most prominent structure with an orange roof like a cross and directly facing Chatham Road is the Rosary Church. St. Mary's College is located to its right, facing Austin Road.*



To the left side of the exterior, the spacious and luminous hall with a capacity of over 200 was the result of the recent renovation. The Rosary Church was the first station in the development of the Roman Catholic Church in Kowloon and it was used to be the meeting place for all the missionaries. As the Church developed to other areas in Kowloon, the priests in the Rosary Church strived to take up a leading role. The readers may wonder why Fr.



*Fr. Paul Lu Keung-Yi*

Paul Lu (1864-1938), resident at the Rosary Church, was sent by the Catholic Church to promote the work of evangelization in Shau Ki Wan on Hong Kong Island. In fact, land transport on Hong Kong Island in those days was not convenient at all; instead, taking a ferry from Tsim Sha Tsui to Shau Ki Wan was much more feasible.

Within the boundary of the Rosary Church Parish, three women religious orders had respectively chosen their starting places of development in Kowloon. Apart from the Cannossa Order from Italy which set up her basis even earlier than the Rosary Church, there were also the Maryknoll Sisters from the U.S.A. and the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception from Canada.

In 1921, when the Maryknoll Sisters first came to Hong Kong, they rented a 2-storey red brick house at no. 19, Chatham Road next to the Rosary Church. Two years later, they moved to no. 13, Austin Road, a house which belonged to the Maryknoll Fathers at that time, and they also established a nursery school afterward.

In 1928, when the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception came to Hong Kong and established Tak Shun School, the Maryknoll Sisters gave their house in Austin Road to them and moved the nursery school to no. 2 Kimberly Road to extend their education service up to primary six. Later, these religious

orders grew as the Hong Kong society developed and they expanded to the districts in north Kowloon Peninsular.

At the beginning, the faithful in the Rosary Church were mainly foreigners including military officers and policemen from Britain, soldiers from India, merchants from Spain and the Portuguese immigrants from Macau. The Chinese residents clustered in Kowloon City, Yau Ma Tei, and Shum Shui Po. Gradually, faithful of different nationalities mingled together in the Catholic spirit of the church. A community of worshippers in the same faith was slowly formed, comprised of different races. Firstly, Our Lady of the Rosary Association was formed to promote the Rosary prayer. Later, Prayer Group, Pious Daughters of Our Lady, Legion of Mary, Women's League, and Youth Association were established. Some active faithful even went a step further in providing social service to the poor. St. Vincent de Paul Association set up its branch as one of the early lay association in the Rosary Church, aiming at doing charity works, sponsoring children, subsidizing poor families, and burying the dead whose families could not afford their funerals.

Apart from the faithful in Tsim Sha Tsui area, the priests in the Rosary Church also had to look after Kowloon City district (since 1924) and Kwun Tong district (since 1925) until completion of St. Teresa Church in Prince Edward Road in 1932. From 1930 onwards, their pastoral ministry and work of evangelization also included Shum Shui Po. From 1938, these priests had to look after the fishermen and workers in Yau Ma Tei areas until completion of St. Paul's Church in Tung Kun Street in 1970. That was why the Rosary Church could be called as "the Mother Church of the Catholics in Kowloon".





# Kowloon Tong



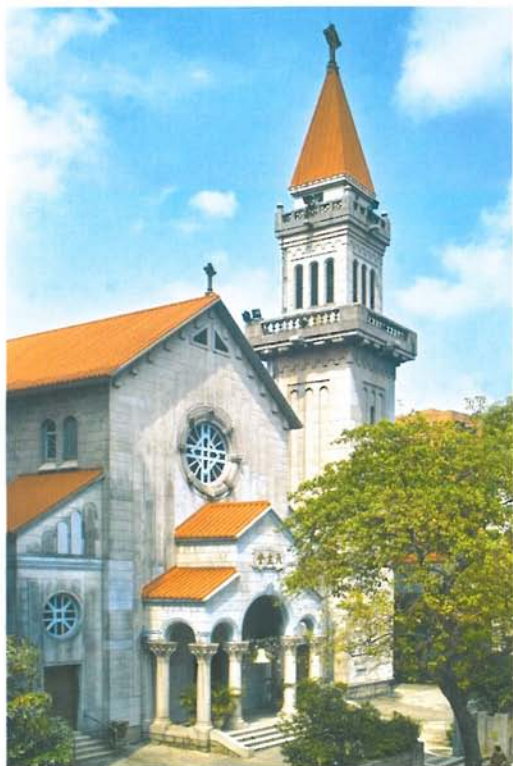
*A photo taken at the time of completion of St. Teresa Church. In those days, there were few inhabitants in the neighbourhood and hardly any pedestrians along Prince Edward Road.*

