

CHRISTIANITY IN MODERN CHINA



**The Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood
and the Evolution of the Catholic Church**

CINDY YIK-YI CHU



Christianity in Modern China

Series Editor

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*To my dearest teacher
Sister Betty Ann Mahen, MM*

A NOTE ON CHINESE TRANSLITERATION

Pinyin is used for the names of people and places in mainland China, for example Zhou Enlai and Beijing respectively. The names of people and places in this book are spelled as they are officially used in Hong Kong (close to Cantonese pronunciation). As for Chinese Catholics outside the mainland, their names are spelled in the way they preferred, for example Francis Hsu Chen-ping—whose family name is Hsu—and Paul Ch'eng Shih-kuang—Ch'eng being his family name and Shih-kuang indicating the two Chinese characters that follow his family name.

PREFACE

This book is the result of my own personal research. I presented this project at a seminar in the Ricci Institute, University of San Francisco on July 17, 2015. On that occasion, I stressed the difficulty of identifying Chinese Catholic women in the studies dealing with the Chinese Church in the first half of the twentieth century. These women had remained “faceless” and “nameless” in contrast to their Catholic male counterparts of the period. There has always been an emphasis on looking from both the perspectives of Chinese Catholics and foreign missionaries, in order to portray a richer and more balanced picture of what had happened in China. The Chinese elite left behind their writings, which historians use to assess the local people’s point of view. Nonetheless, there appear to be no records of Chinese women who worked with Catholic foreign missionaries. These Chinese women may have benefitted from the education provided by the missionaries in the cities and some of them received the instruction of Catholic sisters in the countryside. Historians need to find these women and tell their stories.

This project traces the origins of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood in Hong Kong and their history up to the early 1970s. The sources are mainly from their archives in Hong Kong. The Chinese sisters worked in both Hong Kong and in Guangdong Province. Thus, this study contributes to the neglected area of Chinese Catholic women in the history of the Chinese Catholic Church and society.

First, this book studies the growth of an indigenous community of Chinese sisters, who acquired a formal status in the local and universal Catholic Church. The congregation of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious

Blood was established in Hong Kong in 1922. This development corresponded with Pope Benedict XV's apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* urging the indigenization of the Catholic Church in China.

Second, this book throws light on the correlation between the Hong Kong Mission, the China Mission, and the Universal Catholic Church. It traces the history from the individuals to the top ecclesiastical authority. It emphasizes the intertwining histories of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong, the churches in China, and the Roman Catholic Church.

Third, it assesses the ways in which the history of the Precious Blood Congregation sheds light on the formation and development of the indigenous groups of sisters in China today, and how the history of this congregation relates to, and allows for more understanding of, the contemporary development of the Chinese sisters on the mainland.

I would like to thank the Hong Kong Baptist University for its research grant and my sabbatical from January to July 2015, which allowed me to pursue the writing of this book. Throughout the research and the composition process, I owed much to friends and colleagues who offered constant support that greatly facilitated my work. In the past few years, I have spent considerable time in the archives of the Precious Blood Sisters in Hong Kong. The General Superior of the Precious Blood Sisters, Sr. Madeleine Kwong Lai-kuen, and members of the congregation have been extremely kind, understanding, and helpful. I am much indebted to the archivist Sr. Kwok Wan-chee for her expertise and patience.

At the same time, I am grateful to Rev. Louis Ha for permission to use material in the Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives. Their staff were particularly knowledgeable and cooperative. In addition, I would like to thank Sr. Theresa Chien of the archives of the Canossian Sisters in Hong Kong. I was able to make good use of the resources in the Archives on the History of Christianity in China of the Hong Kong Baptist University Library.

In addition I profited from my trip to Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei in early 2015. I learnt much from Professor Chen Fang-chung, the director of Institutum Historiae Ecclesiae, and received assistance from the staff in Fu Jen University's archives. I also visited the Ricci Institute of the University of San Francisco in the summer of 2015. The friendship and advice of Dr. Xiaoxin Wu, Rev. Robert Carbonneau, and Mr. Mark Mir were indeed valuable and memorable.

As always, I would not have been able to complete my work without the encouragement, generosity, and inspiration of the Maryknoll Sisters in

Hong Kong, Macau, and New York. Sr. Anne Reusch has been a wonderful teacher and friend. For more than a decade, Sr. Betty Ann Maheu has given me tremendous advice and has been the source of intellectual inspiration and emotional support. I truly owe her a great deal and there is no way I could really reciprocate her kindness and guidance.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Professors Beatrice Leung, Thomas Coomans, Yvonne Lo, Rev. Peter Barry, Rev. Sergio Ticozzi, and Rev. Ambrose Mong for their support. Mr. Edwin Ng of the David C. Lam Institute for East–West Studies (LEWI) of Hong Kong Baptist University has been very helpful with technical matters. My friends Ms. Magdalen Yum, Rev. Dr. Ip King-tak, and Dr. Judy Ip have helped me overcome many difficulties. I also thank my family for their love and joy throughout the years.

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A NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

Canossian Archives	Canossian Sisters' Archives, Hong Kong
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
FdCC and FDC	Canossian Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor
HKCDA	Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives
MEM	Foreign Missions of Milan
MM	Maryknoll Missioners
Msgr.	Monsignor
PIME	Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions
PRC	People's Republic of China
SCPF	Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide)
SPB and PB	Sisters of the Precious Blood
SPBA	Sisters of the Precious Blood Archives, Hong Kong
Vatican II	Second Vatican Council (1962–1965)

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Jesus on Chinese Soil

INTRODUCTION

The Roman Catholic Church officially began its mission in Hong Kong in 1841. This was before the signing of the Nanjing Treaty between China and the United Kingdom in 1842, which included the cession of Hong Kong Island to the British. In early 1841, British troops already occupied the island and among them were many Irish Catholics who urgently required spiritual care because of illness and psychological needs. In response, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (SCPF, also known as Propaganda Fide) in Rome, which directed missionary activity for the Catholic Church, issued a decree in April 1841 that designated the island a Prefecture Apostolic. This gave Hong Kong a juridical status in the Roman Catholic Church for beginning the process of evangelization.¹ The first Catholic priest to come to stay permanently in the colony was Fr. Michael Navarro, a Spanish Franciscan, who arrived in January 1842. The first Prefect Apostolic was Fr. Theodore Joset, who had served in Macau. He arrived in March 1842, and died in August of the same year. Fr. Antonio Feliciani, an Italian Franciscan, succeeded him as the second Prefect Apostolic. Initially, the Catholic community was made up mainly of Irish soldiers. Nevertheless, the missionaries' undertaking was the evangelization of the local Chinese.

One after another, foreign missionary societies and congregations came to the British colony. This chapter lists the first three congregations of foreign missionary sisters to arrive in Hong Kong. The Catholic sisters

shouldered the tasks of providing education, childcare, medical services and doing parish work. The French Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres arrived in Hong Kong in 1848, and the Italian Canossian Sisters had arrived by 1860. Due to the enormous difficulties that the Prefect Apostolic, Fr. Luigi Ambrosi, had encountered in the local mission, the Italian sisters were asked to help out in the colony.² In a letter to the colonial government in 1865, Fr. Ambrosi described the foreign sisters as arriving in Hong Kong for “religious and charitable purposes.”³ He claimed that the congregations of French and Italian sisters were religious and charitable institutions. This was how the Catholic Mission explained the nature and motives of the Catholic sisters in the colony. Subsequently, in 1874, as Hong Kong grew, Rome raised the status of the Hong Kong Church to a Vicariate Apostolic.

The 1920s was a decade of political movements in mainland China and Hong Kong. In 1922, the Seamen’s Strike broke out in Hong Kong with the assistance of workers in Guangzhou. In 1925, the May Thirtieth Movement against Western imperialism spread from Shanghai to cities nationwide. Internally, there was civil strife between the Nationalist Party under Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which took every opportunity to expand its membership and influence since its founding in 1921. The Catholic Church faced challenges amid social tension and hostilities. The American Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, who arrived in 1921, were the third women’s religious congregation to reach Hong Kong. They struggled to survive the acute situation resulting from the strike in 1922.

Local Study of Chinese Sisters

This book is a local study of a congregation of Chinese sisters that recounts the evolution of the individual women, their community, and the Catholic Church from diversity to unity and from 1922 to 1973. The foundation of the Chinese sisters began shortly after the arrival of the Canossian Sisters, as the Italians needed help in communicating with the locals. Nevertheless, it was only in the early 1920s that these Chinese women obtained their full autonomy as a religious group separate from the Canossian Sisters as the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood—the fourth congregation of sisters in Hong Kong.

The Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood became an independent congregation in 1922, when Hong Kong was a Vicariate Apostolic which

included the Bao'an, Huiyang, and Haifeng districts of Guangdong Province. The Vicariate Apostolic was under the Italian leadership of the third Vicar Apostolic, Bishop Dominico Pozzoni, from the Foreign Missions of Milan (*Missioni Estere di Milano*, MEM). Since that time, the Precious Blood Sisters have remained the first and only locally founded congregation of Chinese sisters in Hong Kong. Their ethnicity and beginnings have distinguished them from other women religious, and they are exceptional in that they have remained exclusively Chinese in devoting themselves to life-long service to their own society. Gradually, some of them served in Macau, Taiwan, and mainland China, and others eventually have been working in foreign countries.

This book is distinctive as a local study of the Catholic Church in the Chinese society of Hong Kong, whose population had been over 90 % Chinese. It is also distinctive as a study of a minority in society: it reveals the transformation of a minority of Chinese sisters within the minority of the Catholic population in Hong Kong. Initially, only one or two of the Chinese sisters were educated while the rest only received some very basic education. These sisters evolved from being subordinate to the Italian missionaries to becoming independent in the early 1920s and from being poorly educated to attaining professional education from the 1970s onward. By the 1970s their status in the Church hierarchy had risen.

In addition, this book tries to demonstrate in what ways the history of the Precious Blood Congregation throws light on the formation and development of indigenous groups of sisters in contemporary China. How does the history of this congregation relate to and allow for a better comprehension of the current advancement of Catholic sisters in mainland China?

Interrelationship between Congregations and Societies

This book is a cross-cultural study, stressing the interactions between the Chinese and the foreign missionaries in the local society. Of tremendous significance was the fact that the Precious Blood Sisters, the Italian missionaries (men and women), and the other foreign missionaries were undergoing a historic evolution, as was the Roman Catholic Church. The SCPF in Rome decided to entrust the Prefecture Apostolic of Hong Kong to the Foreign Missions of Milan (MEM) in 1858. MEM had only existed since 1850 as the result of Pope Pius IX's drive for foreign missions. In 1867, it received the missionary mandate to administer the Hong Kong Mission.

When the Prefect Apostolic Fr. Luigi Ambrosi passed away in the colony in 1867,⁴ Fr. Giovanni Timoleone Raimondi, MEM, became the Pro-Prefect Apostolic of Hong Kong.⁵ The succession of Fr. Raimondi signified the dedication of the full authority of the local Catholic Church to MEM. In 1868, Fr. Raimondi was appointed the procurator of Propaganda Fide and the Prefect Apostolic of Hong Kong.⁶

The Roman Catholic Church manifested tremendous zeal for sending missionaries abroad. During the time of Pope Pius XI in 1926, MEM merged with another institute to form the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (*Pontificio Istituto Missioni Estere*, PIME). PIME called this a *historic evolution*: “The sole purpose was the first proclamation of the Gospel and foundation of local churches in regions entrusted to them by Propaganda Fide.”⁷ The China Mission was of prime significance. In *From Milan to Hong Kong*, Fr. Gianni Criveller, PIME, states that the Italian missionaries had to work closely with the other local and foreign Catholic societies and congregations for evangelization. The missionary groups’ histories were intertwined.⁸

Chinese Sisters’ Spirituality

While the congregations of foreign sisters in Hong Kong were reluctant initially to invite young Chinese to join them, the Maryknoll Sisters accepted local applicants, Chinese and Portuguese, who manifested a vocation for foreign mission work. The Precious Blood Sisters, however, have been Chinese throughout their entire history. The main question is why did an increasing number of these Chinese women readily pledge their allegiance to a foreign religion, Christianity? Why did they choose to join the Precious Blood Sisters? They persisted in their dedication to the religious life and grew in numbers without the help of foreign missionaries within their congregation, so what vision drove them and their superiors and superiors general? Why did the Precious Blood Congregation—a unique, indigenous group of women religious in the Hong Kong Church—continue to grow and attract increasing numbers of applicants throughout the decades?

The existence of the Precious Blood Sisters was related to a much larger and crucial development within the Universal Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church considered the China Mission of utmost importance. In addition, the British colony had been essential to the mission, with the Third Synod of the Fifth Region of the Chinese Catholic

Church taking place in Hong Kong from January to February 1909.⁹ Most notably, in the 1920s, the Roman Catholic Church had a special concern for the indigenization of the Church in China.

*Impact of the Indigenization of the Catholic Church
on Hong Kong*

The call for the indigenization of the churches in overseas missions began in November 1919, when Pope Benedict XV issued the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud*. The Pontiff took the first steps in fostering the indigenization of the local churches and the formation of native clergy in the field far from Rome. It was the Lazarists, Vincent Lebbe and Antoine Cotta who led the Tianjin Movement against the French Consul's arbitrary seizure of Chinese land in 1916, and filed a complaint with Rome that caused the Pope to recognize the significance of reinforcing the leadership of the churches in China. The apostolic letter was the enlightened decision of Pope Benedict XV.¹⁰ Frs. Lebbe and Cotta, who were the leaders in recognizing the need for the indigenization of the churches and their leadership in mission lands, had spoken to Rome on behalf of that need. With the mandate of the Holy Father, most foreign missionaries and Chinese converts changed their focus to reflect their obedience on the one hand, and their trust in the Chinese people on the other.

Moreover, the apostolic letter highlighted the role of the sisters in the mission. They set up schools, orphanages, and hospitals. Pope Benedict XV praised them for their diligence and devotion that were indispensable to their charity work and evangelization.¹¹ Having studied the Pope's apostolic letter, it seemed wise for the third Vicar Apostolic, Bishop Dominic Pozzoni, MEM, to look into the situation of the Precious Blood Sisters in Hong Kong.

The Precious Blood Sisters were originally an affiliate of the Italian Canossian Sisters (formally known as Canossian Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor), with the former being an offshoot of the latter. In 1874, the Precious Blood Sisters, who were the "Canossian Tertiaries," came under "the first special Rule" drawn up for them.¹² In 1900, the second Vicar Apostolic, Bishop Luigi Piazzoli, MEM, believed that while the Canossian Sisters and the Tertiaries were two communities, they should still "be under one head."¹³ This meant that the Chinese sisters could not conduct "independent organized work" on their own.¹⁴

With the permission of Bishop Pozzoni, MEM, in 1922, the Precious Blood Sisters finally acquired a truly autonomous status.¹⁵ More importantly, their congregation was entirely Chinese in composition, administration, and function. They fulfilled what Pope Benedict XV had intended for the China Mission: namely, the indigenization of at least part of the Catholic Church in the British colony of Hong Kong, where the overwhelming majority of the population was Chinese.

On the China scene, Hong Kong was a small colony on the southeast coast of the mainland, overshadowed by China's intellectual revolution which began in 1917. This revolution emphasized the Western practice of democracy and science. There was simultaneously the rapid development of Chinese nationalism among different classes of society. After the tremendous disappointment experienced by the Chinese people at the Versailles Conference of 1919, there were nationwide demonstrations against the Western powers for betraying China's legitimate request for the return of Shandong Province from the Japanese. The May Fourth Incident of 1919—in which students, intellectuals, workers, and businessmen protested against the warlord government in Beijing and the Versailles Conference—showed the world that the Chinese people were united and determined to make their voice heard in the international arena. The nationalistic sentiments grew much stronger in the 1920s, with the Chinese defending their national pride in the face of foreign encroachments. Across the border in Hong Kong, the Precious Blood Sisters relied exclusively on themselves to organize and complete their work. Their hope was to establish mutual respect and cooperation with the foreign Catholic missionaries. Throughout their history, they asserted their Chinese identity while remaining faithful to the Universal Catholic Church.

EVOLUTION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

This book attempts to show how the evolution of the Precious Blood Congregation mirrored and reflected the evolution of the Hong Kong Mission, which was related to the evolution of the Universal Church's perception of the China Mission. How did the development of this congregation facilitate and allow for a better understanding of the evolution of the Universal Catholic Church?

The Roman Catholic Church is universal, meaning that it is for all people, worldwide, and the Catholics around the world all remain in communion with Rome. Simultaneously, the churches retain their particularism

in serving local societies. Universalism and particularism are supposed to be compatible and ideal. Pope Benedict XV's apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* emphasized that the missionaries were the ambassadors of Christ and the Catholic Church, which was open to all peoples.¹⁶ Looking back to Hong Kong and China in the 1920s, the foreign missionaries followed the orders of their superiors and Rome. In the mission field, they had to learn the Chinese language and culture, to make themselves useful to the local communities, and to adapt to the special situations they found themselves in. Otherwise, they could not fulfill their mission of evangelization. The Chinese priests, nuns, and the laity studied and mastered the Catholic teachings while consolidating their own spirituality. But how did the foreign religion of Christianity take root in Chinese society?

This book takes into consideration the broader scope of the Universal Church's history and Chinese history. It is notable that the Hong Kong Catholic Church had played a significant role in the China Mission from the early twentieth century onward. This book reveals the enormous concern of the Roman Catholic Church for the China Mission. The histories of Hong Kong, China, and the world were closely connected.

In the 1920s, Catholics and Protestants alike considered the China Mission their top priority. The Roman Catholic Church dispatched foreign missionaries, men and women, for the evangelization of China. Foreign sisters established their communities there.¹⁷ With the blessings of the local bishop, they also used their house in the colony as a "procure," a French word meaning "a house or office in some convenient location," for the other houses in mainland China.¹⁸ They served as procurators, sending mail, news, and deliveries to their fellow missionaries in the interior, gathering the necessary materials and exchanging currencies for those serving on the mainland, and receiving those in transit and on holiday.¹⁹ The procure work was important to the foreign Catholic missions on the mainland. Thus, it was common for the foreign missionaries in the colony to ask that capable personnel be sent from their overseas headquarters to conduct the duties described above.

Foreign missionaries pledging their loyalty to the Universal Church had to put what they learned into practice and prove themselves in another environment. The Chinese people were keen on gaining Western knowledge and on modernization. What was universal was meant for everyone in every locality, and thus evolved through the relationship between communities and world development.

This book looks at the different levels of Catholic history: the individuals and the grassroots, the local converts, the local and foreign priests, brothers, and sisters in the localities, and the leaders of the Catholic Mission and the Catholic Church. The history of the Catholic Church in China begins with the individuals and local society of Hong Kong. The book links first, the evolution of the Precious Blood Sisters (formerly the Chinese Tertiaries of the Canossian Sisters) to that of the Universal Catholic Church; second, the devotion of women to the magnificence of Christ; third, the heterogenizing elements of glocalization to universal evolution; and fourth, the local Catholic Church to the transnational history of Catholic missions. In doing so, it reiterates the impact of changes in the local church on the churches outside Hong Kong and that of the China Mission on broader Roman Catholic history.

This book also asks why the Precious Blood Sisters were able to uphold their religious beliefs throughout years of trials, poverty, war, loneliness, and challenges. They consolidated their community and spirituality, but how did they manage to secure their foothold among the other foreign congregations of sisters in Hong Kong? The Chinese sisters saw Christianity not as a foreign religion but as a universal religion. There was a great deal of revelation in their understanding of Christianity after much study and contemplation. Christ was for all, and with tremendous faith, they persevered in their tasks without self-pity, despite hardships. The universal Christ was the source of their strength when venturing into unknown territories. This was particularly true when some of them, who were working in the villages, lost contact with the Motherhouse during the years of the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong from 1941 to 1945. Their spirituality guided them in their service for the local society. In addition, there must be a certain amount of Chineseness in Christianity as well as Christian values in Chinese traditional culture; otherwise the Precious Blood Sisters would not have remained dedicated to their vocation for so many decades.

From 1919 through the 1920s, the Roman Catholic Church underwent an evolution in the China Mission. The indigenization of the local churches was the call of the time, and the Chinese sisters evolved from being a subsidiary of the Italian community to an independent body. From the Italian Canossian Sisters, the Chinese sisters learned about religious life and the rules of living and practice. Gradually, the Chinese sisters assimilated the new ideas, responded to the external circumstances, and transformed themselves in the process. Their evolution was certain.

In the 1920s, their foundress, Sister Clara Tam, took on the responsibility of establishing the Motherhouse in a lower-class neighborhood in Shamshuipo on the Kowloon Peninsula. There the Precious Blood Sisters developed their own identity, shaped by the people they served. Their orphanages, schools, and mission plans evolved alongside Hong Kong and Chinese history.