In 1932 before completion of St. Teresa Church, the faithful who lived in Kowloon Tong had to go to the Rosary Church in Tsim Sha Tsui in attending Sunday Mass. They could also go to the chapel in St. Joseph's Home for the Aged run by the Little Sisters of the Poor which was situated at the junction of Prince Edward Road and Clear Water Bay Road in Ngau Chi Wan. The latter has now moved to Sheung Shui, opposite the Northern District Hospital. In those days, liturgical services in both places were offered by the priests residing in the Rosary Church.

The 1930's was a financially difficult period for the Church. St. Teresa Church was able to be completed in 1932 because of the persistent efforts made by Fr. John Michael Spada. The plan view of the church building formed a pattern like a cross and its architect was Fr. Adalbert Gresnigt, O.S.B., the famous artist and architect from St. Benedictine Order of Holland. His works were all over the

United States, Brazil, and other countries. He came to China in 1926 for designing the schoolhouse in Chinese style for Fujen University in Peking (which is part of the present schoolhouse of the Beijing Normal University. Later, based on the model of Fujen University, he designed the Regional Seminary for South China at Aberdeen. Its rear courtyard was completed in 1930 but due to financial reasons, the rest of the quad on the original draft was omitted. This seminary has been re-named as the Holy Spirit Seminary. Following that, Fr. Gresnigt continued to design St. Teresa Church which was based on a design concept of Romanesque style. The arch was used as the theme for the side portico along with Corinthian stone pillars decorated with Acanthus patterns at the column heads. The glass windows were simply in yellow and green to form an unadorned motif, reflecting an air of plainness and truthfulness, in line with St. Teresa's spirit of simplicity. Even though the top girders were made of concrete and steel, they subtly revealed a hint of solemnity as in the Chinese palatial edifice.

*A photo showing the present St. Teresa Church, a popular preference for wedding ceremony for Catholics. The floral bell hanging between two pillars of the portal is a conventional backdrop that cannot be left out for wedding photos.*