THE TERTIARIES (HONG KONG, 1861)

Two Chinese Catholics, Maddalena and Anna

The story of the Precious Blood Sisters began on August 1, 1861 when biological sisters Maddalena (age 30) and Anna (age 16) Tam, from Macau, moved into the compound of the Canossian Sisters' convent on Caine Road, Hong Kong Island. At that time, the Italian sisters had Prefect Apostolic Fr. Luigi Ambrosi's permission to accept Maddalena and Anna into the residence.²⁰

Even before Maddalena and Anna entered the convent, they assisted the Canossian Sisters in their work. Maddalena—the first child of the family—had worked as a catechist and had considerable teaching experience in Macau.²¹ The superior of the Canossian Sisters, Mother Lucia Cupis, wrote that Maddalena “had already served zealously ... as a teacher of the Orphanage at its first opening” in Hong Kong.²² Gradually, the Canossian Sisters and Maddalena began to understand each other better. Once Maddalena knew that “the Sisters had the intention of opening a school for the Chinese children, as they had started the school[s] for the other languages spoken in the Colony, English and Portuguese, she presented herself to the Sisters of the new Institution, to help in their work, as a free teacher.”²³ In early May 1860, the Canossian Sisters had founded two schools, one using English as the medium of instruction and the other using Portuguese. They also set up a third school to provide the Chinese students with education in their mother tongue. Given that the Canossian Sisters did not know the Chinese language, Mother Lucia Cupis accepted Maddalena's offer to teach in the school, and later commended her for being “indefatigable, always ready to work, always solicitous of the spiritual good of the girls,” and “loved and respected” by the students.²⁴ Maddalena had contributed a great deal to the Chinese school,²⁵ and when Mother Lucia Cupis saw Anna Tam, she recognized that the young Chinese girl was very neat and alert.²⁶ The superior then

asked Anna to assist a Canossian Sister in looking after the orphans.²⁷ Very soon, Anna was getting along very well with the orphan children, and taking care of their needs and recreation. The Canossian Sisters recognized that Anna had a special aptitude for looking after very young children.²⁸

The two Chinese women proved themselves a great asset to the Italian sisters in the school and the orphanage. Thus, the then Vice-Prefect Apostolic Fr. Giovanni Timoleone Raimondi, MEM, and the Canossian Sisters' adviser Fr. Giuseppe Burghignoli, MEM, also encouraged the Canossian Sisters to admit Maddalena and Anna into the convent's compound. Maddalena and Anna aided in any necessary work, learned the rules, and followed the daily timetable of religious life, sometimes venturing into other tasks. Maddalena and Anna stayed in a small house on the grounds of the Italian sisters' convent and ultimately became the Canossian Tertiaries.

The Tertiaries' design for their future religious congregation or the "third order" was a completely new idea for the Canossian Sisters in Italy. The Canossian Sisters had never had a first or second order in their home country foundation. The Tertiaries belonged to "another branch from the same trunk" of the Canossian Sisters. The *name* Canossian Tertiaries first appeared in 1831 in the house in Trent, in northern Italy. At that time, the Canossian Sisters had already engaged in evangelization work in the cities, but they wanted to train women catechists for the countryside since they were forbidden to go to the villages. This was *the* reason for their having Tertiaries, who were attached to the Canossian Sisters. Nevertheless, the Canossian Sisters in Italy admitted that the name Tertiary was "not exact, properly speaking, for the Institute did not have a second class of Sisters."²⁹ Mother Margherita Crespi, who was the superior of the house in Milan, also started to teach the Canossian Tertiaries who had come to Milan.³⁰ *The Rules of the Tertiaries* did not yet have the approval of Rome, but the local bishop did give his consent for the Canossian Tertiary Sisters to make their vows.

The Hong Kong Canossian Sisters' archives keep a record of the Tertiaries in Milan. As written: "The Sisters called Tertiaries, that is, auxiliary to the Daughters of Charity (Co-adiutrix) lived in the wing of the House now occupied by the boarders. Mother Crespi had the general direction of this other novitiate. She assisted at their spiritual reading, sat with them one hour every day, explained to them how to teach Catechism, ... She drew up the Rules, fixed the prayers ... so that the works could proceed with a true religious spirit [underlining in original]."³¹ In the

house in Milan, the Mother Superior provided the Tertiary Sisters with the formation for religious life and the skills for the tasks of evangelization.

Emergence of the Canossian Tertiaries in Hong Kong

In 1861, Maddalena and Anna's willingness to take care of Chinese children inspired the Canossian Sisters to consider having Tertiaries in Hong Kong. This would facilitate the evangelization work, as the Italian sisters did not know the Chinese language. The Canossian Sisters found Maddalena and Anna to be very humble and diligent in carrying out tasks that were impossible for the Italians, who were too few in number (the first dispatch of the sisters only numbered six) and too preoccupied with their charges to learn Chinese.³² The Canossian Sisters had the support of Fr. Raimondi, who went to Rome with his own agenda for the Hong Kong Mission. He met with Pope Pius IX and returned to Hong Kong in late 1862.

Fr. Sergio Ticozzi, PIME, who is a researcher at Hong Kong's Holy Spirit Study Centre, provided the author with a detailed itinerary for Fr. Raimondi. As Fr. Ticozzi explained, "Fr. Raimondi went to Italy in the summer 1861 arriving in Venice in August. Then he went to Milan, and soon after to Rome, to deal with the affair of [the] St. Paul de Chartres Sisters. In September he was still in Rome. Then he went to Lyon, France (in October), to Paris (in November), to Dublin, Ireland (early December). In January he was back to Rome where he stayed until after mid-February. Then he went again to France and to Belgium, returning to Venice in June to board the ship for Hong Kong, where he arrived in October with two Canossian Sisters and a priest."³³ Fr. Raimondi was away from Hong Kong from the summer of 1861 to October 1862. He had already left Hong Kong before Maddalena and Anna entered the Canossian Sisters' convent on the first day of August 1861. Thus, the two Chinese women had been acquainted with the Canossian Sisters before they moved into the grounds of the convent, and the Canossians had obtained Fr. Raimondi's consent for the Tertiaries' plan before he left for Italy.

According to the Canossian Sisters' records, they recognized "the necessity of affiliating to the Canossian Institute a few (Auxiliaries) Coadiutrices as Tertiaries."³⁴ Mother Lucia Cupis, who was the first superior of the Canossian Sisters in Hong Kong, had discussed the plan with Fr. Ambrosi and had received Fr. Raimondi's "full approval" before he departed for Rome in 1861.³⁵

Hence, in 1862, Fr. Raimondi brought with him *The Rules of the Tertiaries* from the Canossian Sisters' house in Venice.³⁶ It was after Fr. Raimondi's return with the Pope's support and *The Rules*, that the Canossian Sisters fully implemented the plan for the Tertiaries in Hong Kong. This was documented in the Canossian Sisters' archives.³⁷ According to the Canossians, Fr. Raimondi "soon began the Tertiaries in aid to the Canossian Sisters, for catechetical instructions, schools," "orphanage or Catecumenate for Chinese girls" after his coming back to the colony.³⁸ Both the Italian sisters and the Chinese women embarked on a challenging endeavor. At that time, the Canossian Sisters were all Italians on their first mission abroad. From their perspective, the training of the Chinese Tertiary Sisters was essential to meet the task of evangelization in the colony. On November 11, 1862, Maddalena and Anna received their habits and entered the novitiate.³⁹

The Canossian Sisters described the "Clothing Ceremony of the First Two Chinese Sisters" that day.⁴⁰ As written, Maddalena and Anna had been hard workers: Maddalena dedicated a lot of her time to the schools, the orphanage, and the catechumen classes while Anna took care of the children. More notably, both women were very satisfied with their lives. The Canossian Sisters had not thought of the contribution of Chinese women to the mission before they arrived in Hong Kong so this development was a delightful surprise to the Canossian Sisters, who quickly discovered what they needed to do. The events that had happened before the summer of 1861 inspired the Canossian Sisters to consider the matter of the Tertiary Sisters⁴¹ and their experience led them to look to the future and foresee the catechumen work that Maddalena and Anna could conduct among Chinese women, which encouraged them to adopt the concept of Tertiaries for these two Chinese women.

Development of the Tertiaries and Death of the First Portuguese Tertiary Sister

Maddalena, Anna, and the Canossian Sisters were adapting to local circumstances. Their stories began to evolve as they united. Maddalena and Anna wore habits as novices of the Tertiaries, with theirs differing from those of the Canossian Sisters in being black rather than brown (in Italian, *marrone*). Dressed in black, Maddalena and Anna tied their hair and wore tight caps, allowing the local people to easily distinguish between them and the Canossian Sisters.⁴²

In those days, the Chinese called the sisters “goo leung” (a Cantonese transliteration of *guniang*, meaning “unmarried ladies”). The Chinese novices followed *The Rules of the Tertiaries* that Fr. Raimondi brought back from Italy. Eventually, the Hong Kong Catholic Church established the Canossian Tertiaries in accordance with *The Rules of the Tertiaries*. In 1862 and 1863, Maddalena and Anna were the only two Canossian Tertiary Sisters. It was a time of trial and error for both the Chinese and the Italian women.

On Christmas Day 1863, Maddalena and Anna made their first professions.⁴³ They wore medals similar to (but not the same as) those worn by the Canossian Sisters. The two Chinese sisters announced their intention to follow Christ and to reiterate their vocation of spreading the Good News.⁴⁴ Despite the cultural differences between the Chinese and the Italian sisters, the former were willing to face the problems because of their religious faith. Obviously, Maddalena and Anna experienced an evolution of their own. Their task of evangelization was heavy, but they were ready to overcome the obstacles. Meanwhile, the Canossian Sisters believed that the entry of these two Chinese Tertiaries could help them understand the Chinese culture and customs, and communicate with the locals.⁴⁵ The devotion of the Chinese Tertiary Sisters to Christ was the *sole* reason for their perseverance during these new developments in the religious life of the Chinese and the Italian sisters.

Mother Lucia Cupis used to say “Our Dear, Good Tertiary Sisters,” as the latter were humble and loyal in carrying out their duties, and “sustained most efficiently the Chinese part of the Works.”⁴⁶ The Chinese Tertiary Sisters continued to look after the Canossians’ orphanage. Some of the children entered the orphanage as the result of war while some girls were abandoned and/or taken there for temporary care by the poor families.⁴⁷ In the orphanage, the Chinese girls received some basic education. The two Chinese sisters were overloaded with work and in great demand to take care of the children. In January 1865, a third Chinese woman entered the Canossian Tertiaries. She was already 36 years old.⁴⁸ Then, in January 1866, a Portuguese woman entered the group, so that there were four women managing the work in Hong Kong.

In 1867, two Tertiaries were assigned to conduct evangelization in the rural areas near Guangzhou in Guangdong Province. Mother Lucia Cupis wrote in detail about the work of the Tertiaries in the villages: “From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.—daily—they [the Tertiaries] divided their weekly days among three different villages: two days they remained at home receiving in those

days a good number of women and children of the village who come to them to be instructed. The following two days they go to another village, and the last two days in the third, always following the same order.”⁴⁹

The Mother Superior continued, “During the six hours of instruction, their catechumens (most of them from the neighbouring fields busy cutting grass and watching herds of cattle), take turns changing one another thus:- after an hour or two, the daughter gives her place to her mother, the mother-in-law to her daughter-in-law, the sister to another sister and so on, so that there is always a numerous and attentive audience. At 3 p.m. they return home, ...”⁵⁰ Afterward, “On arriving home they [the Tertiaries] cook their modest dinner, and after that follow their evening meditation. Thus restored physically with food and spirituality with prayer, they are ready to receive again a few women of the neighbourhood for instruction until sunset.”⁵¹ Indeed, this is a precious record of the evangelization of the Tertiaries and the village women whom they served in Guangdong.

The Tertiaries’ membership slowly increased. In February 1868, the fifth member—another Portuguese woman—joined the Tertiaries.⁵² Throughout the history of the Tertiaries, there were only two Portuguese members—the rest were Chinese. Both of the Portuguese women were orphans who had been cared for by the Canossian Sisters so the Canossian Sisters knew them well and realized that they were suitable for becoming Tertiaries. The first Portuguese woman who committed herself to the Tertiaries became Sr. Maria Soaica. She had lived with the Canossians since she was an 11-year-old orphan.⁵³ Shortly after her profession, she went with six Canossian Sisters to serve in Hankou, in Hubei Province. Typical of the Tertiaries, she performed charity work for the local mission.⁵⁴ “Sacrifice” and “charity” were characteristic of the Tertiaries as revealed in their chronicles. They went out to conduct pastoral care in the mission areas immediately after taking their vows, and they were always in great demand. The Canossian Sisters described Sr. Maria Soaica: with great enthusiasm, she worked untiringly “in all those branches of Works of Charity she was assigned to by obedience.”⁵⁵ However, Sr. Maria Soaica became terminally ill after having labored on the mainland and six years after her entry into the Tertiaries, in March 1872, she passed away at the young age of 29.⁵⁶ She was the first Tertiary to die in the mission.

In January 1870, the sixth member of the Tertiaries entered the Canossian Sisters’ convent.⁵⁷ It was then almost three years before the seventh and eighth members joined in December 1872⁵⁸ and the ninth member arrived slightly more than one year later.⁵⁹ In this group,

Maddalena—as the first and eldest member—was the leader. She had learned Portuguese when she was in Macau and could thus communicate fairly well with the Canossian Sisters. In *History of Our Canossian Missions: Volume One, Hong Kong 1860–1910*, Sr. Ida Sala, FdCC, wrote that the Italian Sisters spoke Portuguese, English, and French in addition to their mother tongue.⁶⁰ Therefore, Maddalena understood the Canossian Sisters when they spoke in Portuguese and related their orders to the other Chinese women. Maddalena served as the supervisor of the Tertiaries, and was responsible for every matter including the novices' training and the distribution of duties among them. In 1872, Fr. Raimondi made a trip to the villages in mainland China, where the Tertiaries served. Upon his visit, he had a favorable impression of the Tertiaries: “The good these Sisters do is incalculable. Modest, recollected, devout, they pass from village to village, stopping here and there, instructing girls and women, preparing for Baptism ... always observing the Holy Rules given to them—this they do rigorously! [underlining original]”⁶¹

Modification and Adoption of the Rules of the Tertiaries in Hong Kong

It took time for the Tertiaries to grow in number, but in 1874, the Canossian Sisters thought it was the right time to review *The Rules of the Tertiaries*. The reason was obvious: Fr. Raimondi was to leave for Italy that year to discuss the needs of the Hong Kong Mission. In 1874, the Hong Kong Mission expanded to include the Bao'an district of Guangdong Province. By then, the foreign missionaries had already spread their work into different areas in Kowloon and the interior, such as Tai Po and Sai Kung.⁶² In November 1874, Hong Kong rose to be a Vicariate Apostolic and Fr. Raimondi became the first Vicar Apostolic. In the same month he was also consecrated bishop in Rome. With his ascendance as the Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong, he no longer shouldered the responsibilities of the procurator of Propaganda Fide, which were delegated to Fr. Giuseppe Burghignoli in December 1874.⁶³

The Canossian Sisters tried to modify *The Rules of the Tertiaries* to cater to the situation in the colony. In Rome, Fr. Raimondi “presented a petition” to Pope Pius IX “to have the approval of the said Rules.”⁶⁴ It was recorded that the Pope “answered to make them observe first,” and that afterward, seeing the progress made, “it would be easier to get the approval from Rome.”⁶⁵ This meant the Tertiaries should take some

time to observe *The Rules* which had been modified; if they were successful in doing so, Rome could consider approving them. As a result, the then Bishop Raimondi returned to Hong Kong with this message and the booklet of *The Rules of the Tertiaries* of Milan in 1874⁶⁶—an important development for the Tertiary Sisters.

In 1874, Bishop Raimondi brought the Portuguese edition of *The Rules of the Tertiaries* from Milan to Hong Kong, certain parts of which he selected to be translated into Chinese for the Chinese Tertiary Sisters to observe. The Chinese translation of *The Rules* that the Chinese Tertiary Sisters read had concrete procedures and regulations for them to follow.⁶⁷ First, the superior of the Canossian Sisters could decide whether to accept an applicant into the Chinese Tertiaries. She could also decide whether to ask a woman of unsatisfactory conduct to leave the Tertiaries and return to her parents. Second, the Chinese sisters were expected to bear in mind their calling and devote themselves entirely to God. A Chinese sister could not refuse an assignment that she considered to be inferior in nature. Third, the Chinese sisters should treat each other like blood sisters and work closely together. Fourth, both the sisters and the novices were to be known to the Chinese people as “goo leung” (as mentioned above, the Cantonese transliteration for “unmarried ladies”). This part of the Chinese translation of *The Rules* catered specifically to the Tertiary Sisters’ mission in a Chinese society. Fifth, the Chinese sisters were to enhance their own spirituality through the worship of the Precious Blood of Jesus. They had already given up any desire for status and pride when they entered the convent and they worked toward a single goal with love and obedience.⁶⁸ Sixth, there was to be no difference between the Tertiary Sisters, all of whom were of equal status. They should appreciate each other and enrich the bonding among themselves.⁶⁹ Seventh, it was unnecessary and useless to emphasize the Tertiary Sisters’ rank within the community, as their goal was the glorification of Christ.⁷⁰

Eighth, the Chinese sisters were to obey their superior’s orders, engage in meaningful conversation, look after each other, and request forgiveness before bedtime if ill feelings arose. Likewise, they were to care for each other when sick.⁷¹ Ninth, they should be willing to take up the lowest tasks with Christ in their heart, and to serve others instead of waiting to be served.⁷² Tenth, they should speak in a cautious manner to glorify God and benefit others. They should not engage in gossip between themselves or with outsiders. Eleventh, the doctor could enter the Tertiary Sisters’ room to see the sick, the priest could enter the convent for the sisters to make

confessions, and visitors could be admitted as well but on all of these occasions, there must be a companion of two sisters.⁷³ Twelfth, the Tertiary Sisters must refuse gifts, favors, and letters from outsiders unless they had the permission of the superior. Thirteenth, they were to follow the superior's timetable for the daily charges.⁷⁴ Fourteenth, they should not ask friends and relatives to visit them, but instead should depend wholeheartedly on the Lord. Fifteenth, none of the Tertiary Sisters should stand at the doorway of the convent unless their presence was requested. They should not be inquisitive about who had visited the convent. When greeting visitors, they should have other sisters as companions, be well mannered, and not spread the conversation around the convent.⁷⁵ Sixteenth, the Tertiary Sisters must have the superior's approval before leaving the convent and must go out in pairs. The purposes of going out should be those of good deeds, educational tasks, and patient care. Afterward, the sisters must report their work to the superior.⁷⁶ Seventeenth, there was to be a yearly retreat of eight days, with the superior making all decisions. Eighteenth, it was the superior's responsibility to take care of the spiritual needs, health, and behavior of the community members.

In summary, the Tertiary Sisters should always keep *The Rules* in mind and observe them, and lead a life of mutual respect, obedience, discipline, and poverty, refraining from greed, arrogance, and idle talk. *The Rules of the Tertiaries* had high expectations of the Chinese sisters, who shouldered many responsibilities and concentrated on the advancement of their spirituality and community.

The Chinese translation of *The Rules of the Tertiaries* specified the regulations that the sisters were expected to follow. It also stressed the superior's responsibilities, with a section outlining her duties. According to *The Rules*, the superior was the example for the Tertiary Sisters and thus had to adhere strictly to the regulations and be virtuous. She had to be the light of the community, to shine for the other sisters.⁷⁷ She also committed herself to teach the doctrine to the Tertiary Sisters, each time for one hour, and to speak about the Catholic faith and values every Friday.⁷⁸ Every month, the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters taught the doctrine to the Tertiaries. On such occasions, the Tertiaries' superior could admit her own mistakes in front of the Chinese sisters, so that the others would not perpetuate the same faults.⁷⁹

Simultaneously, the superior of the Tertiaries was the guardian of *The Rules*, tasked with ensuring the advancement of the community, the well-being of the Chinese sisters, the students in their schools (some of whom

were disabled), and the children in their orphanages.⁸⁰ In other words, the Tertiaries' superior had to be aware of every aspect of the community, so that the Chinese sisters would progress on the right path. According to *The Rules*, it was in this manner that the Tertiaries' superior made herself accountable to the Lord. The obligations of the superior were considered crucial, as her negligence could lead to errors. Even though she had the right to administer matters within the community, she should also maintain an attitude of kindness in the correction of others' behavior. Most importantly, the Chinese translation of *The Rules* stated that the superior of the Tertiaries should report to the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters on any essential matters if deemed necessary.⁸¹ It was of crucial importance that the superior of the Tertiaries received the approval of the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters and the blessings of the Lord. As seen in the Chinese translation of *The Rules*, the Canossian Institute had the ultimate say on the progress of the Chinese Tertiary Sisters.

The Rules highlighted certain characteristics. The Chinese Tertiary Sisters emphasized humility, and there was no exception for the Tertiaries' superior, who had to avoid arrogance and to serve the other sisters on an equal basis.⁸² The superior did not have any privileges when it came to daily necessities and clothing, except that she received special attention when it came to medical care. That was understandable as she had to be in good health to lead her fellow sisters. Virtue was another key word in the Tertiaries' practice meaning that the superior handled every task and treated the sisters with an attitude of tolerance and a spirit of acceptance. She had to listen to the sisters and the students of the schools with an open heart.⁸³ In addition, the superior had to make sure that the sisters maintained suitable behavior, with restraints and without excesses. She delegated the task of checking the sisters' rooms every month to the assistant superior.

The Rules mentioned firstly the relations between the superior of the Tertiaries and the superior of the Canossian Sisters and secondly the relations between the Tertiaries and the Canossian Sisters. The superior of the Tertiaries held an office for two years but her term could be extended. The decision to reselect the Tertiaries' superior belonged to the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters.⁸⁴ At any time, the Tertiaries' superior could be removed from office if she did not prove capable of shouldering the responsibilities or if she was ill.⁸⁵ The superior of the Tertiaries asked permission from the Italian Mother Superior to relocate work among the Chinese sisters and to grant exemptions to particular sisters.⁸⁶ Without the

consent of the Italian superior, the Tertiary Sisters could not change their confessors, their doctors, surgeons, or even the catechists and workers whom they employed.⁸⁷

Discipline was to be strictly observed. Without the acknowledgment of the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters, the Tertiaries could not alter their daily routine. The superior of the Chinese Tertiaries kept a close watch over their timetable, and she kept the keys to the entrance, the chapel, the refectory, the kitchen, and the storage area. Around 5 or 6 p.m. in the evening, she asked the assigned senior sister of the Tertiaries to see to that the convent and the rooms were properly locked. The superior of the Tertiaries had to be accountable to the Italian superior for every aspect of the Tertiaries' everyday lives.⁸⁸ Although the superior of the Tertiaries had the key to the chapel, the Canossian Sisters kept the key of the Eucharist cabinet.⁸⁹ Whenever the Tertiaries received money or gifts, they handed the items over to the Canossian Sisters, showing that the latter had full authority over the former.

In 1874, the Canossian Sisters made a record of the Tertiaries and wrote down their impressions of Maddalena and Anna. The superior of the Canossian Sisters at that time was Mother Maria Stella.⁹⁰ Her description of Maddalena was as follows (underlining and upper case in the original)⁹¹:

Sister Maddalena Tam—the first of our dearest Tertiaries. She has 13 years of Religious Life ... on our first arrival here (1860) she offered herself to us for the education of the Chinese girls, her own nationals, and she still works in that field, beside[s] being in charge of the orphans—who are never less than 50—and ever since those days[,] she remains our indefatigable companion in the needs of our House.

Active in her work, fluent and learned in her speech, she attended all alone to the Spiritual Exercises of the Chinese woman, giving them spiritual talks, leading their prayers, counseling them in each individual need and watching constantly over them, ... In return they loved her like their own mother.

As NOVICE MISTRESS to her Sisters (Tertiaries) she has the consolation of seeing them flourishing ... The Novices are 8 now, but there are several other aspirants.

She gives religious instruction to the women who come to the Sunday School, which is very well attended. Also she explains the Doctrine in the Parish Church; she knows how to restore peace in many families who turn to her for advice.

Sister Maddalena moves about her many tasks with great ease, and does everything as if she did nothing at all! And to say that the whole complex Chinese Branch of our Works passes entirely through her own hands!

It is obviously clear that the true Divine Spirit sustains and guide[s] her.

Sr. Maddalena taught in the Chinese school, took care of the orphans, and explained the doctrine to the Chinese women. She took up the important responsibilities of training the Tertiary Sisters and ensuring that the Tertiaries fulfilled their charitable duties. Throughout the years, Sr. Maddalena looked after the spiritual and practical concerns of the Tertiary Sisters. She was of strong character, with a good education and linguistic abilities that helped her assume her position as the leader of the Tertiaries and the communicator between the Chinese and the Italian sisters. Hence, her work was instrumental to the success of the Canossian Sisters' Chinese school, and to the education of the novices to the extent that could be afforded.

Mother Maria Stella also wrote the following on Anna (underlining and upper case in the original):

Sister Anna Tam—is also a Chinese Tertiary who in order to become a Religious sacrificed to God a beautiful and blooming youth. Gifted with great seriousness of purpose and common sense, she came to us to be educated, but, after a few months, she felt attracted to the Religious life....

Sister Anna is in charge of the Chinese orphans and of the Catechumenate of the Chinese women. These women, at the end of their course of instruction under Sister Anna, know enough to deserve a "GOOD", so to say.

Sister Anna moves about her task with great religious dignity, totally forgetful of self.⁹²

Sr. Anna paid attention to the catechumen classes and the care of the Chinese orphans. She could speak to the Chinese women and children, and win their trust and respect. Both pioneers, Maddalena and Anna, made charity the priority of their vocation and charity was of the utmost importance to the Tertiaries throughout their many years of service in Hong Kong and mainland China. In this way, they were supposed to have fulfilled the promise of sacrificing themselves that they made when they took the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

It could not be known in 1886 but a new member would lead the Chinese women away from the Canossian Sisters. She would become the foundress of the Precious Blood Sisters, taking the Chinese sisters

with her on a journey of self-reliance in 1922. Clara Tam, Maddalena's 18-year-old niece,⁹³ was born into the Catholic family in Macau. The fifth of ten children, she and her family earned a living by selling bread. Later, her biological sisters also joined the Tertiaries, and they succeeded her as the second and then the third superior of the Precious Blood Sisters.

Concern for Catholic Education

Bishop Raimondi expressed his concern for developing Catholic education in Hong Kong, and the Catholic sisters had a great role to play. In 1877, he reiterated the words of Pope Pius IX in his pastoral letter to the Church. At that time, the bishop was responding to the queries of the foreign missionaries regarding Catholic education in the colony. In the letter, he addressed the local Church: "Having been informed that several of our flock are desirous to know exactly what are the decisions of our Church with regard to the education question, we are induced to comply with such a desire, by giving a clear idea of this very important question; and by laying before you the judgments given by the Bishops of the Catholic world and confirmed by the formal definition given of it by the Vicar of Christ, our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX."⁹⁴

According to Bishop Raimondi, the Pope had heard from bishops in missions worldwide and thus had decided that Catholic education must incorporate religion despite the challenges posed by the scientific world.⁹⁵ The Church insisted that Catholic schools include religious education in the face of the trend to divorce religion from education and to focus primarily on the study of natural sciences. In the modern age, there had been the inclination to exclude religion in schools. It was a situation that the Pope noticed and condemned. Pope Pius IX called upon bishops worldwide to continue religious instruction in schools and to develop textbooks. While the Pope was sending his message to overseas missions, Bishop Raimondi took the opportunity to call attention to the significance of the teaching of the doctrine in the Catholic schools in the colony. He told the Church that a Catholic school had to meet three conditions: namely, that the teachers be Catholic, that they teach the doctrine, and that the textbooks contain no substance against the Catholic faith.⁹⁶ Having read the bishop's pastoral letter, the Canossian Sisters should have recognized the value of their schools and the Tertiary Sisters' teaching of the local Chinese children in the colony.

Plague in the 1890s: Death of the Second Portuguese Tertiary Sister

In a letter written by the superior of the Canossian Sisters and sent back home to Italy, Mother Maria Stella described the plague that had been inflicting severe losses and provoking anxiety in the colony's population. Even the sisters could not escape the pandemic: the second Portuguese Tertiary Sister, Anna Pereira, died as a result of the plague. Nevertheless, the sisters bravely continued their work serving the needy and the sick. On August 11, 1894, Mother Maria Stella wrote, "As I informed you, Sister, in one of my letters, this island of Hong Kong is being unfortunately attacked by the plague, which drags along with innumerable victims. Following the advice and obedience of our Superiors, we offered our poor help; at first with daily visitations for a fortnight, then as the Bishop lent us one of the houses of the Mission, six Sisters went to the hospital for five weeks, taking turns, three during the day-time and three during the night time and then retired into the little house for some rest."⁹⁷

The plague claimed the life of the Portuguese Tertiary, Sr. Anna Pereira, in August 1894. She had been with the Tertiaries for 26 years, since her entry in 1868. Mother Maria Stella relayed the sad news to her superior in Italy: "one of the Tertiary Sisters, developed a fever, which grew worse in the course of five days. Six hours before she died the doctors tested her blood and soon discovered the plague-germs!"⁹⁸ It was too late to save her and of utmost urgency that immediate action was taken to save others. Mother Maria Stella said, "The infectious case had to be reported to the Government and immediately it ordered us to take the Sister to the hospital; they came to fetch her with the ambulance."⁹⁹ Sr. Anna Pereira died in the hospital with two sisters who had been in service "with the plague-stricken through volunteer-nursing" at her side until the very end.¹⁰⁰ According to Mother Maria Stella, Sr. Anna Pereira was originally an orphan under the care of the sisters, and she had shown great discipline in deciding to join the Tertiaries.¹⁰¹ She had shouldered the responsibility of the Portuguese orphans, as Mother Maria Stella wrote, "Throughout all the time she lived with us, she edified us with her indefatigable zeal; indeed the loss will severely felt by our Portuguese orphans."¹⁰² In Sr. Anna Pereira's last moments, a priest was by her bedside and she renewed her vows and received the last sacrament. Mother Maria Stella's letter mentioned Sr. Anna Pereira's "sacrifice of her own life."¹⁰³ Again, sacrifice

and charity went hand-in-hand, as the sisters had been prepared for in their training and formation. At the end of the letter, Mother Maria Stella asked that it be circulated through the other houses of the Canossian Institute in Italy.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In 1890, Bishop Raimondi reported the approval of *The Rules of the Tertiaries*.¹⁰⁴ He recounted that the Tertiaries had been of tremendous value to the Hong Kong Mission, assisting the Canossian Sisters in the education of the local girls, the task of evangelization, and other types of charity work that the latter could not do. Bishop Raimondi continued to say that the superior of the Canossian Sisters had asked the Catholic Mission to support the Tertiaries and to implement *The Rules of the Tertiaries* in the colony. Thus, the bishop was willing to respond positively to the requests. The Tertiaries became an integral part of the Hong Kong Catholic Church and Bishop Raimondi recognized the Chinese Tertiary Sisters' unique contributions.

The Chinese sisters moved into the twentieth century, continuing with and maturing in their work. They grew together with the Hong Kong Catholic Church: "The Sisters of the Precious Blood Congregation take their Religious Vows and devote themselves to works of charity and education under the direction of the Bishop. They help missionaries and parish priests in mission works and the apostolate."¹⁰⁵ Moreover, "Their devotedness and zeal in the works of charity, in caring for the orphans, tending the sick, teaching Catechism and instructing children in Schools soon showed what precious help to the missionaries" they had been.¹⁰⁶ The Hong Kong Mission evolved to include larger areas and be of vital importance to the foreign missionaries who would be heading for mainland China in the early twentieth century. The Hong Kong Mission was linked to the China Mission, which was then related to the call for overseas missions from the Roman Catholic Church.

NOTES

1. Sergio Ticozzi, PIME, ed., *Historical Documents of the Hong Kong Catholic Church* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives, 1997), pp. 1-3.

2. Sr. Ida Sala, FdCC, *History of Our Canossian Missions: Volume One, Hong Kong 1860–1910* (Hong Kong: Canossian Missions, FdCC, 1997), pp. 28–29.
3. Letter from Fr. Luigi Ambrosi to Acting Colonial Secretary W.H. Alexander, May 29, 1865, in English, 6 pages, Section II: Hierarchy, Box 4: Msgr. Louis Ambrosi, 4th Prefect Apostolic (1855–1867), Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives (hereafter HKCDA).
4. “Rev. AMBROSI, Luigi,” The Succession Line, Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives, <http://archives.catholic.org.hk/Succession%20Line/L-Ambrosi.htm> (accessed March 27, 2015).
5. “Rev. RAIMONDI, Giovanni Timoleone MEM,” The Succession Line, Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives, <http://archives.catholic.org.hk/Succession%20Line/GT-Raimondi-R.htm> (accessed March 27, 2015).
6. *Ibid.*; Information on Fr. Timoleone Raimondi, Section II: Hierarchy, Box 5: Fr. Timoleone Raimondi, 5th Prefect Apostolic and 1st Vicar Apostolic (1868–1894), HKCDA.
7. “Short History of PIME” (<http://www.pime.org/index.php?l=en&cidn=30>, accessed July 4, 2014):

PIME (The Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions) came into being on July 30, 1850, at Saronno (Milan). It came forth from the great heart of Pius IX, who gave a vigorous push for the “foreign missions.” ... In 1847, the Pope informed the Archbishop of Milan, Archbishop Romilli that an Italian missionary seminary should be created in the Lombard region.

The proposal fell on fertile ground

The “Mission Seminary” had its “baptism” by the bishops’ conference of the Lombard region. The bishops signed the act of foundation on December 1, 1850

The Lombard Seminary for the foreign missions was born in order to send diocesan priests and laymen to the missions, hence it is at the beginning of the modern missionary movement in the Italian church, which has advanced by various means

As the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, PIME was born at the will of another Pope, Pius XI. In 1926 he united the Lombard Seminary for the Foreign Missions with the Pontifical Seminary of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul for the Foreign Missions ... The sole purpose was the first proclamation of the Gospel and foundation of local churches in regions entrusted to them by Propaganda Fide: the mission *ad gentes* (to the non-Christians)

The historical evolution of the “Lombard Seminary for the Foreign Missions” went through two substantial changes in respect to its beginnings. The first was the change—already mentioned—from the Lombard Seminary to the Pontifical Institute

The second big change was internationalization: a policy that was brought about gradually in the 1950s

... According to the rules of 1886 (confirmed by the Constitutions of 1925) the “Mission Seminary for the Foreign Missions” could accept both European priests and “indigenous priests formed in the mission.”

Also, read Ida Sala, FdCC, *History of Our Canossian Missions: Volume Two, China 1868–1952* (Hong Kong: Canossian Missions FdCC, 1997), pp. vii–viii.

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31. Also noted in the same document: “THE CONGREGATION OF THE TERTIARIES WAS DISSOLVED DEFINITELY ON 15th August, 1862;”

- on which day all the good Sisters were very happy to come with us to continue with greater privilege the Works of Charity [underlining and upper case in original].” Read “Translation of the Underlined Part in Photocopy from ‘Souvenir of the Life and Virtue of Rev. Mother Margaret Crespi—Daughter of Charity—Milan: 1808–1876, Superior at Milan from 1850 to 1856,” n.d. (1876?), English translation, one page, Canossian Archives.
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The Chinese Sisters Until 1929

CHINA AND HONG KONG EVOLVING

The first two decades of the twentieth century in China were marked by reform, revolution, an intellectual renaissance, and the demands of a world war. There were times when the Chinese people were confident of their future, along with times of despair. During the Boxer Uprising of 1900, the Qing court once again demonstrated its incompetence to the Chinese and outsiders alike. To save face, Empress Dowager Cixi launched constitutional reforms that seemed to promise change in the central government. Soon, the Chinese people realized that the move was a ruse to rescue the Qing court from its inevitable demise. In fact, it was the failure of reform itself that led to change, with the 1911 Revolution ushering in the Republican Era (1912–1949). What followed were challenges from both inside and outside the country. In 1917, China entered the First World War (1914–1918), and expected to secure its lost territories as a victorious power at the later Versailles Conference (1919). During this time, Chinese students and intellectuals were taking part in the new cultural movement, refuting their own traditions and culture, and instead upholding Western ideas of science and democracy. China was in civil strife, with warlords fighting each other. By the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, the more the Chinese people expected of their country, the more disillusioned they became. The early decades of the twentieth century were characterized by modernization, Westernization, and evolution.

The 1920s was a time of great frustration. The May Fourth Incident of 1919 had a long-lasting impact on the Chinese people, who felt betrayed by the Western powers' failure to respect China's claim for Shandong, which had come under Japanese control during the First World War. Deeply disappointed, many Chinese intellectuals and students turned away from the Western democracies and focused on socialism. In 1921, the Chinese Community Party (CCP) was founded in Shanghai, taking advantage of workers' movements to build its strength. In 1922, the Seamen's Strike broke out in Hong Kong and won the backing of the activists in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. In 1925, the May Thirtieth Movement incited nationwide protests and demonstrations against the Western powers and Japan. In 1929, China, like other nations, suffered from the Great Depression.

What happened in China had repercussions in the British colony of Hong Kong, which was fundamentally a Chinese society. The Chinese intellectuals and elite in Hong Kong were involved in the uprisings of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the revolutionaries. Hong Kong was the base of operations for the revolutionaries, where the strikes broke out. Although there were anti-imperialist protests in Chinese cities, there were no attempts in Hong Kong to end British colonial rule. The Chinese people on the opposite sides of the Hong Kong–mainland border had both similar and contrasting concerns.

From 1900 to 1929, the world was evolving across multiple dimensions: international, political, economic, religious, and intellectual. The elements of evolution were interconnected, encompassing many nations, with events in some regions affecting those in others. Industrialization, modernization of the military, ideas of liberty, laissez faire economics, democracy, and individual rights, and President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points transcended national boundaries and exerted tremendous influence over nations throughout the world. The way these ideas were realized, and even their nature, changed according to place and time.

UNIVERSAL CATHOLIC CHURCH AND INDIGENIZATION OF THE CHINA MISSION

At the beginning of the twentieth century, both the Catholic and Protestant missionaries chose China as their priority for evangelization overseas. In 1900, there were more than 740,000 Chinese Catholics

and 470 local priests on the Chinese mainland.¹ The country proved a valuable endeavor for the foreign missionaries. After the ninety-nine-year lease of the New Territories to Britain in 1898, the Catholic Church included Sai Kung as a mission field in the Vicariate Apostolic of Hong Kong.² Evangelization on the outskirts of the colony became noticeable. Missionaries, the local clergy, and converts reached out to villages in the rural territories. The Chinese sisters were the most capable when it came to shouldering the mission, as they spoke and/or could more easily learn the dialects (mainly Cantonese and Hakka). They were also well acquainted with their fellow Chinese and very much aware of the concerns of the common folk, which made their evangelization efforts more successful as they offered whatever help they could to the local households.

THE CHINESE TERTIARY SISTERS FROM 1900 TO 1912

The Chinese sisters began as Canossian Tertiaries, taking on tasks made difficult for the Italians due to language and cultural obstacles. The Tertiaries branched out from the Canossian Sisters' congregation to address the fact that the Canossian Sisters needed to establish a foothold in Chinese society, and they had the support of the local Catholic Mission and approval from Rome. Although the Tertiaries existed as a community in the Catholic Church, they were subordinate to the Canossian Sisters, to whom they provided ready assistance.³ The Canossian Sisters controlled the administration and the allocation of work among the Tertiaries, who took care of evangelization, the orphanage and schools. In 1910, the orphanage housed 191 Chinese children, of whom the youngest were four years old, and some Eurasian children. The Chinese school was called Pui Ching and had 89 students.⁴ The Chinese sisters went in pairs to help in villages in Sai Kung in the New Territories and Bao'an, Haifeng, and Huiyang in Guangdong Province.⁵

In the archival records, the Canossian Sisters only listed the Tertiaries' baptismal and family names. Even when written in Chinese, the Chinese character of the family name appeared first, followed by the transliteration of the baptismal name. Thus, the Chinese sisters' names were usually more than three Chinese characters. Their original Chinese names (often comprising three Chinese characters) were hardly known because once they entered the Tertiaries, they forsook their original Chinese names (the second and third characters) and used their baptismal names instead.

The Tertiaries served the needy, the deprived, and the women and children of the Chinese families. They also had the ability, courage, and determination to reach out to the poor and to desolate, faraway areas. The Chinese sisters were conscious of their own evolution as religious women serving God, loyal to their life-long vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Their outlook, identity, and responsibilities developed over time as they recognized the changes within themselves and in their immediate surroundings. Simultaneously, they evolved with the dynamics of the Catholic Church and the colony of Hong Kong. The Chinese sisters followed the Catholic Mission's directives, evangelizing in the mission fields of mainland China. The term "mission" suggests perseverance, and the Tertiaries brought hoes and labored together in the fields with the farmers and the women. The Tertiaries were extraordinary and independent, women of action beyond doubt.

The Tertiaries remained under the administration of the Italian Canossian Sisters for a long time. It took six decades (from 1862 to 1922) before the Chinese sisters assumed the status of an independent congregation, which came under the direct control of the Hong Kong Catholic Mission. The Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood, established in 1922, was the first locally founded congregation of sisters in Hong Kong and it has remained the only one to the present day. Since 1922, they have been called the "eldest daughter" (although it should be the "only daughter") of the Hong Kong Catholic Church. Their evolution involved many aspects, including their individuality, spirituality, community life, undertakings, and organization. Together, they evolved with the larger Catholic Church and the developments in Hong Kong and China.

The Chinese sisters led a simple life, guided by the orders of the Italian sisters. The then second Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong, Bishop Luigi Piazzoli, MEM,⁶ granted the local superior of the Canossian Sisters the authority to rule over the Tertiaries, who were responsible for pastoral care and the charity work in the local community. Having received little education, the Tertiaries managed their duties before finishing their training in the novitiate. They had some opportunities for study when the Italian Canossian Sisters spoke about the Catholic doctrine, faith, and values. As such, the Chinese sisters were of much lower status than the foreign missionary sisters in the local Catholic Church. Compared with the average women in Hong Kong, however, these Chinese sisters had the exclusive right and the rare freedom to choose their own vocation. It would be in the later decades of the twentieth century that the Precious Blood Sisters received higher tertiary and professional educations.