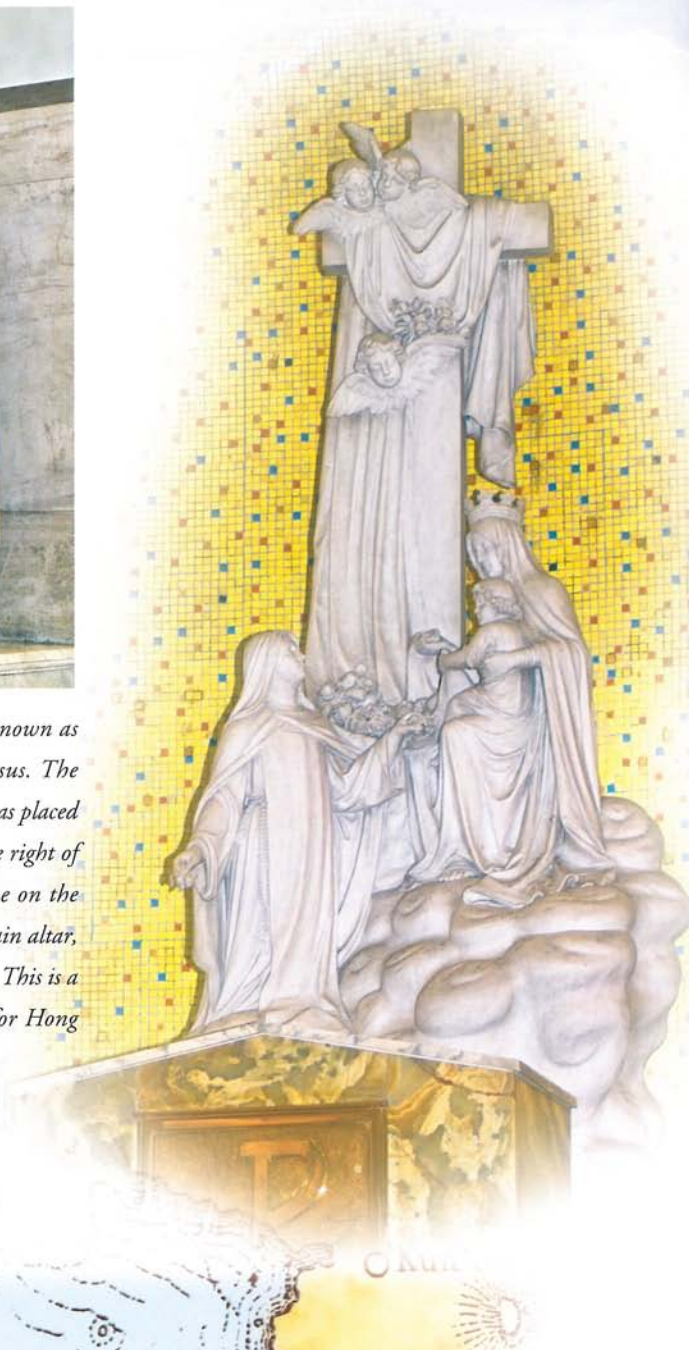


*The arches along the side portico were supported by stone pillars of the Corinthian order, posing an air of solemnity and simplicity.*

St. Therese of Lisieux, Little flower of Jesus, (1873-1897) was a cloistered nun of the Discalced Carmelite Order in Lisieux, west of Paris. She joined the order at 15 and passed away at the age of 24. She was canonized in 1925. Two years later, the Pope named her as the “Principal Patroness of all missionaries in the world”, creating a popular “St. Teresa” fever in many local churches. In this respect, the church newly completed in 1932 was naturally named after her. The marble statue behind the main altar with little angels above the Cross sprinkled roses upon her which symbolized the bestowing of graces from God. This was a replica from the Carmelite Church in Lisieux and was donated by the students of St. Mary’s School. During the Centenary of her death in 1997, this church hosted a grand reception for the tour of her relics.



Little Therese, also nicely known as St. Therese of the Child Jesus. The statue in the above picture was placed next to the stone pillar to the right of the altar. The marble statue on the right is placed behind the main altar, at the back of the tabernacle. This is a statue uniquely produced for Hong Kong.



ung-sh

tsin-long

la-tau

kok

To ka wan

r-leang

Hok-in

u

Fu-tsiu-kok

Hung-han

u

Kun





The statue of Our Lady of Fatima was venerated next to the minor small altar on the left side of the main altar. This was one of the statues of the first batch from Portugal after her apparition in 1917. The bell tower was the symbol of this church but the bell made in bronze was sold during World War times. From the memory of the faithful, the ringing of the bell for the saying of the Angelus was still punctually heard during the 1960's.

*Positioned at the portal outside the church and facing the busy street of Prince Edward Road is St. Christopher's statue.*



*Our Lady of Fatima*

In post World War times, a statue of St. Christopher - a saint in the 3rd century, the Patron of Transportation, was venerated at the left corner of the portal of the church. The blessing of automobiles was held yearly on July 25th and needless to say, luxurious sedans would keep coming in streams. However, another type of "car owners" would also drive in their bicycles for blessing. Nevertheless, in recent years, this traditional practice was halted without being noticed.



*The spot in the centre of this photo showing the orange roof in the pattern of a cross is St. Teresa Church (2004). To its left is Caritas Centre on Prince Edward Road. All the way through the photo from top to bottom is Waterloo Road. The square structure toward the top right corner is Maryknoll School.*

五方  
ung-sh  
a-tsin-lon  
la-fau  
kok  
To-la-wa  
r-leang  
Hok-un  
fu-tsiu-kok  
Hung-hea



St. Teresa Church had a few plaques with historical values. One of them was its foundation stone (see right photo above) which was laid in 1932 and was embedded at the base of the bell tower on the right side of the church. Another one (see right photo below) was in memory of the rebuilding of the sacristy as well as the proclamation of the Dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother in 1950. This was laid inside the sacristy above the washing basin. The third one (see left photo below) was embedded on the right side after entering the portal and it was



in memory of the founding benefactors. The last name engraved on this stone was Benito Mussolini which was apparently added later as its font and style were different from the rest. However, a question was raised, “Was he the dictator of Italy?” When was it inserted? Who engraved it? All these were still pending to be investigated.

Within the boundaries of this parish stood many reputable Catholic schools which provided a reason for many parents to opt for their residence here. Few months prior to the opening of St. Teresa Church, the schoolhouse of La Salle College in Boundary Street run by the Brothers of the Christian Schools was just completed and they moved the old school here from Chatham Road. The school was built around its own church and its apex could be seen from near and afar. Unfortunately, this one in European style was sacrificed for the sake of building a new schoolhouse in 1982.