Sister Maddalena Tam and Sister Clara Tam

In 1900, Sr. Maddalena Tam—the leader of the Tertiaries—was almost 70 years old. She was educated and was responsible for supervising the Chinese women, explaining *The Rules of the Tertiaries* and the instructions of the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters to the Chinese sisters. She was the link between the Italian sisters and the Tertiaries. When the Canossian Sisters read the Bible aloud, Sr. Maddalena translated the Italians' teachings into Chinese for the Tertiaries.⁷ It was through such means that the Chinese sisters slowly accumulated their knowledge of Christianity. A younger nun, Sr. Clara Tam, provided Sr. Maddalena with immediate support.⁸

In 1901, Sr. Anna Tam—the second woman to enter the Canossian Sisters' convent—died of the plague at the age of 56.⁹ The Canossian Sisters issued an obituary notice, which read: “SISTER ANNA TAM—died of plague on 29th November, 1901.”¹⁰ They wrote: “She had worked in the Institute for 42 years! She was the Head of the Kitchen Department, in charge of directing the huge culinary service of the Chinese Branch which required providing meals for over 500 people ... to pray for our good Sister Anna Tam, who spent her whole life at the service of religion, ever since the arrival of our first Sisters in Hong Kong—in 1860. She was at all times of very great use in the many branches of works of charity of this house.”¹¹ Sr. Anna set an example for the future Tertiaries, who continued to provide the Canossian Sisters with assistance while devoting themselves to charity work. Her death was one of many caused by epidemics in those days.

Sr. Anna's passing marked the end of a phase in the history of the Tertiaries. Their work depended on the decisions made by the Italian missionary sisters, who in turn secured the consent of the Italian priests, who had full authority over the Hong Kong Catholic Church. In this early stage of the local Church, the Italian missionaries had more power to facilitate the expansion of the Catholic population and their influence in society. Although the Church was relatively young, the foreign missionaries gradually gained experience and expanded their mission fields.

Relationship Between the Chinese Tertiary Sisters and the Italian Canossian Sisters

To develop the Hong Kong Catholic Church, the Italian missionaries took advantage of their experience at home. What had been practiced in Italy

could be expedited in the British colony. In August 1904, Bishop Piazzoli set off for Italy but four months later, in December, he died there.¹² Fr. Dominico Pozzoni, MEM, accompanied Bishop Piazzoli to Italy and stayed there for a while. During this time, Fr. Pozzoni knew about the Italian Precious Blood Sisters and their constitutions.¹³ The Canossian Tertiaries had always been known as the “Precious Blood Sisters” abroad. Subsequently, Fr. Pozzoni brought a copy of the constitutions back to Hong Kong.¹⁴ In July 1905, Fr. Pozzoni became the third Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong, and in October, he was consecrated titular bishop.¹⁵ He was now Bishop Pozzoni, and he wanted the Chinese Tertiaries to adopt the constitutions of the Italian Precious Blood Sisters. Thus, in 1905, he asked Fr. Antonius Liu Cho-wan, who was also a respected scholar and translator, to produce a Chinese edition of the constitutions.¹⁶ As Fr. Liu was then serving in Haifeng, Guangdong Province, it took him quite some time to get the work done. In 1910, he moved to Hong Kong.¹⁷ Finally, in 1912, he completed the translation, explaining why the constitutions—only 25 printed pages in Chinese—took so long to be translated.

In 1912, the Chinese edition of the constitutions, entitled *Baoxuehui ren'ainü xiugui* (“Constitutions of the Precious Blood Sisters of Charity”),¹⁸ became the official version used by the Canossian Tertiaries in the colony.¹⁹ The constitutions used in Italy were now comprehensible to the Chinese Tertiary Sisters, and while they adopted the Chinese-language version, they had no relation with the Italian Precious Blood Sisters. Since the Chinese sisters became independent in 1922, they have remained a local congregation with no affiliation with other overseas congregations also named “Precious Blood Sisters.” The names “Sisters of the Precious Blood” or “Precious Blood Sisters” generally refer to different congregations around the world, and it should be noted that the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Hong Kong is not related to any of these overseas groups.

The Chinese Tertiaries continued to stay in the Canossian Sisters’ convent on Caine Road, and even though the Chinese and Italian sisters resided in the same place, they had little interaction except when the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters handed down orders to the Tertiaries.²⁰ The sisters lived by exacting timetables, with no exceptions. There were two schedules in the convent: one for the Chinese and another for the Italians. The two groups had different times for prayer, Mass, charges, and meals. They sat separately in the convent’s chapel. The Tertiaries were accommodated in one large room while the Italian sisters

had private bedrooms. There was a lack of contact between the Chinese and Italian sisters, and it took a long process of cross-cultural adaptation to enable more communication between the two communities. The Italian sisters took pride in their European traditions, and the Chinese Tertiaries slowly learned the rules of religious life. Moreover, the Italian and Chinese sisters were struggling to adapt to the local situation, to respond to the demands of the Catholic Mission, and to serve the people to the best of their ability. Offering service to the needy took up almost all their time.

The Tertiaries' Education of Chinese Girls

In the compound of the Canossian Sisters' convent, the Tertiaries were in charge of a temporary residence for Chinese girls, who had the opportunity to receive some basic education.²¹ This was somewhat like a small boarding school, with the girls living, studying, and working together. Their families paid a small sum of money per month for accommodation and meals, not because the Chinese sisters wanted or needed the money, but rather as a sign of the family's appreciation—a token of thanks. More significantly, it meant that the family was willing to make a sacrifice so that the daughter could attain knowledge and skills for the future. It was in this way that the girls were able to improve their lives. Regardless of how small the monetary amount was, it proved the families' determination that the girls should aim toward higher goals. The message was that the families did not take the good deeds of the Chinese sisters for granted, and the daughters were expected to recognize their families' sacrifices. Every practice was meant to have a meaning for those who were fortunate enough to grasp it.

Each day the girls had class for about an hour, and then spent the rest of the time helping the Chinese sisters with embroidery. The Chinese sisters maintained strict regulations and the girls returned home only once a month. The emphasis was on discipline. The arrangement was already a luxury for the young teenagers, as very few Chinese girls learned how to read at the time, and parents seldom thought of education for their daughters. Here, the girls attained some degree of literacy and gained the skills needed to make a living after they left the sisters. In Hong Kong and on the mainland, it was common to see the Catholic sisters hiring and teaching the Chinese women to do the needlework. Meanwhile, the Tertiaries provided the Chinese girls with accommodation. About 100 girls from Hong Kong and Macau entered the boarding school in 1910, partly as a

result of disturbances in Macau.²² Other congregations soon imitated the undertakings of the Chinese Tertiary Sisters in Hong Kong. The boarding school was also an important means of introducing the Catholic doctrine and securing vocations. It was by witnessing to the sisters' religious and community lives that girls became determined to join the Tertiaries.

In addition, the habits worn by the Tertiaries projected an image of solemnity, professionalism, and respectability. The Chinese girls saw a group of independent Chinese sisters who were distinguished from most women in the colony. Living together meant that the girls had close contact and communication with the sisters, and many of the former developed deep admiration for the latter, aspiring to follow in their footsteps.

Lucy Chan and the Other Novices of the Tertiaries

An excellent example of how the school attracted those seeking a future vocation was that of Lucy Chan, who ultimately became an exceptional superior general in the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood—the sisters called her Mother. The Chinese families could understand the Chinese Tertiary Sisters and thus were willing to trust them. Lucy's family had moved from Guangzhou, Guangdong Province to Hong Kong and wanted her to receive an education.²³ It did not take long for Lucy to prove an obvious candidate for the novitiate. The Chinese sisters gave her time to determine whether she had a calling. She spent a year in reflection and prayer contemplating whether she would be one of the few such women granted the privilege of determining her own future. Choosing a religious life meant leaving one's family, accepting strict rules and schedules, and serving others. Obedience was absolute.

Lucy's experience in the school made her conscious of her evolution. Initially, she only thought of embracing the Christian faith. At that time, Lucy had no concept of what her future responsibilities and evangelical work would be.²⁴ Nevertheless, she knew from those early days to observe the superior's orders. In November 1906, Lucy became a postulant of the Tertiaries and paid respect to the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters. As such, the Chinese women did not enter the Canossian Sisters' congregation, but rather the local community of the Tertiaries. Yet, it was the Canossian Sisters and their Mother Superior who had the final say in the distribution of tasks among the Tertiaries. There seemed to be an urgent need for someone to supervise the Chinese girls' embroidery work. Three days after Lucy became a postulant, she received the assignment of

overseeing the girls attending the boarding school, indicating that there were not enough Chinese sisters to handle the many charges. Those who entered the Tertiaries began working immediately, and their work took up most of their time. Although the Tertiary Sisters were ready to serve their people, they could not afford sufficient time for study.

In 1907, once Lucy had been a postulant for nine months, she accepted the challenge to evangelize in the villages. The mission field was Danshui in Huiyang District, Huizhou city, Guangdong Province. She was starting from scratch and an elder sister led her as she struggled to learn the dialects and the skills needed to communicate with the families in remote areas.²⁵ In the countryside, the sisters became familiar with the wives and children of the families. There were already some priests managing the Catholic churches in the localities. In addition to evangelization and assisting the priests, Lucy coped with managing her everyday life on an extremely tight budget. This applied to all of the sisters working in the countryside, as their annual stipend was only 15 Hong Kong dollars. Sometimes, the local people gave offerings to the sisters,²⁶ but overall life was difficult and Lucy had to obey and endure whatever happened. She stayed in the villages for one year before returning to Hong Kong to start her formation as a novice.

In the Canossian Sisters' convent, Lucy wore the new habit of the novice and took her vows in a ceremony with two other novices. The Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters oversaw the ceremony and received the new novices. There was a direct line of authority from the Italian sisters to the Chinese Tertiaries.

There were other Chinese women, some of whom were very young, who asked for permission to stay with the Chinese sisters.²⁷ A 13-year-old, Josephine Man, wanted to be a "goo leung" ("unmarried woman"), and her strong will gained her the approval of the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters. Like the other Chinese girls, Josephine had to acclimate to community life and learn from the Tertiaries. When Sr. Clara Tam was explaining the Catholic faith, she paid special attention to Josephine, helping her to understand the text. Josephine learned to read and she assisted the others with the embroidery work under the supervision of an Italian sister. Together with the others, Josephine observed the strict timetable that shaped each day. It was a test of her self-discipline, obedience, and readiness to live with the rest of the older sisters. She learned quickly and adapted readily to religious life. After many years, she became Sr. Josephine Man.

Not every novice was of the same character, however. Some of them were quiet while others were more vocal. Despite differences in their personalities, the Chinese women eventually proved capable of fulfilling their mission. They either resided in the Canossian Sisters' convent or they labored in the villages. It was not easy to be admitted to the convent—it required self-motivation in community life, respect for the superiority of the sisters, and perseverance under harsh circumstances.

CONSTITUTIONS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD SISTERS OF CHARITY (CHINESE SISTERS 1912–1914)

In 1912, Bishop Pozzoni achieved his objectives of firstly implementing the constitutions of the Italian Precious Blood Sisters in the colony and, secondly, making the constitutions comprehensible to the Chinese Tertiaries. He formally approved the Chinese edition of the constitutions for the Tertiary Sisters in the Vicariate Apostolic of Hong Kong, and thereafter the Tertiaries followed the *Constitutions of the Precious Blood Sisters of Charity*.²⁸

In August 1914, the local Catholic Church printed copies of the *Constitutions*, the entire text of which was in Chinese with the 37 regulations the sisters had to observe also rendered in Latin.²⁹ This printed version also included the daily prayers in Chinese. The *Constitutions* stated that the Chinese sisters had four main tasks. Firstly, they educated the Catholic children to be virtuous, regardless of family background. The sisters decided how many children to teach depending on the number of members in the community. Secondly, the sisters went out to care for the sick, including the sisters' relatives and friends, but they could not stay outside the convent overnight. Thirdly, the sisters taught the doctrine in the church unless they were unable to do so. Fourthly, the sisters gladly accepted tasks given by the superior. This work could be teaching the children, looking after the sick, and going out to preach, among other tasks. The Chinese sisters obeyed the superior's decisions, such as changes to the mission areas and responsibilities when they went out to preach. As long as it was for the good of the people, the sisters readily accepted whatever befell them.³⁰

According to the *Constitutions*, the Chinese sisters devoted themselves to Christ, His Precious Blood for the redemption of the people, and to paying respect to Our Lady of Sorrows.³¹ The *Constitutions* outlined the daily routine. In the morning, the sisters went to Mass. They prayed and

meditated, then led the children (the girls) in prayer. There was also evening prayer. Every eight days, the sisters made confession to the priest.³² Each day, the sisters were supposed to study the doctrine, to reflect on the Precious Blood of Christ, and to pray to Mary. They prayed the Rosary, and sometimes did so with the girls.³³ They were expected to stay away from all unnecessary and unfavorable matters to avoid being distracted from their responsibilities.³⁴ The Chinese sisters led a life of simplicity, wearing the black habits and veils. They were to be humble, polite, and prudent in their behavior.³⁵

As before, the *Constitutions* asked the sisters to treat each other like blood sisters, and to ask for forgiveness before bedtime in cases where someone took offense.³⁶ Without the superior's approval, the sisters could not engage in written correspondence with outsiders. They could not ask their parents, relatives, or friends to visit them. If a sister's parents wanted to visit, another sister must serve as a companion on the occasion.³⁷ When the sisters went out of the convent, they had to be in pairs and have the superior's permission. The *Constitutions* stipulated that the sisters attend eight days of retreat every year. In addition, the *Constitutions* stated that the sisters make their profession in the presence of the superior every year, to remind themselves of their calling to religious life. The Tertiaries also obeyed the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters.³⁸

The *Constitutions* emphasized the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—in that order. Regarding poverty, the sisters should not have their own property and should report all donations to the superior.³⁹ Although the Chinese sisters could accept their parents' properties, they could not use or transfer the items, as the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters controlled these assets. Regarding chastity, the sisters were to live the life of Christ and pay great respect to the Virgin Mary. Strict observance of proper behavior was expected.⁴⁰ Regarding obedience, the sisters were to abide by the regulations of the community. They had devoted themselves to the Lord and thus should gladly observe the orders of the superior to ensure the effectiveness, wholeness, joy, and perpetuity of their service.⁴¹ The sisters were to place complete confidence in their superior.

Finally, the *Constitutions* stressed the virtues of humility and love. The Chinese sisters were to consider humility to be of great significance because they followed the path of Christ and made certain that their behavior reflected their religious faith.⁴² The Chinese sisters assumed a low, selfless profile. They had no wish to attract attention as they believed in seeking God's blessings instead. Hence, the *Constitutions* asked the sisters to treat

each other with respect and modesty while avoiding arguments. The sisters were expected to behave in the same way with outsiders, projecting the spirit of humility in their service. They had to be willing to do whatever tasks with which they were entrusted. Regarding love, the Chinese sisters knew that it was the spirit of their community⁴³ and their loving relationship with Christ prepared them for any difficulties.

THE CHINESE SISTERS FROM 1912 TO 1922, FROM LOCALIZATION TO INDIGENIZATION

Leadership of Sister Clara Tam, Second Generation of the Tertiary Sisters

In the early twentieth century, the Catholic Mission emphasized localization. The Italian priests decided to localize their foreign practice in Hong Kong, and the first essential step in the process was to use the local language. The localization of the Church required the mastery of the Chinese dialects, and while the Canossian Sisters were expanding their charity work, they did not have enough time to learn Cantonese. They also found it to be a very difficult language to learn.⁴⁴ Both the local Church and the Canossian Sisters were anxious to expand the mission, and thus they recognized the importance of deploying the Tertiaries. The Church played an indispensable role in developing the Tertiaries, who spoke colloquial Chinese and contributed tremendously to evangelization through the kindergartens, schools, visits to prisons, and the mission fields in villages of the New Territories and Guangdong Province.⁴⁵

By 1912, the Tertiaries had been affiliated with the Canossian Sisters for half a century. The first generation of the Tertiaries had served as pioneers, but by 1912 they had clearly released their responsibilities to the second generation of sisters. In 1913, Sr. Maddalena Tam died at the age of 82. The Canossian Sisters had tremendous respect for Sr. Maddalena because of her indispensable leadership of the Tertiaries. The superior of the Canossian Sisters, Mother Teresa Martinoia, praised Sr. Maddalena for her unflinching guidance and outstanding foresight for the Chinese sisters. The archival materials show that Sr. Maddalena received wide appreciation for her dedication to the Tertiaries and their missionary work.⁴⁶ As one source notes, the Tertiaries followed the example of Sr. Maddalena, who “devoted herself to God’s glory and to the good of souls.”⁴⁷ It continues, “For fifty years she worked in humility and obedience caring for orphans

... tending the sick babies ... always happy whatever duty obedience called her."⁴⁸ After the death of Sr. Maddalena, the unquestionable successor was Sr. Clara Tam.

With the ascendance of Sr. Clara, the Tertiaries entered another phase of their history that corresponded with the success of the 1911 Revolution and the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912. On the eve of the new republic, the Roman Catholic Church believed it was time to make a decision in the mission field—one that had a profound impact on the Chinese Catholic Church and massive implications for the China Mission. After localization, the focus shifted to the indigenization of the Chinese Catholic Church through firstly the transfer of leadership to the local clergy, secondly the formation of local priests, and thirdly the development of the local congregations of sisters.⁴⁹

In the founding of a congregation, there was every so often a superior with a keen sense of mission and vision for the sisters. While Sr. Maddalena had led the Tertiaries for five decades, Sr. Clara was in charge of the Precious Blood Sisters who became independent in 1922. When Sr. Maddalena died in 1913, Sr. Clara was 45 years old and had served the Tertiaries for 27 years. Sr. Clara had been assisting Sr. Maddalena in taking care of the Chinese sisters for a long time, and thus she had the knowledge and the authority to lead them.

Like the other Chinese sisters, Sr. Clara came from a Catholic family in Macau, with ten children who had been raised according to Catholic teachings and values. Similarly to Sr. Maddalena, she was educated and offered valuable service to the Tertiaries, within which many of the sisters were blood relatives. Sr. Clara was no exception, as her blood sisters and several of her other relatives also entered the Tertiaries.⁵⁰ Throughout the years, she had worked in the schools and the orphanages and took a special interest in recruiting new vocations for the Tertiaries. In addition to her experience, Sr. Clara had the qualities of a beloved superior and she later became the honored foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. The Chinese sisters fondly remembered her as being caring, humble, and diligent.⁵¹ She simultaneously shouldered numerous responsibilities, demonstrating her versatility, competence, and dedication to the congregation. Sr. Clara soon received Bishop Pozzoni's appointment to head the Chinese sisters. Her many years as their superior were both demanding and exhausting.

In 1913, the Canossian Sisters retained tight control of the Tertiaries' management and work, which had spread to villages in the New Territories

and Guangdong Province.⁵² The Chinese sisters continued their work in the schools and the orphanage.⁵³ Many of these Chinese women took up their duties even before completing their training and novitiate, and they had little time for study. Among the Tertiaries, members of the Tam family were the most prominent. The Tertiaries' black habits were an imitation of those the Canossian Sisters wore, but a different color, and their bonnets were simpler. The medal the Tertiaries wore also differed from that worn by the Canossian Sisters.⁵⁴

Half a century had passed since the Chinese girls had entered the Canossian Sisters' convent, but their status had not risen much. Both the Chinese Tertiaries and the Italian sisters maintained unquestioning obedience to the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters. There had not been any betterment in the livelihood of the Tertiaries in the villages, as they were in urgent demand to conduct the evangelization of the Chinese people. Once the Catholic Mission requested the Tertiaries' service, they responded. They could not negotiate with the Catholic Mission and the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters with regard to their work and subsidies, yet they evolved through the incremental study of the Christian religion, their associations with the villagers, their evangelization work, and their lives in the villages. The Tertiaries gained self-confidence in what they had achieved, and understood their vocation as sisters for evangelization. They evolved with the changing situations in the mission fields, together with the people they served, which made them uniquely approachable.

Independence of the Precious Blood Sisters in 1922

The Precious Blood Sisters' independence took several years to materialize and was a well-monitored process. On July 13, 1919, Bishop Pozzoni approved the "Special Rules for the Precious Blood Sisters Who Go to Work in the Mission Districts."⁵⁵ The title indicated that the local Church recognized the Chinese sisters' contributions to the evangelization work. From 1919 onward, the Chinese sisters were known as the Precious Blood Sisters and they were no longer called the Tertiaries.⁵⁶ The Catholic Mission implemented the "Special Rules" among the Precious Blood Sisters, who did not play a role in their creation but had to readily accept them.