In that same year, Maryknoll School was expanded and it was moved from Tsim Sha Tsui to no. 248 Prince Edward Road. Five years later, in 1937, a unique schoolhouse in brown and yellow bricks was completed at the present location, at the junction of Boundary Street and Waterloo Road, opposite the church on the other side of Waterloo Road.

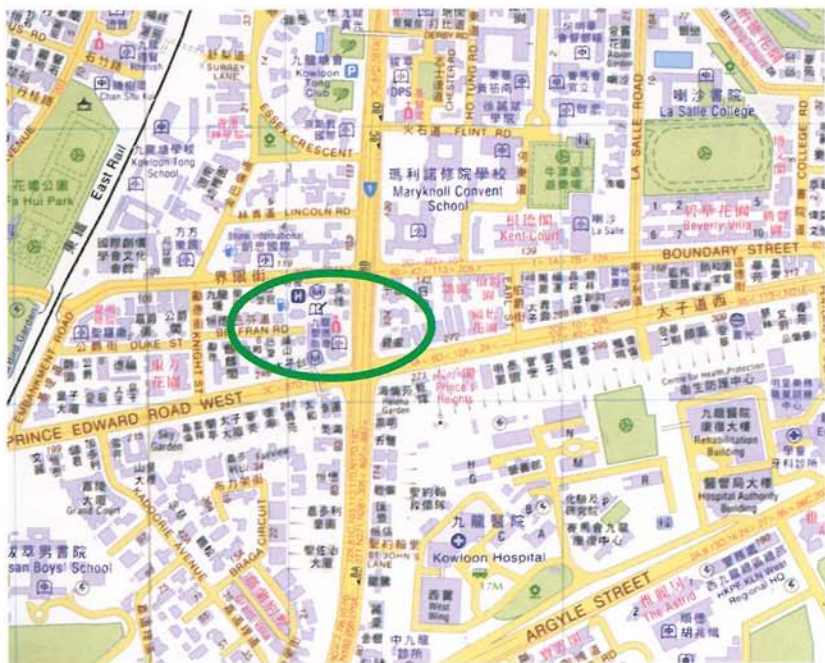
Another Catholic school for girls was St. Rose of Lima's College, located at a few minutes' walking distance from the church in Embankment Road. This school was founded in 1948 by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. Today, only the kindergarten and the primary section remained at this site in Embankment Road as the college has already been moved to the new schoolhouse in Shatin.

Respectively within three years from 1952, each year a reputable Catholic school was founded in the bounds of this parish. Wah Yan College, founded in 1952 by the Society of Jesus, was the first one in the series and it was moved from Nelson Street to the present address in Waterloo Road. The second was Tang King Po School, a technical school in Tin Kwong Road, established by the Salesians of Don Bosco in 1953. Both schools were for boys. In 1954, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception founded a school for girls named Good Hope School and its primary section was located at 125 Waterloo Road while the



schoolhouse of its secondary section at Clear Water Bay Road was constructed three years later.

Among the renowned schools, St. Teresa Kindergarten and Primary School run by the parish itself were certainly included. Their schoolhouses were linked with the church. A small open area for physical education was used as a car park on Sundays with a capacity of up to sixty cars for those who drove in to attend the Mass. Adjacent to the church was the Kowloon Caritas Centre which has a building respectively on Prince Edward Road and Boundary Street, providing various kinds of social services to the residents. It was started in 1967. To the east of the church, St. Teresa Hospital run by the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres was located at no. 327 Prince Edward Road. It was commonly known as the “French Hospital” and is a private hospital that keeps up with medical and technological advancements.

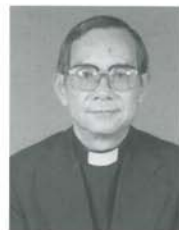


To the south of the church, along the busy Prince Edward Road was the Kings Park Chapel in Ho Man Tin district. It was formerly under the administration of this parish. This chapel was uniquely made of granite. At the beginning of the 1950's, the hill was clustered by wooden huts as many refugees influxed from China lived there. At that time, this chapel and the Maryknoll Sisters' Centre with a clinic provided great help to meet the residents' most urgent needs, particularly solving the problems with reference to lodging, food, medicines, and education for many refugees in the 1950's.

The church has respectively played an important role in worship, education, as well as medical and social services. All these were significantly performed through St. Teresa Church. No wonder during the 16-year administration (1949-1966) under Fr. C. Orlando (1907-1979) and Fr. Francis Wong Tak-cheung (1930-1993), a joke was popularly spread among the priests that the parish pastor of St. Teresa Church was nicknamed as the "Bishop of Kowloon".



*Fr. C. Orlando*



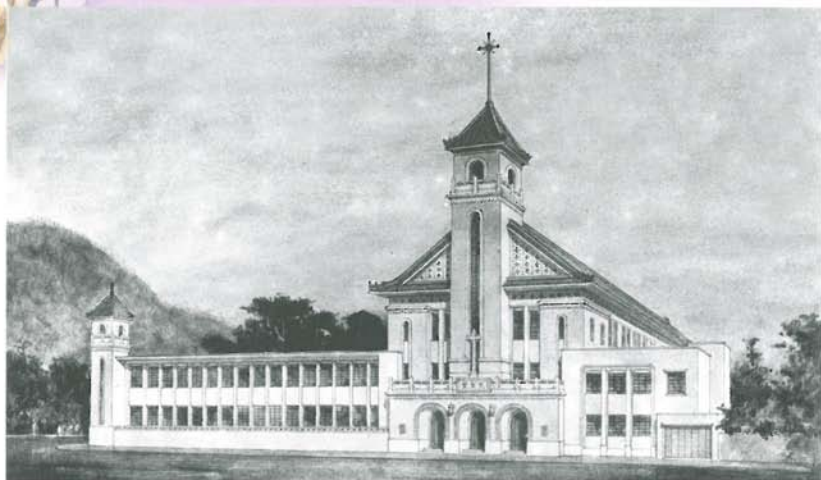
*Fr. Francis Wong  
Tak-cheung*







# Sham Shui Po



*The sketch of St. Francis of Assisi Church. It looks exactly the same as the actual building except the size of the cross was enlarged and the right hand side of the church was a school.*

St. Francis Assisi Parish in Sham Shui Po was neither located there nor called by this name. It formerly existed as St. Francis Xavier Church in Kowloon City. Its change of name and location had its own story.

A station of evangelization was established as early as 1860 at the place called Sha Tei Yuen, near the shore of Kowloon City. The Archives of the Catholic Church has two land proprietary certificates - one was in 1865 for the land of the Kowloon Carbon Factory and the other was in 1869 when the Church bought two pieces of land from the Lau Brothers at Sha Tei Yuen. The latter had an area of 550 sq. meters.

According to later records, from 1869 onwards, two houses were built as the lodging for the missionaries who went to and fro from China and as a chapel. This chapel was named after St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552) in memory of this Jesuit priest who came to South East Asia to spread the Gospel in the 16th century.



*The orange roof is St. Francis of Assisi Church. Facing Shek Kip Mei Street, there are two oldest 7-storey Resettlement Estate (left hand side). The road on the right hand side is Tai Po Road (2004).*

sha-wan  
leong  
Kap-lun  
shui-pai  
Kau-lun  
Hok-un  
Tso-pai  
Fu-tsiu-kok





*The present St. Francis Assisi Church which just celebrated its 50th anniversary (2005)*

The missionaries had to walk along trails in the hill for 3 hours from this station to work in Sai Kung. This chapel was rebuilt in 1890 and the farmlands near to the chapel were rented to the farmers for growing crops and building houses which provided lodging for over 300 people.

In 1930, the British government in Hong Kong retracted this piece of land from the Church for the expansion of Kai Tak Airport. But the Church asked the government to exchange it with another piece of land near to Kowloon City for rebuilding the church, the school, and the dormitory. Therefore, the government consented to give the land, section no. 1461 in New Kowloon situated at no. 10 Gaat Hang Tsuen, for a rental of 1 dollar per year and required the church to be completed within 1931. However, the Church asked to extend this requirement since she was in debts due to the construction of St. Teresa Church at Prince Edward Road and could not afford to raise more funds within a short time. Hence the government demanded a penalty of over 300 dollars for extending one year of this permission. Until 7 June, 1937, the Church was able to complete the construction of a 3-storey building on a piece of land about 500 sq. meters and paid a rental of 24 dollars per year to the government. On the ground floor, a school named Da Tung School was established; the first floor was used as a church with a regular attendance of about 400 for the Sunday Mass; the second floor was used as the priests' residence.