For years, the Canossian Sisters had several houses in Shau Kei Wan (then spelled Sau-ki-wan, SauKiwan, or Shaukiwan; Lot No. 106), which

was the earliest developed area on the eastern side of Hong Kong Island.⁵⁷ Small houses accommodated the girls' school, with one occasionally serving as the chapel for Sunday Mass. In 1913, a new house—the Holy Cross—was constructed adjacent to those of the Canossian Sisters and it became the chapel for the Catholic neighborhood.⁵⁸ The Holy Cross catered to the spiritual needs of the Chinese Catholics. On September 8, 1919, Bishop Pozzoni sent the first group of eight postulants from the Precious Blood Sisters to the Holy Cross.⁵⁹ It was thought that the place was not yet ready to accommodate the “overabundant” number of Chinese sisters, who opted to move there.⁶⁰ Bishop Pozzoni had previously discussed the matter with the superior of the Canossian Sisters, Mother Teresa Pera, and both had agreed to quietly send the postulants there without any special ceremony.⁶¹ The Holy Cross became “the first independent convent for the Sisters of the Precious Blood.”⁶² The address was “Sau-ki-wan, Cross Street.”⁶³

According to the Precious Blood Sisters' archives, Bishop Pozzoni had already decided to support the independence of the Chinese sisters in 1918.⁶⁴ A slightly different timeline is reported in the Canossian Sisters' records. In *History of Our Canossian Missions: Volume Three, Hong Kong 1910–2000*, Sr. Ida Sala, FdCC states it was in 1919 that the bishop told Mother Teresa Pera his intention to remove the Chinese sisters from the Canossians and to form them into a separate congregation under the control of the Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong.⁶⁵ Sr. Ida explains that Rome had been thinking of fostering the local leadership of the Catholic Church in China, not only of the priests but also of the congregations of sisters after the 1911 Revolution.⁶⁶ Rome's decision certainly influenced the Catholic Mission in Hong Kong.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, the Chinese sisters depended entirely on the local Church for expenses of all kinds, and they had no financial foundation for independence. As described, “They received food and clothing from the Vicar Apostolic, but the money was administered by the Canossian Sisters.”⁶⁸ They remained in the Canossian Sisters' convent and pledged obedience to the Canossian Sisters' superior.⁶⁹ The decision to send the eight women to Shau Kei Wan was thus an experiment to see whether the Chinese sisters could eventually move their residence there. More importantly, the decision to send the postulants was made by Bishop Pozzoni and Mother Teresa Pera. The Chinese sisters did not participate in the discussion. It was Bishop Pozzoni who made the final decision to grant independence to the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood.

In November 1919, Pope Benedict XV sent out his apostolic letter *Maximum Illud*. The Roman Catholic Church sought the continued expansion of its mission overseas, responding to increasing demand and noting the possible opportunities. It stated that the Roman Catholic Church was delighted that “efforts to promote and develop the foreign missions ... in many quarters of the world increased and intensified.”⁷⁰ The reasons for writing this letter were expressed as follows: “to encourage you, your clergy, and your people in these efforts, and secondly, to point out methods you can adopt to further the fulfillment of this momentous undertaking.”⁷¹ The apostolic letter asked that the missionaries commit to converting all people within the boundaries of the mission fields.⁷² It emphasized that “the preaching of the gospel can be brought more immediately and more effectively to everyone in an area if more mission stations” were set up as soon as possible.⁷³

In the earlier paragraphs of the apostolic letter, there was a request to the Vicars Apostolic to pay special attention to the contribution of the sisters: “He will bring in sisters to open schools, orphanages, and hospitals, to found their hostels and establish other charitable institutions. He is happy and eager to do this, because he realizes how remarkably works of this kind, with God’s help, contribute to the spread of the Faith.”⁷⁴ The letter stressed that the sisters played a crucial role in advancement in the mission fields. In the latter part of the letter, there was more praise for the sisters, highlighting the sisters’ dedication to the care of children, their charity, and their pastoral work.⁷⁵ The Roman Catholic Church sent a clear message to “encourage the sisters and inspire them to further efforts on behalf of the Church,” and in turn their service would further their own spiritual growth.⁷⁶ Certainly, this was applicable to the Precious Blood Sisters, who had been going off to the villages and engaging in all of the tasks mentioned in the letter. The evolution of the Roman Catholic Church and its recognition of the women serving in mission fields and the various ways in which they promoted evangelical work were significant. Together, the Precious Blood Sisters evolved through their devotion to evangelization.

The apostolic letter expressed three main concerns which were obvious to the Precious Blood Sisters in their later reading of the history of the Catholic Church. The issues were: firstly that the local churches should have their local bishops; secondly that the local cultures of the mission fields should be respected; and thirdly that religion and politics should remain separate.⁷⁷ The letter pointed to the indigenization of the local

churches worldwide, emphasizing the local clergy as crucial because they might understand the culture and concerns of their own people better than the foreign missionaries.⁷⁸ Thus, the local priests' training was of prime consideration. The letter explained: "Their education should be complete and finished, excellent in all its phases, the same kind of education for the priesthood that a European would receive."⁷⁹ In addition, it stated that the local priests were *not* assistants to their foreign counterparts; rather, that the Chinese and foreign priests were of equal status. Given that indigenization was a significant concern, the apostolic letter marked an important episode in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in the twentieth century.

The indigenization of Catholicism stressed that the Church should not be "alien to any people" and not be related to any foreign power.⁸⁰ After the apostolic letter was issued, the Roman Catholic Church sent Archbishop Celso Costantini as the apostolic delegate and its representative to China. To fulfill the objective of installing local bishops in the churches, Archbishop Costantini facilitated the establishment of the Regional Seminary for South China in Hong Kong, to train Chinese priests.⁸¹ He had this project "most at heart," and had visited many sites before deciding on the best location for the seminary in the colony in the mid-1920s.⁸² This was the outcome of the apostolic letter: "We are ordering the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to apply remedies adapted to the various regions of the world, and to see to the founding of seminaries for both individual regions and groups of dioceses."⁸³ Clearly, Hong Kong had assumed a crucial role in the indigenization of the churches in mainland China.

The Precious Blood Sisters were fulfilling the indigenization of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong and on the mainland. In 1920, the aspirants were following the Precious Blood Sisters to the remote villages.⁸⁴ In 1922, the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood attained the status of an indigenous congregation dedicated to evangelization and caring for the poor in Hong Kong and the interior. The Chinese sisters had the blessings of the apostolic letter of Pope Benedict XV, which called for the indigenization of Catholicism in overseas missions. In a similar way to the sisters' evolution, the local Church witnessed its own evolution inter-related with that of the Roman Catholic Church in its worldview.

On July 14, 1922, the Holy See approved the independence of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood⁸⁵ and the Chinese sisters moved out of the Canossian Sisters' convent on Caine Road and into

the Holy Cross on Cross Street.⁸⁶ The Precious Blood Sisters became the first congregation of Chinese sisters in Hong Kong. According to the Canossian Sisters' archives, the separation of the Precious Blood Sisters from the Canossians was solely the will of Bishop Pozzoni. As written in the Canossian Sisters' document: "The greater loss was on the side of the Canossian Sisters whose works in the Chinese Section remained without trained personnel—schools—catechisms. But the Bishop's order had to be obeyed no matter how much it cost even to the Chinese Sisters themselves of those days."⁸⁷ In *History of Our Canossian Missions: Volume Three, Hong Kong 1910–2000*, Sr. Ida writes, "Our Chronicle recorded that on August 20th, 1923 all the dowries belonging to the Chinese Sisters *still alive* were returned to them, the total sum amounting to \$2,210 [Hong Kong dollars], and that by February 2nd, 1924, all the Chinese Sisters had left the Canossian Institute [emphasis added]."⁸⁸ The Precious Blood Sisters were exclusively Chinese and were now under the direct administration of the Catholic Mission.⁸⁹ Once again, the Chinese sisters suffered through very humble beginnings (see Fig. 2.1).

SISTER CLARA TAM ACCOMPANYING THE CHINESE SISTERS THROUGH TOUGH BEGINNINGS

Endeavors of Sister Clara Tam

When the Precious Blood Sisters moved to the Holy Cross on Cross Street, Shau Kei Wan, they had to endure extremely harsh conditions. Although they had secured an autonomous status, they did not have the financial basis to sustain themselves in the long term. They had to rely on the Catholic Mission for their future growth. In fact, they had already anticipated such circumstances. Bishop Pozzoni officially appointed Sr. Clara Tam as the superior of the Precious Blood Sisters. Sr. Clara, who ran the congregation from 1922 to 1929, had the courage to lead the sisters through the hardship.

At that time, there were 36 Precious Blood Sisters and seven novices.⁹⁰ They were mainly responsible for evangelization and education work. Some of them were sent in pairs to the villages of Bao'an, Huiyang, and Haifeng in Guangdong Province.⁹¹ The other sisters managed the daily activities and duties in the convent in Hong Kong.⁹² Although the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood had become an independent and separate community, the Canossian Sisters asked some of the Chinese sisters to



Fig. 2.1 The convent of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Shau Kei Wan in 1922. Sisters of the Precious Blood Archives, Hong Kong

stay behind in the Italian convent to help out with the charges for two or three years.⁹³ In 1923, five Chinese sisters stayed to work in the Canossian Sisters' convent and in 1924 two of them were still there.⁹⁴ Sr. Clara was one of those asked to remain in the Canossian Sisters' convent, but she declined the request. After 1924, there were no longer any Precious Blood Sisters residing in the convent on Caine Road. According to the Canossian

Sisters' chronicles of 1924, Bishop Pozzoni ordered the detachment of the Precious Blood Sisters from the Canossians, and the Chinese congregation was directly subject to the authority of the Vicar Apostolic.⁹⁵

The chief responsibilities of the Precious Blood Sisters continued to be evangelization and education. They had become reasonably knowledgeable in the mission fields, and thus some of them shouldered the hardest task, namely, evangelization in the villages of Guangdong Province.⁹⁶ They fulfilled what the foreign missionaries had considered an enormously challenging task. While some of them went off to the villages, there were about 18 sisters actually living in the Holy Cross, on an allowance of 50 Hong Kong dollars per month from the Catholic Mission.⁹⁷ Life was severe, and the sisters looked to the Catholic Mission as their essential source of support. With their former teaching experience, the Precious Blood Sisters set up their own girls' schools in 1923. They were rather ambitious, and established schools in several localities: one in the Holy Cross, one each in Wanchai and Sai Ying Pun (also on Hong Kong Island) and others in Shamshuipo, Kwun Chung, Hung Hom, and To Kwa Wan on the Kowloon Peninsula.⁹⁸ Fr. Giovanni Spada, PIME, was the official principal of these schools and represented the sisters in communication with the Hong Kong British government.

When Bishop Pozzoni died in February 1924, Fr. Spada became the Vicar Capitular. He remained in the post until March 1926, after which Fr. Enrico Valtorta was appointed the fourth Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong.⁹⁹ Fr. Valtorta was consecrated titular bishop in June 1926. That year, the statistics of the local Church were: 23 foreign priests, 10 Chinese priests, 21 foreign brothers, one Chinese brother, 102 foreign sisters, 67 Chinese sisters, and 30,237 lay Catholics.¹⁰⁰

The 1920s were a time of adaptation. The Holy Cross served as the Chinese sisters' convent during the transitional period—a temporary residence. The Precious Blood Sisters had few funds for their immediate use and future advancement, but they carried on. Sr. Clara's motto was *sacrifice*, and she taught the Chinese sisters the importance of humility and the meaning of poverty.¹⁰¹ The Precious Blood Sisters had four schools, all of which were established in 1923: Ching Kau School in the Holy Cross, Tack Ching School on Nam Cheong Street (which was then a primary school and moved to Un Chau Street in 1929), Tack Ying Girls' School (two campuses, one in Kwun Chung District and another in Sai Ying Pun), and Tau Chi Primary School in Hung Hom, Kowloon.¹⁰² These were probably very small schools with not that many students. As the Precious Blood

Sisters persisted in their endeavor, Sr. Clara wanted a permanent convent for them. With much vigor, she served as the schools' principal and the mistress of novices, in addition to facilitating the rewriting of the constitutions of the congregation, which were to be put in print.¹⁰³

On August 11, 1928, the Vicar Apostolic Bishop Enrico Valtorta, PIME wrote to the apostolic delegate, Msgr. Celso Costantini on the canonical existence of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Bishop Valtorta explained, "Finally in 1922 Bishop Pozzoni detached the Precious Blood Sisters from the Canossian Institute, gave them a house of their own with an apostolic school, novitiate, etc. ... and they were endowed with a more complete body of Rules ... The said Rules are not yet printed, and I would like to reduce them to a greater simplicity as they seem to me too redundant and wordy."¹⁰⁴ Regarding the sisters' wellbeing, he said, "Also ceded to them was the administration of the subventions granted to them by the Ordinary, besides the incomes from services rendered, such as schools, etc."¹⁰⁵ Until then, the Precious Blood Sisters received financial support from the Catholic Mission. Nevertheless, their pastoral work in the villages and education work in the local schools earned them significant respect. On July 19, 1929, Pope Pius XI declared that the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood was a local congregation in the Vicariate Apostolic of Hong Kong.¹⁰⁶

In 1929, Sr. Clara Tam passed away after many years of dedication and devotion to the construction of a permanent convent for the Chinese sisters. Her death ushered in another phase in the sisters' history as they secured residence in their newly built Motherhouse on Un Chau Street, Shamshuipo. Erected simultaneously with the Motherhouse was an adjacent building, the ground floor of which was used for the church and the upper floors for Tack Ching School. Previously, Bishop Valtorta had been very concerned about a group of refugees in Shamshuipo, which was a lower-class district. These people had fled from Haifeng, Guangdong Province, driven to the colony by Chinese Communist activities.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the location of the Motherhouse signified the Precious Blood Sisters' life-long service to society's deprived and underprivileged.

Almost 30 years later, in drafting their own history, the Precious Sisters wrote, "The Congregation of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood was founded in 1922 by the Bishop of Hong Kong. It is the only Diocesan Congregation of the Hong Kong Diocese."¹⁰⁸ With regard to their mission, they explained, "The primary purpose of the Congregation is the personal sanctification and perfection of each Sister. The secondary

purpose of the Congregation is to devote themselves to missionary work proposed by the Bishop of the Diocese, thus helping others to save and perfect their souls. This purpose is realized through the present works of the Sisters:- teaching catechism; the education of children in schools; the care of the sick in hospitals and clinics; and the welfare and education of orphans in orphanages.”¹⁰⁹

Constitutions of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood in Hong Kong, 1929

In October 1929, the *Constitutions of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood in Hong Kong* were published (*Xianggang Huaji Yesu Baoxuehui xiunü huigui*; hereafter referred to as the 1929 Constitutions).¹¹⁰ This time, the entire Constitutions were bilingual, in Chinese and Latin. There were two sections, with ten chapters in the first and 11 in the second. The first section was on the purposes of the congregation, the application for admission, and the congregation’s leadership. Regarding leadership, the 1929 Constitutions emphasized the significance of the General Chapter and the duties of the council. It also identified the responsibilities of the superior general (the sisters then had only one convent), the assistant superior general, the councilors, the mistress of novices, and the secretary of the congregation. Other chapters in the first section were on managing finances, the local superiors, the various offices, the ranks of the officers, and the chaplain. The second section was on the formation of the novices and the sisters and the corresponding rules and regulations. The chapters dealt with the rules of the novitiate, profession of the sisters, religious habit, ceremonies, penalties, departure from the congregation, sickness and death, and observance of the constitutions.

The first chapter stated the purposes of the congregation. The primary purpose was to worship the Precious Blood of Christ and to honor Our Lady of Sorrows and Saint Joseph in the profession of vows and the constitutions.¹¹¹ The second purpose was to secure the guidance of the bishop in the missionary work, such as the teaching of the doctrine, the opening of schools, the care of orphans, and the establishment of a hospital. Such were the charity works listed, and the purpose was to help in the sanctification of others.¹¹²

At that time, the Precious Blood Sisters officially had only one convent, the Motherhouse in Shamshuipo. The sisters followed the 1929

Constitutions until the bishop made resolutions if there were to be more than one convent in the future.¹¹³ The 1929 Constitutions stated that the General Chapter was the sole authority in making the most important decisions, including the selection of the superior general.¹¹⁴ The superior general was also the superior of the Motherhouse, and her term of office was three years but could be extended with the permission of the bishop. The superior general and the council chose the local superiors and sought the bishop's approval.¹¹⁵ According to the 1929 Constitutions, the bishop or his representative chaired the General Chapter and selected the superior general.¹¹⁶ As the General Chapter chose the superior general, it also met once every three years to correspond with the tenure of the latter. Three months before the General Chapter, the incumbent superior general informed the sisters, who had the voting power, of the assembly.

In addition, the 1929 Constitutions listed the rules of the elections in the General Chapter. The sisters chose two monitors from among themselves to assist in the election process. It was of prime importance that the sisters kept every matter confidential, even after the General Chapter.¹¹⁷ The sisters cast their secret ballots, which were burned after the election.¹¹⁸ A sister had to receive more than one half of the votes and the blessings of the bishop to become the superior general.¹¹⁹ Then, the sisters voted for the four councilors, who only needed a majority vote to be elected. If it so happened that two sisters had the same number of votes, she who first made the profession would assume the position of councilor. The first councilor would be the assistant superior general. Afterward, the newly elected superior general and councilors chose the mistress of novices and the secretary of the congregation in front of the bishop.¹²⁰ Thus, the General Chapter was the only occasion when the leadership of the congregation was elected. According to Chapter 9 of the first section, the sister-leaders attended every occasion in order of seniority.¹²¹ In the gatherings, the council meetings, the church, and even in the refectory, the sister-leaders maintained an order. The superior general entered first, followed by the assistant superior general, the former superior general, the councilors, the mistress of novices, the secretary, and the local superiors, followed by the rest of the community. The sisters lined up in accordance to the seniority of their religious profession.¹²²

The second section of the 1929 Constitutions laid out the various stages of the formation of the sisters. Initially, the postulants received six months of training; during the postulancy, they were separated from the

professed sisters. They wore a black habit and a medal of Our Lady of Sorrows.¹²³ If deemed suitable, the postulants moved on to become novices and changed to the religious habit of the professed sisters, except that they still wore the same medal they had received since entering the convent. There was a special ceremony for the change of habit, after which they entered the novitiate.¹²⁴ As in the previous phase of training, the novices did not interact with the professed sisters. According to the 1929 Constitutions, the novices led an even more restricted life than the professed sisters, involving almost no communication with outsiders. The novitiate lasted for one year.¹²⁵ If the novices were suited for religious life, they made their temporary profession and formally used their baptismal names and kept their family names.¹²⁶ At the time of her profession, a novice should be no more than 35 years of age. If she was older than 35, the superior general should have already requested the approval of the bishop for her to take her permanent vows. Every time a sister made her temporary or final profession, she received a certificate to be kept inside the convent. The professed sisters wore a different medal from that worn by the novices, with one side bearing the figure of the crucified Christ and the other side displaying Our Lady of Sorrows.¹²⁷

In the 1929 Constitutions, the three vows were written in the order of chastity, poverty, and obedience.¹²⁸ The sequence was different from that of the constitutions adopted from the Italian Precious Blood Sisters in 1912. In the second section, there was a chapter on “restraint and ceremonies.” The sisters did not have their own private rooms, but instead slept in a dormitory.¹²⁹ There were also signs forbidding entry outside the refectory and kitchen. If the sisters had to attend to the needs of the chaplain, the doctor, or the carpenter, they had to go in pairs. Unless they had to go out for work, the sisters could not leave the convent. In addition, there were other rules for the sisters to observe in the 1929 Constitutions. The sisters should ask for tutorials from female rather than male teachers.¹³⁰ They should go to a nearby church for Mass except on special occasions. They could not go to the funeral of a non-Catholic; if they were to attend the funeral of a Catholic, they could not cry or pray aloud when non-Catholics were present. The sisters were also forbidden from socializing with men or even teaching them the doctrine. When the sisters left or returned to the convent, they had to pray to Christ and Our Lady.¹³¹ It was of great importance that the sisters projected an image of respectability through their words, conversations, and behavior.¹³² With

regard to their spiritual development, they had time to study the doctrine together in the convent. They also learned music, the psalms, Chinese songs, and to play the piano.¹³³

The second section of the 1929 Constitutions also mentioned penalties. The sisters should privately advise each other in the words of the Bible if mistakes were observed; however, if this failed, the matter should be reported to the superior general as a realization of the virtue of love.¹³⁴ In this regard, the superior general should assess the matter with the sister concerned, and avoid any punishment of her in public. There were several ways in which the superior general could act: firstly to remove or suspend the post and orders of the sister concerned; secondly to separate the sister from the rest of the community; and thirdly to order her to meditate. In the event that these measures had no effect on the sister, the superior general had to inform the bishop and await his judgment.¹³⁵ Nonetheless, the matter could not be disclosed to the novices or outsiders.

There was a chapter on the exclusion of sisters from the congregation. This might be the decision of the superior general or the sisters, and it had to be reported to the bishop. It was only with the permission of the bishop that the superior general could order a sister out of the congregation.¹³⁶ There had to be significant reasons for the decision, such as the sister's loss of vocation, her reluctance to correct mistakes, or her deliberate lying before making profession. If the sister had possessions when entering the convent, the property had to be returned to her when she left the congregation.¹³⁷ There was also a chapter on sickness and death. The sisters should seek medical help immediately and avoid prolonging an illness.¹³⁸

In the 1929 Constitutions, the last chapter was on observing the regulations. During the yearly retreat, the sisters read the constitutions aloud and it was emphasized that they attained happiness through the love of the Lord and the Precious Blood of Jesus.¹³⁹

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The first two decades of the twentieth century saw an evolution of many aspects of Hong Kong, mainland China, the Catholic Mission in the colony, the Roman Catholic Church, and Catholic missions overseas. The changes, progress, and advancements in thoughts and practices were interrelated. Different people learned from each other through ongoing

interactions. At all levels of society, there was interrelatedness in work, concerns, and needs. Across the national boundaries, there were communications and the drive to foster better relations. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Chinese Tertiary Sisters were increasing in numbers, experience, and recognition. In 1905 Bishop Pozzoni used the constitutions of the Italian Precious Blood Sisters for the Chinese Tertiaries in Hong Kong. This was notable, as the Italians catered to the local needs of the mission and the Chinese sisters. The Catholic Church was expanding in Hong Kong and the mainland, and the China Mission had Rome's attention. After the 1911 Revolution, Rome was considering facilitating the leadership of the Chinese clergy and the development of the congregations of Chinese sisters. What happened in China influenced Rome, which in turn made its decisions for the far-off mission fields. With the localization of the Church in Chinese society, the time had come to indigenize the local churches. In Hong Kong, the subsequent independence of the Precious Blood Sisters was not merely a matter of an indigenous congregation, but a manifestation of the evolution of the Roman Catholic Church in its worldview and worldwide missions. What had happened to the Chinese sisters was a reflection of the change in the thinking of the local bishop in response to the considerations of Rome. The history of the Precious Blood Sisters—from independence and development to the erection of their Motherhouse—was the consequence of the advancement of the Catholic Church on Chinese soil. The Chinese sisters were responding to the changing times and gradually asserting their presence in the Church and in society. The evolution in the superiors' perspectives on the Chinese sisters was linked to the Hong Kong Mission, the Chinese Catholic Church, and the revelations of the Pope in understanding the missionary enterprise in China.