The construction fund for building this church was donated by the Gomes family. In memory of their ancestors, the name of the church was changed from St. Francis Xavier to St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226). At the beginning, Fr. A. Granelli (1892-1976) was doing the work for the Diocesan Catechetical Commission in the schoolhouse of Da Tung School. However, the resident priest for this church was Fr. Dominic Bazzo (1906-1998) who celebrated two Masses on Sundays until the Japanese Occupation. In September 1943, the Japanese government who occupied Hong Kong demolished the brand new church by the excuse of extending the airport but only 7500 Japanese Yans were paid as compensation. At once, the faithful lost their meeting place on Sundays.



For this reason, over 100 laymen had to use the church property

in Long Kong Road in celebrating Sunday Mass. During the period of Japanese rule, almost all church activities were halted. Following that was the post-war disorder and riots in China which affected the church activities and prevented them from being resumed.

*The statue of St. Francis of Assisi, placed on the first floor facing the wooden door of the church*



*The Baptismal font at the entry to the church*



*Fr. A. Granelli*



*Fr. D. Bazzo*

sha-wai  
leong  
Kap-lun  
shui-pai  
Kau-lung  
Hok-un  
Tso-pai  
Fu-lsiu-kok





Sisters of the Precious Blood had established their convent and a clinic in Sham Shui Po as early as the 1930's. They also allowed the laymen to attend Sunday Mass held in the chapel of their convent. Before St. Francis of Assisi Church at Shek Kip Mei Street was built, the following lay associations were



*Interior of the church: stained glasses behind the main altar depicting the stories about St. Francis.*

respectively set up in the Precious Blood Church namely, St. Vincent de Paul Association, Youth Association, Association of the Children of Mary, Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, and the Altar Servers' Association.

At Christmas in 1953, fire broke out in Shek Kip Mei squatter area and over 50,000 people became homeless. The government promptly implemented a public housing scheme by building 7-storey resettlement estates and provided lodging for the fire victims. In 1955, the Church completed the building of the new church near to the disaster site at Shek Kip Mei Street and used the same name as the one in Kowloon City that was demolished 12 years before.

Turning from Tai Po Road to Shek Kip Mei Street in Sham Shui Po, the first building that came into sight was St. Francis of Assisi Church. Its tall rectangular bell tower rose above the roof of the church in the shape of an inverted V, leaving an ambiance of solemnity. The three arched entrances were like gesticulation to welcome pedestrians from the street. After entering the main entrance, spiral staircases were on both left and right sides of the front lobby, similar to the arms





of a mother extending to embrace the people into the church. As the faithful walked up the stairs to the first floor, they had actually turned 360 degrees, facing the statue of St. Francis and leaving the hustle and bustle of the street behind them. The upper part of the wooden door was decorated with small lucent



*The foundation plaque at the right hand side of the Church's main entrance.*

glass frames, manifesting a taste of vintage. The characteristic of the interior was without pillars and the entire church was like a huge empty space in which the profile of arches repeatedly emerged. The sanctuary was situated within the bounds of a great arch while the coloured glasses behind the altar, the side windows, and the two side altars all echoed the design of an arch. The space of the entire church was enveloped by stone girders which resembled layered signboards. The structure formed by blending these sharp angles and arches gave people a feeling of warmth and security similar to that inside a tent. This beautiful design was the masterpiece made by an architect named Chin Nai Yan.

The primary school run by the parish was linked with the main body of the church and situated on its right side. This school was so well-received by the parents living in this area that they competed with each other in sending their children to study here. Apart from pastoral and educational ministries, there was another outstanding service provided by the parish. In 1964, the parish pastor promoted the establishment of a credit union which took members from the parish Catholics and their direct relatives. This was the first of its kind founded in Hong Kong which aided many families in building a solid foundation for their finances.

In the first sixteen years after its completion, the church was managed by Italian missionaries until 1969 when Fr. Thomas U Uen-Chi (1914-1987) was appointed as the parish pastor. Since then, the parish was led by Chinese clergy. Altogether, Fr. U had served fifteen years in this parish and made many contributions regarding maintenance and renovation of this church.