The Chinese, Italians, and foreign missionaries worked side by side in the Hong Kong Mission. The Chinese sisters could not have continued without the acknowledgement of the Canossian Sisters and the Italian bishop. Neither could the Canossian Sisters have pursued their charity work without the dedication of the Chinese sisters, who sustained whatever hardships they met with the utmost faith and perseverance. In the 1920s, the Hong Kong Mission itself was very similar to the situation on the mainland, with cultural interactions, the pursuit of evangelization, and the building of charity institutions. The Precious Blood Sisters became organized and established with their constitutions and Motherhouse in 1929.

NOTES

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The Turbulent 1930s

ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD SISTERS

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Precious Blood Sisters marched forward, facing the challenges that lay ahead. When foundress Clara Tam passed away in 1929, the Catholic paper reported the “Death of the First Superior of the Local Congregation of the Precious Blood.”¹ This was a tremendous loss for the congregation, as Sr. Clara had dedicated herself to the community for more than 40 years. She served the sisters and the locals with enormous perseverance, and her biological sisters followed in her footsteps as Tertiaries.² The Catholic paper also noted that “She distinguished herself in the assistance of the Chinese orphans, and in the visits to the hospitals and prisons, gathering very consoling fruits of conversions.”³ Nevertheless, Sr. Clara’s death coincided with the beginning of another chapter in the history of the Precious Blood Sisters. She paved the way for the Chinese sisters, who were prepared to shoulder even greater responsibilities following her death. As the Catholic paper stated, “At her death she left the native Congregation well-formed and secure of the future. Presently, the Congregation numbers about 50 Sisters and a good number of aspirants.”⁴ It was a close estimation; at that time, there were more than 40 Precious Blood Sisters. The community was evolving into a more established, organized institution in its religious and charity work thanks to its bond with the local population and responsive treatment of the Catholic Mission’s agenda. The Catholic paper also noted that the

development of the Precious Blood Sisters required the construction of a large Motherhouse in a location on the Kowloon Peninsula, where the Catholic Church had yet to make its presence known.⁵

The Catholic Mission had chosen the ideal site on which to build a permanent convent for the Chinese sisters. Shamshuipo was a populated district in the Kowloon Peninsula where much pastoral work remained to be done. The Church seized the opportunity to exert its influence in the area while providing the Precious Blood Sisters with a chance to settle down and plan for their future. As one account described, “The Chapel of the Convent and the large Chinese school close to it will become a new centre of Catholic life in the midst of about 100,000 pagans. The works of the construction are coming to an end and already preparations are made for the inauguration—only the well-deserving Superior will not see the coronation of the work in which *she had such a large part.*”⁶ Sr. Clara had laid the foundation for the sisters, and although her passing away was a great sorrow for them it was a time of mixed emotions. Numerous tasks awaited the Precious Blood Sisters now that they had their convent and the adjacent building for use as a local church and a school.

THE CATHOLIC MISSION’S ACQUISITION OF THE LAND IN SHAMSHUIPO

The Precious Blood Sisters moved into their Motherhouse at 86 Un Chau Street in Shamshuipo in 1929. The Catholic Mission had exchanged its land in Shau Kei Wan (then spelled Shaukiwan; Inland Lot No. 527) for the land in Shamshuipo (New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1114) for the Chinese sisters two years before. On November 10, 1927, the government’s Public Works Office informed the Catholic Mission that the land in Shamshuipo was ready. The Church had to pay the Colonial Treasury a premium of HK\$5,000, and a fee of HK\$12 for the boundary stones. Subsequently, the Church paid a Crown Rent of HK\$1.00 per year for the land in Shamshuipo.⁷ The Church had obtained the land in Shamshuipo on Crown Lease after having surrendered the land in Shau Kei Wan.⁸ The matter was an agreement between the government and the Church that the two parcels of land be exchanged, with the latter acting as the lessee and providing the money. The Vicar Apostolic Bishop Enrico Valtorta and the Director of Public Works, Mr. E.W. Carpenter, signed the agreement on November 25, 1927. Clause number 8 of the agreement stated that the Church must “build and finish, fit for occupation, before the

expiration of 24 calendar months” following the possession of the land in Shamshuipo.⁹ That included “in a good substantial and workmanlike manner, one or more good and permanent buildings” on the newly leased land.¹⁰ The agreement also laid out the following conditions for the newly acquired land in Shamshuipo, to which the Church had to adhere.¹¹

The lessee shall not, without the consent of the Governor in Council first had and obtained, erect or maintain upon the lot any building other than:

1. A house for the accommodation of sisters of the Religious Order charged with the conduct of the Girls School of the Roman Catholic Mission,
2. A house for the accommodation of Aspirants of the said Order and a preparatory school for the same,
3. A house for the accommodation of Novices of the said Order,
4. A school to be conducted by the said Order for day scholars,
5. Such buildings as may be necessary for the accommodation of such teachers, servants and other persons as may be employed by the said Mission in the conduct and management of the said schools.

The Crown Lease shall contain a covenant to this effect.

In addition the Church as the lessee could “not sell, assign, mortgage, charge, demise, [or] underlet” the possessed land or any part of it.¹² Once the conditions had been made clear, the Vicar Apostolic Bishop Valtorta contacted the Director of Public Work, Mr. Carpenter, about site preparation and related work. Bishop Valtorta had already hired an architect for the construction project,¹³ and the Motherhouse was soon completed. The subsequent assignment of the Chinese sisters to Shamshuipo was in accordance with the Catholic Mission’s plan for the apostolic work in this increasingly populated area. The convent also served as the novices’ home and the sisters were to secure their foothold there and devote themselves to charity work in the neighborhood.

Shamshuipo was home to the poor and the working class. The location of the Precious Blood convent came to symbolize the sisters’ commitment to the most disadvantaged in society. At that time, the Hong Kong Catholic Mission regarded the Chinese sisters as the most suitable to spread the Church’s influence in this neighborhood. From a wider perspective, the Catholic Mission had long wanted to expand its pastoral work to larger areas of the Kowloon Peninsula, and the establishment of the

Motherhouse served the Church's desire to expand the Catholic population in the locality. The Catholic Mission was ready to entrust the Precious Blood Sisters with the new endeavor. The Church had high hopes for the mission there, and the Chinese sisters were best qualified for the tasks. The Church acknowledged the previous contributions of the Chinese sisters, who had a special role to play among their own people in the colony. This opened up many possibilities for the sisters. The Precious Blood Sisters continued their undertakings but now with their own establishment—a permanent convent—among the targeted populace. In June 1929, the sisters arrived at the new convent. On July 1, Bishop Valtorta presided over the ceremony inaugurating the Precious Blood Sisters' Motherhouse.

Later in July, through Msgr. Celso Costantini (the apostolic delegate to China), the Precious Blood Sisters were approved by the Holy See and were canonically registered as a religious congregation.¹⁴ The Holy See affirmed the status of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood. The sisters evolved alongside the Roman Catholic Church, which expressed its growing zeal for the China Mission and put the goal of indigenization as its top priority. With much determination, the sisters concentrated on education, medical care, charity, and evangelization, and their work became the finest example of the indigenization of the Catholic Church in Chinese society.

At the same time, the sisters retained their evangelization tasks on the mainland in response to the local Catholic Mission's call that they keep their service widespread, regardless of how little they earned from the Church to sustain their congregation. Wherever they were, the Precious Blood Sisters served the destitute and the underprivileged. They received a small income from the Church, which they used to do as much good as they could wherever it was most needed. The sisters attended to their duties, without hesitation, as they had no time to waste.

THE FIRST AND SECOND GENERAL CHAPTERS IN 1929 AND 1932

The Precious Blood Sisters held the First General Chapter on July 29, 1929 to elect the superior general, the assistant superior general, the four councilors, the mistress of novices, and the secretary of the congregation.¹⁵ The Vicar Apostolic Bishop Enrico Valtorta, Fr. John Situ Teng-chiu (who was granted the title of "Missionary Apostolic" in 1926 and was then in charge of St. Margaret's Church),¹⁶ and 41 sisters were present. The

procedures began with the 41 sisters selecting 13 among themselves to represent them and to vote for them. Together with the assistant superior general and the mistress of novices, there were then 15 sisters responsible for choosing the superior general. Then Bishop Valtorta asked the rest of the community to wait for the election results. During the process of the elections, two sisters served as moderators to administer the counting of the votes.

The sister-representatives vowed to make their decisions based on their own conscience and to keep their vote a strict secret. They then cast their votes for the superior general of the congregation. First, Bishop Valtorta counted the ballots in the box to ensure that they corresponded with the number of voters. Second, one moderator quietly read the name on each ballot before handing it to the second moderator. Third, the second moderator read the name of the sister selected and the number of votes she had received thus far. Then, Bishop Valtorta counted the votes. In the First General Chapter, Sr. Teresa Tam received more than half the total number of votes, and was thus named superior general of the congregation.¹⁷ She vowed to serve the community to the best of her ability and awareness. Finally, Bishop Valtorta announced his approval of the election result.

Afterward, the sister-representatives chose the four councilors from among their own number. They voted four times, and each time the sister who received the most votes was made a councilor and removed from the running. Finally, the newly elected superior general and councilors chose the mistress of novices and the secretary of the congregation, with Bishop Valtorta's endorsement. In this way, the sisters established their leadership through a well-organized election process.

By the end of 1929, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood had 41 members (excluding a sister who passed away that year).¹⁸ By the end of 1930, they had 42 members (including two sisters who made profession, and excluding one who passed away). By the end of 1931, they had 44 members (including two additional sisters who made profession).¹⁹

Under the leadership of Sr. Teresa, the Second General Chapter took place on the same day and in the same month as the First General Chapter—July 29—in 1932. It was held in the Motherhouse. Fr. Giuseppe Carabelli, PIME, (who was in charge of the cathedral on Caine Road)²⁰ represented Bishop Valtorta on the occasion. Also present were Fr. John Situ, the incumbent superior general, the assistant superior general, the councilors, the mistress of novices and the nine sister-representatives

chosen by the sisters (who had the right to vote) to cast the votes on their behalf. Although the sister-representatives pledged to keep the election process confidential, the rest of the sisters waited eagerly for the results. The procedures were the same as those used in the First General Chapter. This time, there was a tie between two sisters for the position of superior general, but Sr. Teresa was re-elected for another term. Then, the four councilors were elected and the secretary of the congregation was selected. The mistress of novices retained her position, as she had not yet completed her six-year term. The congregation continued under the guidance of Sr. Teresa.²¹

THE THREE SUPERIORS GENERAL: TERESA TAM
(1929–1935), JOANNA TAM (1935–1938), AND LUCY
CHAN (1938–1957)

During the turbulent 1930s, the Precious Blood Sisters were under the direction of three superiors general, the last of whom is still well remembered as a beloved, admired, and respected figure, who led the congregation through the most critical of circumstances. The Chinese sisters survived through their most serious difficulties through the 1930s, after which they managed to regain contact with the other sisters, who had stayed behind in the faraway villages. The sisters were eventually able to consolidate their congregation, but there were no easy days on the horizon.

Sister Teresa Tam (1929–1935)

Sr. Teresa Tam, the biological sister of Sr. Clara, won two terms and was the superior general from 1929 to 1935. Her first concern was the acquisition of even more space for the expansion of the Motherhouse.

The convent was a four-story concrete structure probably designed by a British architect.²² When visitors approached the convent, they were met by a granite wall separating the building from the outside street. They were admitted at the main entrance on Un Chau Street, and then climbed a swirling staircase to reach the main door on the first floor. The formal meeting area was on that floor, with guests having to wait in the parlor to meet the sisters and/or the superior general. The secretary's office was close to the parlor and the superior general's office was behind that of

the secretary. Thus, the secretary was well aware of the movement of the sisters and guests in the convent. On the first floor, there was also a huge room in which the sisters slept.

In 1930, the sisters secured the house adjacent to the convent and began to remodel it until it emerged as a three-story concrete building attached to the convent. The two blocks were linked to form a larger structure, and the new wing provided enough space for a dormitory and kitchen for the sisters.²³

In 1930, the sisters were contemplating their future endeavors, yet they remained extremely cautious and carefully calculated every detail. In the Precious Blood Sisters' archives, there are two sheets of paper that list the congregation's financial balances for 1930. The information reflects the sisters' precarious financial situation and their priorities. The first sheet recorded sources of revenue, including school fees (HK\$7,935.40), school subsidies (HK\$2,340), raffle tickets (HK\$4,994.82), income from the services that the sisters provided (HK\$1,646), meals offered (HK\$850), miscellaneous (HK\$690.78), and interest received (HK\$820). Altogether, the earnings were close to twenty thousand Hong Kong dollars (\$19,277). This amount, added to savings from previous years, made slightly more than thirty thousand Hong Kong dollars (\$30,342.24).²⁴ Every cent was precisely counted, for income and expenditures alike.

The erection of the new wing adjacent to the four-story convent used up a large portion of the money (HK\$11,600). Beyond that, the sisters spent mainly on their community: specifically, teachers' salaries and rent for the school buildings, as education was the most important of their ongoing undertakings. In addition, there were the regular expenses such as medicine, coal and firewood, land and sea transportation, the sisters' habits, and the souvenirs for the schools. After deducting the total expenditure of HK\$27,390.56, the sisters had less than three thousand Hong Kong dollars left (\$2,941.68) by the end of 1930²⁵—an amount that did not provide the sisters with any assurance, should there be an emergency.

Sr. Teresa Tam continued to focus on education and charity. In the early 1930s, the Precious Blood Sisters were already in charge of six local schools. In five years their superior general had expanded the venture to include ten schools through which the sisters educated the children of working-class families. The additional four schools were Ching Fung Middle School on Johnston Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong Island (1932); Tack Yan School, Yaumati, Kowloon Peninsula (1932); Tack Shing School,

Tsuen Wan, Kowloon Peninsula (1933); and Tack Ying Third Branch, Kowloon City (1935).²⁶ Subsequently, the sisters bought another house at 16 Wan-Nam Lane, Yaumati, also on the Kowloon side.²⁷

The Precious Blood Sisters were highly regarded for their decades of service to orphans. In January 1932, they had 44 members in their congregation.²⁸ In 1932, they set up an orphanage and a dispensary on the ground floor of the Motherhouse while simultaneously providing the neighborhood with free medical care (see Fig. 3.1).²⁹ They sought every means to raise funds to support their charity work and they also earned tiny sums through their pastoral service in the villages in the New Territories and on the mainland. Every dollar was carefully spent, as the sisters lived together with society's poor, and the budget was tight. The sisters organized a fund-raising bazaar every year but, as recorded, it "at no time produced the needed amount, so the balance was provided by the hard work of the Sisters themselves."³⁰ The sisters' sources of income came from the annual bazaars and the earnings they received from the Church for their pastoral work in the villages. For example, in January



Fig. 3.1 The Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Shamshuipo in 1932. Sisters of the Precious Blood Archives, Hong Kong

1933, Bishop Valtorta asked Sr. Teresa to send the sisters to a village in Taishan, Guangdong Province. Bishop Valtorta wrote, "If you can spare two suitable Sisters, I have no objection to your sending them."³¹ The sisters acted immediately and two reached Taishan within four days. After their arrival, the priest there reported that the locals had "a good impression" of the two sisters, who readily catered to the needs of the neighborhood. Indeed, the foreign missionaries needed the sisters, as they could communicate with the Chinese, visit their families, and talk to the mothers and children.³² The Chinese sisters worked with the abandoned, the locals, and those who came for help. Yet despite the sisters' compliance, discord had already begun to develop between them and the Hong Kong Catholic Mission. The matter mainly concerned the cost of the premises in Shamshuipo.

In January 1933, Fr. M. Liberatore, PIME, who was procurator of the Hong Kong Catholic Church,³³ sent a letter to Sr. Teresa. On behalf of the Church, he asked the Precious Blood Sisters to pay for their newly acquired premises. He had been negotiating with the sisters for some time before he mailed the letter, and it was obvious that the sisters could not meet the demand due to continuous financial difficulties. Desperate and powerless, Sr. Teresa decided to write to Msgr. Celso Costantini, the apostolic delegate to China, who was then in Beiping (now Beijing), before submitting a formal reply to Bishop Enrico Valtorta.

On February 1, 1933, Sr. Teresa sent the letter to Msgr. Costantini.³⁴ According to the Precious Blood Sisters' archives, she had finished the letter to the archbishop three days before sending her reply to Bishop Valtorta. It was an important missive because it marked the Chinese sisters' evolution into an order that was bold enough to speak its mind. The letter to the archbishop explained the Precious Blood Sisters' history and clearly stated their precarious financial situation. Both the Chinese and English versions of the letter are in the Precious Blood Sisters' archives. The English translation is as follows (emphases added):³⁵

Monseigneur,

Our Order was founded in 1861 under the direction of the Canossian Institute. At first our foundress Sister Magdalena Tam [Sr. Maddalena Tam] was in charge of all our affairs. Until 1907 the Superior of the Canossian Convent *took over the charge*, and never taught us our mother language. So in 1922 the Bishop Fr. D. Pozzoni ordered us to separate ourselves from the Canossian Sisters, and we were given houses at Sai-Wan-Ho as our temporary convent.

In 1928 the next bishop H. Valtorta [Enrico as Henry in English] gave us a place at Shamshuipo and a new convent was erected.

The aim of our order is to help in the apostolic work of the parish, and we have been all the time patronized by the Bishop.

Last year Fr. M. Liberatore suddenly ordered us *to buy the convent premises and to pay for the board of our postulants during all the previous years.* With capital and interest the sum amounts to over \$100,000. We feel very much surprised, because since *we were ordered to come out* from the Canossian Convent we feel we are one and the same family with the Hong-Kong diocese and we never knew we had to buy the places allotted to us, nor to have to pay for the board of the postulants. Beside[s] the construction fee of our houses was largely contributed by charitable donors.

At present we have 45 sisters, 5 postulants and 35 aspirants. *22 of our sisters are doing apostolic work in villages* and 23 remain in the convent doing teaching work in our seven schools and taking care of babies. To those in the villages . . . [is given] a monthly allowance of \$100 each, the rest are being supported by the convent.

In 1931 we began an orphanage and a clinic, *the fund comes from the money earned by the sisters and from the yearly bazaar.* These sources barely allow us to make both ends meet, so how can we have the extra sum of money to pay for the premises.

We guess the diocese is short of finance and therefore have to think out [ways to secure] resources, but since we belong to the same organisation, it is ridiculous to get it from your own members, besides a sum of \$100,000 would not help much.

The land and property of our foundress Sister Magdalena [Sr. Maddalena] and the foundation fund of our convent was still in the hands of the Canossian Convent and *we have not yet settled that affair with them.* The superior of the Canossian Convent seems to ignore the fact.

Therefore we beg to place the fact before the Bishop [Valtorta] and to make clear our present financial situation, so that you know why we cannot fulfill the demand put before us.

We hope the Bishop [Valtorta] will see our point and continue his patronage over us. God bless you.

Your Sisters of the Precious Blood Convent

At that time, the Chinese Sisters were working in the villages as instructed by the Catholic Mission, and running the schools and the orphanage. Any extra income came from the bazaars. In the letter, Sr. Teresa also stressed that the money and possessions of the Precious Blood Sisters were still kept by the Canossian Sisters.

Afterward, Sr. Teresa informed Bishop Valtorta that the sisters were unable to pay for the cost of the Motherhouse and the new wing. In her letter of February 4, 1933, she wrote, "I have the honour to ask your lordship to kindly condescend and hear a humble representation made by all the sisters of the Precious Blood and myself, regarding the incapability of our society to purchase the building or property now in our occupation, or even of meeting its payment on a rental basis."³⁶ On the one hand, the sisters were truly grateful for Bishop Valtorta's continued support and guidance. On the other hand, Sr. Teresa said that the sisters could not even afford a discussion of the proposal owing to the lack of resources and the means of securing additional funding.³⁷ The superior general stated that Bishop Valtorta was well aware of the earnings of the sisters' annual bazaars, which were their only source of additional income and barely sufficient to cover their regular expenses.³⁸ That supported what Sr. Teresa had written to Msgr. Costantini. There were no other ways for the sisters to meet Bishop Valtorta's demands.