*Fr. Thomas  
U Uen-Chi*



*Fr. E. Tapella*

During his term of service in this parish, Fr. E. Tapella (1929-1977) who died young had deeply impressed the residents in Sham Shui Po. He passed away at the age of forty-eight because of a traffic accident while he was running around to serve the mentally retarded and the physically handicapped. The Tapella House founded by him has now developed into a home for the mentally retarded called Fu Hong Society which has forty units providing services to almost two thousand mentally retarded and physically disabled people.

sha-wan

leong

Kap-lun  
shui-pet

Kau-lun

aa-ti

Kau-lun shing

tsai

Ma-tan

Hong-kok

Toi-wan

Gen-leang

Hok-un

Tso-pai

Fu-tsiu-kok



## Reflection

The Catholic churches in three Kowloon districts namely, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon Tong, and Shum Shui Po have a comparatively longer history than the rest. The choice of their location and relocation, naming and re-naming, as well as their architectural styles all differ from each other for different reasons. It was either due to the benefactor's intention, the architect's idea, or even because of political reasons which resulted in different outcome. Because of the governmental intention to enlarge the airport, St. Francis Church has to be twice demolished, relocated, and reconstructed. Hence, one could say that this was a church filled with the experiences of resettlement. Strangely speaking, entering these churches of different historical styles and significance gives one the same feeling of peace and tranquility.

The Rosary church in Tsim Sha Tsui has been the flagship of the local church in Kowloon, however, within a few decades, its role was replaced by another church. As time passes, today, the church revives after a century. This is the time of emphasizing historical events, exploring the root, and tourism. The things of old will revive their past glory after creative renovations. The roles played by people, places and events, will vary in the course of time under the changing circumstances. Those who love to reflect on history would naturally be receptive to the open-mindedness of history.

The bell tower is the most outstanding part of the church building. The toll of the bell brings back loving memories, poetic thoughts, and many blessings. However, it was a pity that the bell towers of Rosary Church, St. Teresa Church, and St. Francis Church were unable to fulfill their function. These bells were "mute" because they had to be sold for supporting livelihood during the World Wars. Another key factor was because of technological advancement in the modern

world. The toll of the bell made in bronze is now widely replaced by the digital sound broadcast through electronic devices. Likewise, people in the cities have also become more sensitive to sound pollution. Many of them cannot tolerate the noise generated by the bell. Conventionally, the purpose in ringing a bell was to report time, gather people, give a warning, and signify a wedding ceremony or a funeral. The historical meaning in ringing these bells required understanding from the masses, however, such understanding no longer exist in the pluralistic modern society. Fortunately, these churches still stand in the downtown areas, posting a sense of holiness and solemnity to our citizens, and giving fragrant freshness to all.

These few churches mentioned in this pamphlet are either associated with a school or located near to the schools founded by Catholic communities. Evangelization of the Church to China has close ties with cultural and educational activities. These apostolates were also tied to the contributions made by the religious orders for men and women of different races and cultures. The fruits from the hard work of the missionaries were outstanding among these few parishes in Kowloon. Catholic education focuses on wholistic development which covers knowledge, virtues, emotions, and spirituality. That was why spending time near to a church during our education years was a traditional practice in Europe during the Middle Ages. The missionaries brought this tradition to Asia, allowing it to be further developed and flourished by the local faithful.

sha-wai

leong

Kap-lun  
shui-pai

Kau-lun

na-ti

Hok-in

Tso-pai

Fu-lsiu-kok



## Public Transportation Information

### ROSARY CHURCH

Address : 125 Chatham Road, South, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon.

Telephone : (852) 2368-0980, (852) 2368-2283, (852) 2368-5731

Website : <http://rosarychurch.catholic.org.hk>

MTR Jordan Station, Exit D (turn left, via Austin Road)

### ST. TERESA'S CHURCH

Address : 258, Prince Edward Road, Kowloon.

Telephone : (852) 2336-2241, (852) 2336-0048

Website : <http://stteresa.catholic.org.hk>

MTR Prince Edward Station, Exit B1

(Via Prince Edward Road West)

### ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH

Address : 58, Shek Kip Mei Street, Shamshuipo, Kowloon.