Sr. Teresa recalled what the Catholic Mission had decided for the Precious Blood Sisters. She wrote, "the building or property in question has been always understood by us to have been meant for our *permanent use* to promote and perform the noble work [emphasis added]."³⁹ She added, "We substantiate our understanding from a statement made to us by Rev. Fr. [Giovanni] Spada, who said that we were *not* to interfere with any constructional work as the building [convent] was erected for us *at the expense of the Mission* [emphases added]."⁴⁰ Here, the superior general emphasized the Catholic Mission's obligation to the Precious Blood Sisters. In her letter, she reiterated the tremendous difficulties that the sisters had faced. She said, "We take the liberty to set forth a brief review of our history, and ardently hope that, by recounting a few of the countless obstacles undergone by us and our predecessors before we could make our present standing, we may be favoured with your lordship's kind and usual empathy."⁴¹ She was trying to persuade Bishop Valtorta to reconsider the request made to the sisters.

In Sr. Teresa's review of the sisters' independence, she unintentionally linked it to the significant concern about the indigenization of the Roman Catholic Church at that time. The Hong Kong Catholic Mission was then responding to Rome's call. She wrote, "In that year [1922] the former Bishop [Dominico] Pozzoni ordered our separation from the Italian sisters, somewhat against our will, *with a view of making a*

Diocesan Congregation and to help the Vicar Apostolic in the propagation of the Faith [emphasis added].”⁴² By saying that it was “somewhat against the will” of the Chinese sisters, the superior general might have been addressing the financial problems that they encountered in the early 1920s. Moreover, she said that when the Chinese sisters moved away from the Canossians’ convent, their total assets were not returned by the Italian sisters. Instead, the Chinese sisters were only allowed to take HK\$2,250 with them⁴³—a sum that was almost identical to the amount (HK\$2,210) recorded by the Canossian Sisters, with only a difference of forty dollars, as mentioned in Chapter 2.⁴⁴

Sr. Teresa continued, “After the separation, we were allotted a house in Shaukiwan, and there, with some support from the Mission, we established a footing of our own, constantly in the face of hardships as could be imagined under those circumstances.”⁴⁵ Then, she said that the Catholic Mission realized that the sisters needed a larger and permanent residence to carry on their good work. In addition, the Catholic Mission was keen on placing the sisters in the locality of Shamshuipo. The superior general pleaded, “At this time, your lordship began to show us great interest and sympathy, and soon bestowed on us this our present building and abode.”⁴⁶ She was grateful that the sisters now had “a better home and a firmer stand.”⁴⁷ It could be taken from this letter that the Chinese sisters had finally felt a sense of self-assurance in that they relied on themselves and managed their own existence. Nevertheless, it was precisely at this moment that they were confronted by the Catholic Mission’s sudden request for repayment.

In a concluding remark, Sr. Teresa compared the Precious Blood Sisters with other religious congregations in the colony. She said, “Yet we have still to struggle on for existence because unlike our sister societies, we have no sure source of income or reserve fund to aid us.”⁴⁸ Unlike the foreign missionaries, the Precious Blood Sisters could not seek financial support outside Hong Kong. They maintained a precarious presence as the only local congregation of religious sisters. They had struggled to develop independence and attain recognition, and Sr. Teresa could only beg for further understanding of their state of being. What she wrote was an apt summary of their story thus far: “Despite hardships, hunger, weakness and other physical trials, we are always proud to carry on as servants of your lordship.”⁴⁹ She said, “In conclusion, all the sisters earnestly join with me in asking your lordship to be sympathetic to us all.”⁵⁰ There was no way the Chinese sisters could pay that sum of money.

The sisters' financial balances were upsetting. By late 1933, they reported that their financial situation was arduous and troubling, particularly due to a recorded deficit. Their income was from the same sources as before with no extra funding, a total sum for the year of HK\$19,136.18.⁵¹ The sisters had the same income that they had in 1930. Nevertheless, their expenditures had increased. The teachers' salaries commanded the largest amount, the expenditure on the Motherhouse community was high, and the rent for the school buildings was considerable. Noticeably, the sisters also spent a lot on the baby clinic. They also paid to organize fund raising and for the school souvenirs, the sisters' habits, the chapel, transportation, and medicine. The carrying over of the deficit from 1932—a little less than HK\$5,000—also created difficulties. The total expenditure was HK\$22,240.04.⁵² Like the previous year, the sisters were concerned about the deficit of approximately HK\$3,100. By the end of 1933, there were 44 members in the congregation (excluding the sister who died that year).⁵³

In the summer of 1934, the Catholic Mission received the government's permission to build a hospital on the land in Shamshuipo (New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1114),⁵⁴ of which it was the lessee, and it signed the agreement mentioned earlier in this chapter. Initially, the agreement (dated 1927) did not mention the construction of a hospital on this piece of land. That was an arrangement between Bishop Valtorta and the government. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary, Bishop Valtorta said that the Precious Blood Sisters had been using part of their Motherhouse as a hospital for children with the support of the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children.⁵⁵ He recounted that the Hong Kong governor had visited the Precious Blood Sisters' convent before and praised the medical care provided by the sisters to the children. Moreover, demand for the sisters' medical service had grown throughout the locality. Bishop Valtorta persuaded the government to support the expansion of the sisters' work by approving the hospital's construction in Shamshuipo.⁵⁶ In his letter of July 25, 1934, Bishop Valtorta wrote:⁵⁷

By the terms of the Indenture of Crown Lease the Lessee covenanted that he would not without the consent of the Governor ... make or maintain upon the said Lot [New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1114] any building other than those set out and described in the Lease and further that the Lessee would not without the previous license of the Governor in Council use the premises for any other purpose whatsoever.

Certain buildings have been erected on portion of the ground for the purposes allowed by the term of the Lease.

Local conditions induced the Sisters who occupy the Convent and School premises to care for the sick children of the neighbourhood and now part of the Sisters' own Convent is actually used as a Hospital for Children under the supervision of the said Sisters and with the help of the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children. This Hospital seems to meet a most popular need. H.E. the Governor has visited and encouraged it.

It is now proposed to enlarge the sphere of the Sisters' work by the erection of a proper Children's Hospital, which would in my humble opinion be greatly conducive to the welfare of the inhabitants of the District.

In view of the fact that the License of His Excellency the Governor in Council has to be obtained for the erection of a Hospital on the above mentioned Lot [New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1114], I have the honour to request you [the Colonial Secretary] to be good enough to lay my application before His Excellency the Governor in Council for his and the Council's favourable consideration to erect the proposed Children Hospital.

Finally, in August 1934, Bishop Valtorta received permission from Hong Kong's governor to construct the proposed hospital.⁵⁸ In his letter of August 28, 1934, Bishop Valtorta wrote, "H.E. the Governor has given his consent to the erection of the proposed Children Hospital on the above mentioned lot [New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1114]."⁵⁹

Nevertheless, 1934 proved a problematic year for the Chinese sisters. From all of their sources of income combined, the sisters received just over HK\$20,000. Their expenditures remained sizeable, with the teachers' salaries increasing from about HK\$5,500 in 1933 to over HK\$7,800 in 1934,⁶⁰ due to the additional schools and expanded staff. The expenses generated by the Motherhouse and the schools' rent were also high. Other expenses remained similar to those in previous years, with the maintenance fees for the buildings increasing the total amount. The sisters carried over a deficit from previous years and spent altogether HK\$23,450.92 in 1934.⁶¹ Therefore, the congregation bore an even greater deficit of HK\$3,359.58 by the end of 1934.⁶² The situation reached a critical point at which the Precious Blood Sisters bound themselves to reassign all of their properties to the Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong in case their congregation ever required dissolution. They sent out a warning that the most probable cause for such a conclusion would be financial difficulties. By the end of 1934, there were 45 sisters in the congregation.⁶³

Bishop Valtorta had his own plans for the Chinese sisters, who found themselves torn between following his instructions and honoring the deal he had made with the government. In June 1935, Bishop Valtorta pushed to incorporate the sisters because he believed that doing so would facilitate

the new hospital's construction. He stated that they had provided the locals with much-needed services for a long time, and that the congregation must be incorporated in Hong Kong to allow the sisters to pursue their work. At that time, he had decided that the properties on New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1114 should be allocated to the sisters.⁶⁴ He asked the solicitors to emphasize the sisters' charitable and educational endeavors when petitioning the government for their incorporation.⁶⁵ In June, a priest accompanied Sr. Teresa to see the solicitors, and handed the Crown Lease of New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1114 to the latter.⁶⁶ The purpose was "the preparation of a Lease thereof and for submitting to the Government a Bill for the Incorporation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in connection with their School and also for maintaining a Hospital carried on by them."⁶⁷ In August 1935, D'Almada & Mason Solicitors informed Bishop Valtorta that the firm had received a letter from the Colonial Secretary granting permission to pass the Crown Lease (New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1114) on to the Precious Blood Sisters' superior general.⁶⁸ The Solicitors wrote, "We have the pleasure to inform you that we today received a letter from the Colonial Secretary informing us that His Excellency the Governor in Council has granted permission to demise the above premises to Sister Teresa Tam."⁶⁹ The years that followed were characterized by progress and problems alike as the Chinese sisters addressed the bishop's demands.

Sister Joanna Tam (1935–1938)

The Third General Chapter took place in the Motherhouse on July 29, 1935.⁷⁰ Bishop Valtorta and Fr. Peter Lam Yam-tong (Pro Rector of the Precious Blood Church, Shamshuipo from 1934 to 1939) presided over the event.⁷¹ As before, the sisters elected representatives from among themselves using the procedures followed in the First and Second General Chapters. Sr. Teresa obtained some votes but the number did not exceed half of the total votes. Moreover, she had already served as superior general for two terms. Sr. Joanna Tam also received a number of votes. The votes were recast and Sr. Joanna received more than half.⁷² Bishop Valtorta then approved Sr. Joanna as the new superior general. The votes were then cast for the four councilors. Sr. Teresa received the most votes and became the first councilor and the assistant superior general. Then, Sr. Joanna and the new councilors chose the mistress of novices and the secretary of the congregation. Sr. Joanna, Sr. Clara, and Sr. Teresa were biological sisters who had entered the Canossian Tertiaries at different times.⁷³

By the end of 1935, the congregation had 45 members, but by the end of 1936, there were only 43 members due to the deaths of two sisters.⁷⁴ In January 1937, D'Almada & Mason Solicitors informed the Precious Blood Sisters that the Crown Lease on New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1114 (dated March 8, 1930), formerly registered under Sr. Teresa, was now registered under Sr. Joanna.⁷⁵ Although the legal firm did not charge any money for its work, the sisters had to pay for the fees of the Land Office and the Stamp on Lease, a total amount of HK\$90.⁷⁶

The Chinese sisters lived on a tight budget and had to track every dollar they spent. In their archives is a letter written in English by Sr. Joanna to the Mother Superior of the Canossian Sisters. The archivist believed that Sr. Joanna eventually decided not to send the letter, as the document was unsigned and accompanied by the original (now brownish) envelope. On both the letter and the envelope, the sender was the “Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood, Yuen Chow Street, Kowloon” (Yuen Chow Street is Un Chau Street). The letterhead included the phone number 56537. On the envelope, the recipient was “The Reverend Mother Superior, Italian Convent, (Canossian Institute), Caine Road, Hong Kong.” The letter, dated May 3, 1937, succinctly addressed the conditions under which the Chinese sisters struggled (emphasis added):⁷⁷

Dear Reverend Mother Superior:

As we are very much troubled about finances at present[,] I wish to bring up a matter for discussion and arrangement with you, feeling sure that you will give it your very kind consideration. You know that we are building some very necessary additions to our establishment here and are short of the required sum of money. The matter I wish to discuss and settle is this; when our Sisters separated from the Italian Convent[,] a certain sum of money was handed over to us *but there is still a considerable amount of money belonging to our congregation that we have not so far received*. This money was brought in by the Sisters on entrance and by donations etc. afterwards. I would, then, kindly request you to consider and examine into this matter, so that we can arrange it satisfactorily. Whatever money is due to us by right we feel sure you will on investigation return to us. Of course we do not make any claim to any money that is not justly due to us. Hoping you will give us an early reply.

With all kind wishes,
I remain,
Yours very sincerely in
the Sacred Heart,
SISTER SUPERIOR [unsigned]

It had been 15 years since the Chinese sisters had gained their independence from the Italian missionaries, and the letter—so carefully composed—explained their patient desire to obtain the money, and their failure to do so for such a lengthy period.

Chapter 2 of this book also mentions the “dowries” that the Chinese women brought with them when they entered the convent of the Canossian Sisters. Each Chinese family gave the daughter entering the order what they could afford, as if she were to be married, and as such they had parted with most of the valuables at hand. More importantly, throughout the years the Precious Blood Sisters may have sought to regain their money from the Canossian Sisters, but without success. Chapter 2 points out that the Canossian Sisters documented that they returned the dowries to the Precious Blood Sisters who were present in 1923,⁷⁸ so the Chinese sisters were asking for the dowries that had belonged to those who passed away before 1923—an amount still kept by the Canossian Sisters. The unsent request echoed the letter to Msgr. Costantini of February 1, 1933, cited earlier in this chapter. At the time that the request to the Italian sisters was written, the Precious Blood Sisters were debating whether to go forward in May 1937. It must have been a time of great urgency for Sr. Joanna to have written the letter, but her decision not to send it merits close attention. Because the letter was written in English, Sr. Joanna must have been planning to claim their money. Was it due to past failures that the superior general of the Chinese sisters ultimately decided not to send the request? Although the sisters were becoming more assertive, Sr. Joanna was concerned about the possibility of engaging in conflict with the Italian sisters if she sent the letter.

The Chinese sisters opened the Precious Blood Hospital in a lower-class neighborhood just as the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937. Other foreign Catholic sisters on the mainland also knew the constitutions of the Precious Blood Sisters.⁷⁹ By the end of 1937, there were 42 members in the congregation and by the end of 1938, there were 46 members (including four sisters who took vows that year).⁸⁰ By 1938, the social conditions were deteriorating rapidly. The sisters offered free medical care and medicine to poor families, but at the end of 1938 they were still suffering from a financial deficit.⁸¹ Their sources of income had not increased for many years but their expenses had multiplied significantly. On the one hand, their income came from the school fees, the school subsidies, the raffle tickets, the services, and the rent—all of which only

added up to HK\$22,459.60.⁸² On the other hand, they tried to satisfy the growing expectations. They spent over HK\$4,500 on the convent's daily needs, such as meals, and paid more than HK\$6,500 on teachers' salaries.⁸³ The school rents cost the sisters HK\$6,358.⁸⁴ There were fees related to transportation, medication, fuel, electricity, the telephone service, and water use, in addition to books and the sisters' clothing. The sisters paid for the people they hired to work in the convent, and the expenses were over HK\$20,300.⁸⁵ Once calculated, there should be a surplus of over HK\$2,130, but the sisters spent a huge sum (HK\$4,772) on the construction of the Motherhouse. By the end of 1938, the Chinese sisters had a deficit of almost HK\$2,640.⁸⁶ With the war rampaging in China's interior, the sisters could not count on any savings for future use.

Sister Lucy Chan as Superior General (1938–1957)

On July 27, 1938, the Precious Blood Sisters held the Fourth General Chapter to select the new superior general, the assistant superior general, the councilors, the novice mistress and the secretary.⁸⁷ Bishop Valtorta, Fr. John Situ, and Fr. Peter Ngai Wan-fai (who served in St. Margaret Mary's Church, Happy Valley, Hong Kong Island)⁸⁸ were present. All of the sisters participated in the assembly, but the Fourth General Chapter differed from the previous ones in that Bishop Valtorta received permission from Pope Pius XI to exempt the casting of votes for the different posts in the congregation. Instead, Bishop Valtorta himself chose which sisters would serve in the various positions. He named Sr. Lucy Chan to be the superior general and the mistress of novices and Sr. Joanna Tam to be the assistant superior general, the superior of the hospital, and the first councilor. He also chose the other councilors and the secretary of the congregation. Although the records of the General Chapters were in Chinese, Bishop Valtorta signed every one of them.⁸⁹ The special arrangement for the Fourth General Chapter and the fact that Sr. Joanna Tam had only served one term were both exceptional. The purpose of the unusual changes seemed to be for Sr. Joanna to step down as the superior general and instead to focus on her work as the superior of the Precious Blood Hospital. Fr. Peter Ngai became the vicar at the Precious Blood Church soon after, and remained in that post from 1939 to 1941.⁹⁰

Sr. Lucy Chan was 50 years old at the time and had been a member of the order for 32 years and she shouldered the responsibilities of the superior general beginning in 1938. She knew that she had to lead the sisters

through a figurative dark tunnel. Her many years of service meant that she had invaluable evangelization experience in the villages and in educating the locals.⁹¹ She had witnessed the independence of the congregation, the superb leadership of former superiors, and the adversities faced by her fellow sisters. As such, Sr. Lucy was knowledgeable in her work with the poor and in seeking ways to unite and encourage them despite the unforeseeable future.⁹² Sr. Lucy had a vision, and as such she took on the responsibilities of managing the order's schools.⁹³

Sr. Lucy's personal handbook, which contained opinions and reflections, is in good condition in the Precious Blood Sisters' archives. In the handbook, Sr. Lucy mused on the priests' teachings in the 1930s, but it is her unique voice that comes through so vividly to the reader.⁹⁴ On the first page, she wrote "The Main Ideas and Thoughts of Lucy Chan," yet the handbook was full of questions. Regarding the call to lead a religious life, Sr. Lucy believed that a sister must keep it and hold it tightly, as she had done when first entering the convent. Then, she pondered the sadness of one's soul; specifically, where the pain came from and its overall effects.⁹⁵ Sr. Lucy was also concerned about all of the sisters and their physical health. She reported that she was fine and did not suffer any illness. Subsequently, she moved on to wonder whether the sisters could keep the matters of the congregation in strict confidentiality, or if they were being inquisitive about the business of those sisters who went out in pairs to work outside the convent.⁹⁶

Sr. Lucy also contemplated the sisters' ability to maintain virtuous conduct by conscientiously striving to improve and remember the importance of acting in the interests of others. She reflected on whether the sisters were interested in their work. Sr. Lucy believed that it was through the Lord's blessings that a sister was inspired to perform good deeds. Thus, a sister must treasure God's gift and make good use of it. She also considered whether the sisters were willing to resist the temptations of the external environment and she paid careful attention to the sisters' thoughts, their spirituality, and their good will.⁹⁷

Sr. Lucy also wondered about the sisters' ability to obey their superiors and readily follow orders, questioning whether this was problematic for any individual sisters. That directed her to stress the congregation's regulations and the importance of the sisters' whole-hearted compliance in abiding by all of the rules and restrictions.⁹⁸ She pointed to the vow of poverty and thought about how a sister should follow her profession, which led her to contemplate whether a sister could live in a prolonged state of quiet

and meditation.⁹⁹ By maintaining self-discipline, a sister could devote herself entirely to the service of others. Here, Sr. Lucy acknowledged the significance of fully concentrating on one's work with the knowledge that God was always watching.

To maintain self-discipline and devotion, Sr. Lucy stressed prayer and meditation to guide the sisters in their service and worship. That immediately led her to call upon the sisters to reconsider and reflect on their daily work.¹⁰⁰ Following the Precious Blood Sisters' traditional heritage, she encouraged the sisters in fulfilling their duties; specifically, educating children and caring for the sick through the love of God and the use of effective methods.¹⁰¹ In this way Sr. Lucy was very much like the foundress, Sr. Clara, who had also called for attention to prayer and meditation as sources of strength.

Toward the end of the 1930s, it was literally correct to say that the Precious Blood Sisters lived in poverty with notable endurance and determination, and they could only work to the best of their ability in the face of such critical circumstances. There was no time to lose and no extra money to spend. In 1939, their total income was about HK\$30,480 and their total expenditure was slightly more than HK\$31,310.¹⁰² Their deficit had narrowed to a sum of slightly more than HK\$830.¹⁰³ The situation was much less severe than in previous years, as the deficit (from 1939) was less than a third of that from 1938. One reason for this was that the sisters had no large building project in 1939 but, as always, they responded to the call to service. In July 1939, two of the sisters working in the Precious Blood Hospital, one of whom spoke English, were ready for volunteer service that the government urgently needed because of an epidemic. The request came from the government's Director of Medical Services, Dr. P.S. Selwyn Clarke to Bishop Valtorta, asking if the Catholic Church could dispatch sister-nurses to help out in a district in Kowloon.

The Catholic Mission had tried to maintain a cordial relationship with the colonial government, with the hope that both sides could be mutually supportive of each other's needs. In his reply to the director, Bishop Valtorta said that the two Chinese sisters in the Precious Blood Hospital, along with the Canossian and the Maryknoll Sisters, were able to offer the necessary service to the government. Here all of the sisters involved, Chinese and foreign, were answering the call of Bishop Valtorta.¹⁰⁴ After having received Bishop Valtorta's confirmation, the director replied, "If the epidemic worsens, I shall let you know, if I may, and seek further help from you in the shape of the Chinese Sister who can speak English from the Precious Blood

Hospital.”¹⁰⁵ To the best of their ability, the Precious Blood Sisters made themselves useful to the Church and the government, and in doing so they obtained increasing recognition. By the end of 1939, there were 46 members in the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood.¹⁰⁶

REMARKS

In the 1930s, the Precious Blood Sisters established themselves in the district of Shamshuipo along with their Motherhouse, the church, the schools, the orphanage, and the hospital. They were invested in every aspect of the Catholic Church’s religious and charitable work, having evolved from a small community of sisters into an assertive, confident, and versatile congregation. The Precious Blood Sisters built their congregation among the poor, the working class, and the deprived. Although the Catholic Mission had its plans for the colony, the sisters were adhering closely to the bishop’s demands and evolving along with the Church’s developments.