Telephone : (852) 2777-2218, (852) 2777-2354

Website : <http://sfac.catholic.org.hk>

MTR Sham Shui Po Station, Exit B2

(via Fuk Wa Street turn left to Shek Kip Mei Street)

## Acknowledgement

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Page 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 23, 24, 25, 27

\* Mr. But Wai Kin, Joe

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\* Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives

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sha-wan

leong

Kap-lun

nshui-pet

Kau-lun

un

Tso-pai

Hok-un

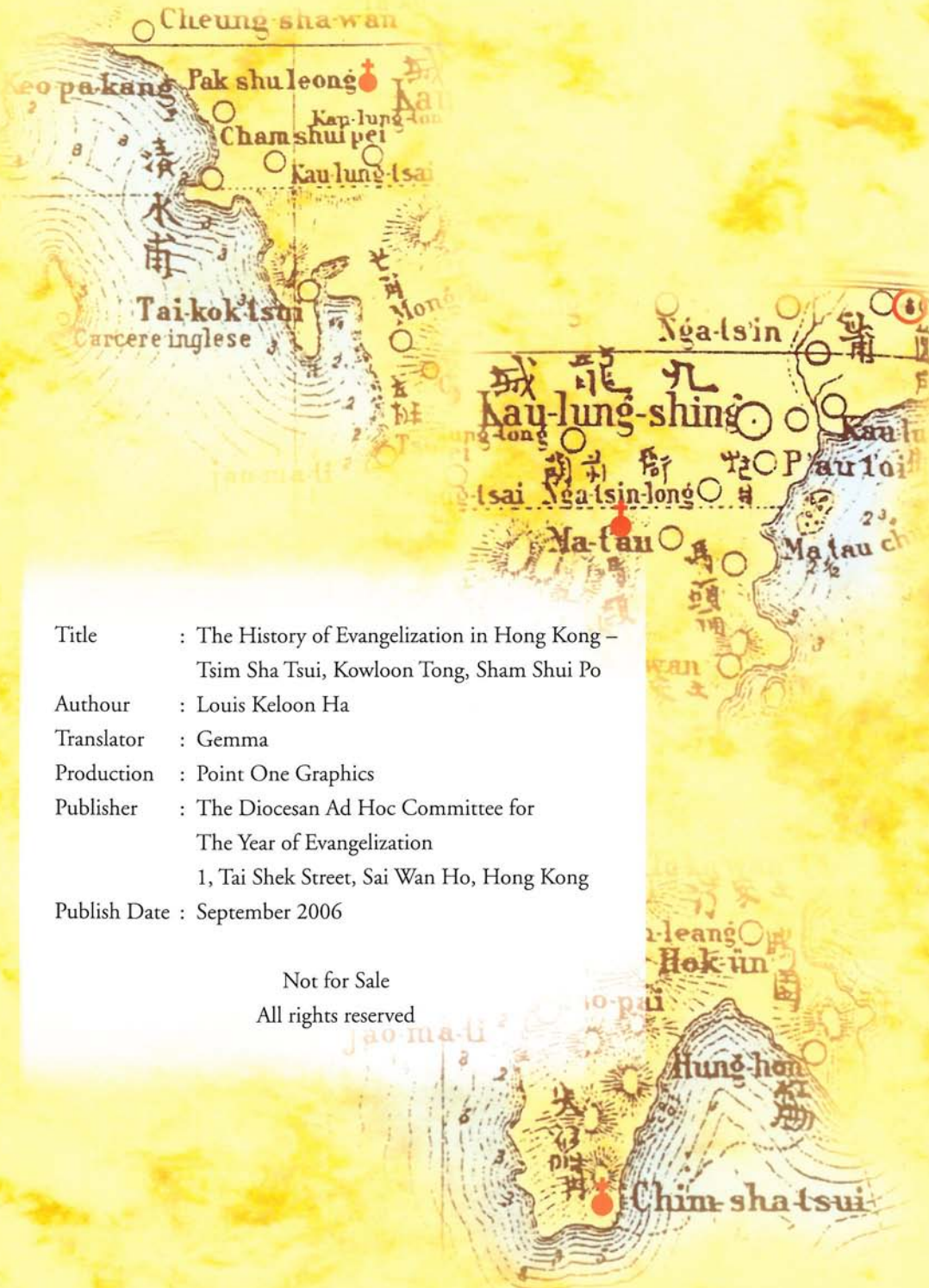
Fu-tsiu-kok





This map briefly showing the landscape of Kowloon was drawn by Fr. S. Volonteri (1831-1904), a missionary in Hong Kong. It was also printed in 1873 in a French missionary magazine. The red dots with a cross in this drawing are added for this pamphlet, depicting the respective locations of the Rosary Church in Tsim Sha Tsui, St. Teresa Church in Kowloon Tong, and St. Francis of Assisi Church in Sham Shui Po. These churches were already existent when Fr. Volonteri drew this map in the 19th century; however, St. Francis of Xavier Church which was demolished later should be situated toward the right of this map where it was shown by a black dot with a cross but a red circle is now added to highlight its previous location.





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