What the Precious Blood Sisters achieved in Shamshuipo was representative of the successes of other religious congregations in Hong Kong and mainland China. The Precious Blood congregation was a typical example of the indigenous congregations in China’s interior. Together, the sisters grew and developed with the Catholic Church in Hong Kong and China, growing in stature in the 1930s despite significant financial difficulties. They responded to the call for service in faraway villages and did their best to bargain with the bishop. They grew through hardships, as did the rest of the people they served in Hong Kong society.

Nevertheless, the world had reached a breaking point in 1939. The outbreak of the Second World War in Europe had left the international climate ruined by the end of the 1930s. In 1940, the Precious Blood Hospital opened a new wing to manage the increasing number of patients. From 1941 to 1945, Hong Kong was under Japanese occupation and this demanded extreme perseverance from the locals. During that period, the Precious Blood Sisters could barely manage their own livelihood, yet despite the severity of the situation, the sisters continued to care for those in despair. Numerous families abandoned their babies, the care of which fell to the immediate attention of the sisters. It was a challenging time, particularly as the Japanese soldiers occupied the Precious Blood Hospital and the adjacent convent, but the sisters continued to look for the light at the end of the dark tunnel.

NOTES

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7. Letter from the Director of Public Works to the Vicar Apostolic Bishop Enrico Valtorta, November 10, 1927, in English, one page, History of the Congregation, Box 1.5, SPBA.
8. Agreement for Exchange of Land (First Schedule: Particulars of the New Lot [Shamshuipo]; Second Schedule: Lot to be Surrendered [Shaukiwan]), November 25, 1927, 6 pages, Public Works Office, Hong Kong Government, History of the Congregation, Box 1.5, SPBA.
9. Ibid., p. 3.
10. Ibid.
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13. Letter from Bishop Valtorta to the Director of Public Works, E.W. Carpenter, Esq., November 12, 1928, in English, one page, History of the Congregation, Box 1.5, SPBA.
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15. The General Chapter of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood (in Chinese), July 29, 1929, Election Rules and Regulations, SPBA.
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18. List of the names of the Precious Blood Sisters, 1929, in Chinese, one page, Statistics of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood, SPBA.
19. List of the names of the Precious Blood Sisters, 1930, in Chinese, one page; list of the names, 1931, in Chinese, one page, Statistics of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood, SPBA.

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22. This is an observation after the author’s visit to the Motherhouse on September 19, 2014. The author would like to thank Prof. Thomas Coomans of the Department of Architecture of the University of Leuven for his insightful observations.
23. *A Brief History of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood Religious Congregation of the Diocese of Hongkong (1861–1952)*, pp. 4–5.
24. Information on the financial balance of the Precious Blood Sisters; two sets of identical information, one handwritten in Chinese and another typed in Italian, 1930, History of the Congregation, Box 1.5, SPBA.
25. Ibid.
26. *A Brief History of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood Religious Congregation of the Diocese of Hongkong (1861–1952)*, p. 4.
27. Ibid., pp. 4–5.
28. List of the names of the Precious Blood Sisters, 1932, in Chinese, one page, Statistics of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood, SPBA.
29. *A Brief History of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood Religious Congregation of the Diocese of Hongkong (1861–1952)*, p. 4; Information on Sr. Joanna Tam, History of the Congregation, Box 1.2, SPBA.
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31. Letter from Bishop Enrico Valtorta, PIME to Sr. Teresa Tam, January 3, 1933, in English, Missionary Work, Box 5.1, SPBA.
32. Letter from a priest in Taishan, Guangdong Province to Bishop Enrico Valtorta, January 7, 1933, in English, Missionary Work, Box 5.1, SPBA.
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42. Letter from Sr. Teresa to Bishop Valtorta, p. 2, History of the Congregation, Box 1.5, SPBA.
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44. Sr. Ida Sala, FdCC, *History of Our Canossian Missions: Volume Three, Hong Kong 1910–2000* (Hong Kong: Canossian Missions, FdCC, 2012), p. 35.
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61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. List of the names of the Precious Blood Sisters, 1934, in Chinese, one page, Statistics of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood, SPBA.
64. Letter of Bishop Enrico Valtorta, June 14, 1935, in English, one page, History of the Congregation, Box 1.5, SPBA.
65. Letter from Bishop Enrico Valtorta to Messrs. D'Almada & Mason Solicitors, 33 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong, June 18, 1935, in English, one page, History of the Congregation, Box 1.5, SPBA.

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94. Handbook of Sr. Lucy Chan, n.d., in Chinese, Sisters' Writings, SPBA.
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96. Ibid., the second page.
97. Ibid., the second page to the sixth page.
98. Ibid., the third page.
99. Ibid., the third and the fourth pages.
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The War Years 1940s

THE “DARK TUNNEL” IN HONG KONG HISTORY

The Sino-Japanese War had already begun on the mainland in 1937. In December 1941, the Japanese military and air forces stormed the British colony of Hong Kong. Without having to fight to the best of their ability, the Japanese troops easily secured full control of Hong Kong by Christmas Day and the Japanese occupation lasted until August 1945.

During this distressing period, the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood did everything necessary to survive and help the community for which they felt responsible. Some of the sisters could not escape from the villages where they had been working, and thus they had to remain where they were throughout the war years. This meant that they lost contact with their Motherhouse in Shamshuipo, Kowloon. The war years were challenging to everyone under Japanese occupation in Hong Kong. The Precious Blood Sisters encountered the ultimate test of their ability, faith, and endurance and the individual Chinese sisters stranded outside the Motherhouse demonstrated tremendous courage and determination in the face of major obstacles. As a group and as individuals, the sisters relied on the minimal resources that they could get hold of in such circumstances. They prayed that one day they would reach the far end of the “dark tunnel,” but the history of the Chinese sisters had prepared them for the poverty and destitution caused by the Second World War (1939–1945).

ON THE EVE OF THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION
IN DECEMBER 1941

The Personal Chronicles and Reflections of a Precious Blood Sister

One sister recorded some of her ideas and reflections at certain times in 1940 and 1941. She was Sr. Katherine Lui, who later succeeded Sr. Lucy Chan as superior general and became an esteemed figure in the history of the Precious Blood Sisters. She entered the congregation in 1939 at the age of 27 and made her first profession in 1941. During her journey from novice to professed sister, she recorded her experiences and her words shed light on the community's life and concerns. During this initial stage of her religious life, she had already exhibited a deep understanding of the sisters and superiors' duties. In her private notebook, written in Chinese, she outlined solutions to life's problems, taking into account the relationships among the sisters, the leadership of the superiors, and the psychology of each individual sister. Her words demonstrated her potential to be the superior of the congregation in the future, so much so that a reader might have thought she had been with the congregation for many years. Her musings on community and religious life occurred in the first and second years of her formation, and reflected her belief that the congregation was moving toward greater developments.

In addition to a description of the congregation's growth, Sr. Katherine's notebook contained guidelines she had composed for the sisters' daily undertakings,¹ but the notebook was first and foremost for *her personal use*, to remind herself of the essential principles and as a place to record her thoughts or views. She wrote that the sisters acted for the glorification of God and not for their own names. She thought that a superior should pay attention to the matters of her subordinates, and be cautious in making enquires to avoid jealousies. Likewise, a superior must be gentle and kind to the sisters and teach rather than penalize them in cases of wrongdoing. She believed that the superior must readily provide assistance and reassurance. Moreover, she reminded herself to be fair and equal with all of the sisters in the community.

In February 1940, Sr. Katherine recorded her thoughts on how the sisters should treat each other. She wrote that the sisters should care for others and be willing to forgive, as human nature was weak. Forgiveness was crucial to maintaining harmonious relationships and avoiding favoritisms, misunderstandings, and ill feelings. In March, she noted that it was better

to say kind words to those who had suffered than to merely acknowledge the situation. In May, Sr. Katherine reconsidered the teachings and expressed the necessity of avoiding prejudices for or against any person. In June, she considered the times of worry and boredom experienced by all of the sisters and focused on the vital knowledge that God never left one's side, as ill sentiments were counterproductive to the calling. These were her musings on the teachings she considered.

Sr. Katherine also had her own explanation for the causes of human sadness, which she believed originated from a person's private longings. There was also the fear of other people's judgment, in the face of which she stressed humility and the shouldering of one's responsibilities. From her perspective, it was unwise to dwell on what others might think of you. Instead, the sisters should rely on Christ and His blessings. Then she mentioned another reason for sadness; namely, the hatred of others and their wrongdoings. She urged that the sisters pray for those toward whom they harbored anger, as the solution for settling grievances. In December 1940, she wrote about the sisters' lives within the community and advised that they refrain from comparison and criticism. She found it pointless to consider oneself on higher moral ground. Each sister had her own duties. There were further writings in 1941 focusing on humility.

From December 26, 1940 to January 2, 1941, Sr. Katherine was on retreat in accordance with the Precious Blood Sisters' Constitutions, which mandated a retreat of eight days every year. The retreat took place after Christmas and lasted for one week into the New Year. Her entries during this time explained that love meant forgiving and understanding the people with whom one tended to be impatient or to mistrust. One must put oneself in other people's shoes. In times when others were being praised, admired, and given important tasks, Sr. Katherine reiterated the importance of humility, saying that others' good work was for the adoration of Christ and the benefit of the congregation. She urged the sisters to show their love for each other and to be sympathetic with others so that their actions would demonstrate their love.

It was as 1941 began that Sr. Katherine re-examined her past deeds. The Chinese sister constantly warned herself to avoid inappropriate behavior and negligence. One of the lessons that the sisters learned was to be mindful of their thoughts and acts, with an emphasis on correcting one's mistakes, habits, and deficiencies. Sr. Katherine exemplified both the "Chineseness" and the teachings of the Precious Blood Sisters. Faith was her answer to rescue herself from past suffering. She said the Lord had called her to

religious life and she tried to keep herself from wandering off the path. In her words, she was very grateful for the opportunity provided by the retreat to realize her own weaknesses and remedy the situation. Thus, she engaged wholeheartedly in service, openness, and surrender to the Lord.

The week immediately before the Fifth General Chapter in July 1941 (July 21–28) was another occasion for retreat. On July 24, Sr. Katherine wrote that the sisters must maintain close bonds by uniting and working together diligently for evangelization and the congregation. She trusted that it was God's blessings that had allowed her to attain the sisterhood. She had made her first profession and for that she insisted on repaying the Lord. It was through discipline, dedication, gratitude, humility, devotion, and sacrifice that the newly professed sister, Katherine, prepared herself for religious life and endured the ensuing Japanese occupation with her fellow sisters.

The Fifth General Chapter of the Precious Blood Sisters, July 1941

As the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) ravaged China's mainland, the government and the people in Hong Kong speculated about their imminent future. The Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood held the Fifth General Chapter on July 29, 1941—at which time they did not know that Hong Kong would soon be under Japanese attack. The main objective of the General Chapter was as usual to choose the superior general, the assistant superior general, the four councilors, the mistress of novices, and the secretary of the congregation for new terms.² Bishop Enrico Valtorta presided over the event, accompanied by Fr. Peter Ngai Wan-fai, who was the vicar at the Precious Blood Church until 1941, and Fr. Lucas Fung Tak-yiu, who served the Catholic Mission.³ The Fifth General Chapter marked the return to a voting process, rather than the previous one in which all the positions were chosen by the bishop. There were 41 sisters with voting power, and they chose 12 representatives from among themselves to elect the leading positions in the congregation. Then, the remaining sisters waited patiently for the election results.

Together with the incumbent superior general, the former superior general, and the four current councilors, the 12 sister-representatives supported the choice of the superior general for the coming term of three years.⁴ As in the past General Chapters, they vowed to select to the best of their conscience, and to keep the election process confidential. Two sister-representatives served as moderators. On this occasion, Bishop

Valtorta nominated Sr. Lucy to continue for a second term and the sister-representatives upheld his decision. Next, the sister-representatives cast their votes and Sr. Joanna became the assistant superior general, the superior of the Precious Blood Hospital, and the councilor. Then, the bishop nominated the second councilor and the sister-representatives elected the third and fourth councilors. In the presence of the bishop, the newly selected superior general and councilors picked the mistress of novices and the secretary of the congregation.⁵

Sr. Lucy's second term as superior general of the Chinese sisters lasted from July 29, 1941 to July 26, 1944.⁶ Apart from hospital matters, Sr. Lucy appointed the appropriate sisters to teach in the primary schools in Shamshuiipo and on Hong Kong Island. The sister-teachers worked whole days. There were also sisters assigned to the villages, and they were expected to return to the Motherhouse once a year to attend the annual retreat and to report to the superior general regarding their work. These pastoral-care sisters were to use the annual report to reflect their needs and/or to seek re-assignment.⁷

The Ratification of the Precious Blood Schools

In 1941, the Precious Blood Sisters continued to offer schooling for the local children. Sr. Lucy was particularly concerned about whether the Hong Kong colonial government would continue to recognize their two schools: one in Shamshuiipo, Kowloon and the other in Wanchai, Hong Kong Island. Twice, in August and October 1941, she asked Bishop Enrico Valtorta to retain a priest with the family name Cheung in the administration to assist with the teaching work in the Precious Blood schools. In a handwritten letter dated August 1, 1941 she wrote, "With deep gratitude for granting Father Cheong [Cheung] to help us about the school matters. Through his kind service the registration of the lower class of the two schools have [sic] been formally ratified, but the middle class still needs a bit of good results to show the Chinese Ministry of Education, so it means we have to work hard in order to gain that registration for the middle class."⁸ The sisters had to obtain official recognition of their middle classes in the schools, so Sr. Lucy requested the continued assistance of Fr. Cheung for his very high standard of Chinese, as his contributions would benefit the students. Another pragmatic concern was that Fr. Cheung was well connected in educational circles, whereas Sr. Lucy admitted that as religious sisters, it would be "impossible" for them to

engage in such social undertakings.⁹ Such limitations were not unknown to the Chinese sisters, yet Sr. Lucy was candid in revealing the situation. She wrote, “Perhaps you [Bishop Valtorta] will think why we should ask a priest not others? Our wise Bishop, you must understand in this world *to find a sincere heart is as hard as anything*. Among ten teachers we can scarcely find one that has a sincere heart towards the school [emphasis added].”¹⁰ The Chinese sisters were very cautious about who they hired in such difficult times. To convince the bishop to retain Fr. Cheung in the schools, Sr. Lucy explained, “People usually work merely for the sake of the money, especially [male] Catholic teachers.”¹¹ She stated that it was extremely difficult to find a teacher with high proficiency in Chinese. It was not that the sisters did not want to hire women to teach in the schools, there simply was no such highly qualified female teacher at the time.¹²

Sr. Lucy wrote, “So our kind Bishop, hoping you will understand our difficulty and ask Father Cheong [Cheung] to continue his kind service in our schools in any moment, so that we may perfect our God’s work.”¹³ Once more she pleaded, “Dear Bishop, since I have obeyed you and promised to continue to carry the heavy cross, I have asked you nothing but this. Hoping you will pity this poor cross-carrier and grant me this special favour. Please write me a word, in case Father Cheong [Cheung] will refuse me.”¹⁴ Sr. Lucy was desperate to keep the priest in the schools; and thus, it was crucial and urgent to obtain the bishop’s permission. She knew that Fr. Cheung had known about the bishop’s reluctance to re-assign him to the schools and thus planned not to stay behind.

Two months after the mailing of the above letter, Sr. Lucy wrote to Bishop Valtorta for the second time on the appointment of Fr. Cheung to serve in the Precious Blood schools.¹⁵ The superior general of the Chinese sisters was outright and forceful in her deliberation (dated October 11, 1941 [emphases added]):¹⁶

Your Lordship:

Since the last interview, in which you showed your discontentment of Father Cheong [Cheung] in his generous help to us, I am extremely sorry to inform you that since that day Father Cheong [Cheung] has absolutely refused to continue his usual help. *Now, dear Lordship, how am I going to carry on the school matters especially during this hard time?* I consider *this is the hardest time*, of course, I have the reason to say so. If the registration of the lower classes has not [been] ratified I rather give up the whole matter and leave the school as it is. But now everything has gone half way,

the matters of registration had been presented to the Chinese Ministry of Education two years ago.

The ratification process had taken too long. According to the previous letter dated August 1, 1941, the Chinese Ministry of Education had already ratified the lower classes of the two Precious Blood schools. The colonial government's procedure had reached the halfway mark by August, and the sisters were eager to attain official approval of the middle classes. In August 1941, Sr. Lucy frankly stated that the Chinese sisters needed the expertise of Fr. Cheung and his social network to complete the ratification process. Now, in October, she must have felt great frustration after unsuccessfully soliciting the bishop's affirmation and the priest's support. Sr. Lucy reported that the Precious Blood schools could not attain full ratification without the appointment of Fr. Cheung. The schools were *registrated*, meaning that they received financial support from the Hong Kong government and must meet the required educational standards. Sr. Lucy continued: "Besides, the registrated school is far different and troublesome than the local one. It would not be so confusing if we had understood the rule, and followed it properly in the beginning; but now time has passed and everything has gone into mess!"¹⁷ The Chinese sisters still had a lot to learn about dealing with government bureaucracy. At that time, they were caught in a chaotic situation and wanted swift relief.

In her letter, Sr. Lucy expressed her high hopes and serious expectations:¹⁸

Suppose the inspector does really come and find out the confusion of our school, then what will be the result? Close the school, of course, it is a great blow to our poor Convent, but since it is a Catholic School, I am afraid it may affect seriously the good name of the Catholic Church. So, dear Lordship, please consider the matter, and believe that we are really under difficulty and are greatly in need of your dear Father Cheong [Cheung]. I do understand a priest's great duty, so I dare not to bother him too much, *but let me say, once a week will it be alright?* If your Lordship think[s] it is possible, please give Father Cheong [Cheung] a word, *because our direct asking him is useless.*

At length, I must say I have done my best to explain it to you and beg for your help. *I hope you will understand and not think it a little matter. What might become of the effect I am sorry to say is entirely up to your choice* [emphases added].

Sr. Lucy ended her letter by asking for “a little sympathy” from Bishop Valtorta, in the form of granting her request.¹⁹ She warned the bishop of the adverse effects on the Catholic Church were the schools to be denied ratification, and while her statement was persuasive, it was up to the bishop to safeguard the prestige of the Church. Sr. Lucy claimed to be the humble listener, noting that there was nothing she could do if the bishop ignored her repeated appeals, but the letter reflected her determination, openness, and assumed leadership. She added a postscript to the letter that read: “P.S. About the Professor your Lordship ... introduced to us, I am sorry to say that the Sister in charge has found that owing to his different language she cannot find out any help from him, but both his daughters we have gladly accepted into our school with the least fee. Thanks for your kindness and hoping you will forgive our refusal.”²⁰ Bishop Valtorta had probably asked the Chinese sisters to give the “professor” a position, but they were unable to do so. Nonetheless, they still offered help in another way. By 1941, the sisters had learned to bargain with the bishop by asking him to recognize the consequences of his decisions. It would be damaging to deny the schools the proper recognition from the colonial government. Finally, on October 18 (exactly a week later), Bishop Valtorta sent back a reply: “I wish to inform you that after careful consideration of this matter I can allow Father Cheung to help in your school only one morning (9–12 noon) every week, and no more.”²¹ Although the bishop’s reply was short, a single sentence, it fulfilled Sr. Lucy’s wish and the matter was finally settled. Unfortunately, fate soon turned against everyone in Hong Kong.

The Japanese Invasion, December 8, 1941

The Japanese troops invaded the colony on December 8, 1941. Simultaneously, Japanese planes bombed the territories, instilling fear and anxiety among the local population. Within four days the Japanese army was able to gain control of the Kowloon Peninsula.²² During this initial stage of attack, the Precious Blood Sisters were fortunate in that their properties remained intact. On December 11, the British forces began to retreat from Kowloon, and the lack of law enforcement created an opportunity for local bandits to steal and riot. On the night of December 11, a few hundred gangsters gathered to break into the Motherhouse. The Chinese workers, whom the sisters had hired to work in the hospital, took shifts to guard the convent so the sisters were safe from the disturbances

that night.²³ Nonetheless, the Japanese bombing escalated, targeting different areas of the colony and dragging on for quite some time. The Precious Blood Hospital continued to offer medical service for the homeless and the war victims.²⁴ There was tremendous demand for the emergency care provided in the hospital and the sisters and staff worked under extremely stressful circumstances.

On December 21, the Japanese bombed the area surrounding the Precious Blood Hospital. The bomb destroyed the babies' ward and took 20 lives,²⁵ but the building survived despite the destruction. Then, a second bomb hit the grounds of the Motherhouse and a third landed right outside the entrance gate. Another bomb smashed into the column supporting the veranda for the school building, which was used as a church, adjacent to the Motherhouse.²⁶ These incidents shattered any last expectations of peace and safety. In response to the persuasion of a Jesuit priest, the sisters, novices, postulants, and workmen left the Motherhouse and the hospital and took up temporary residence in St. Teresa's Church on Waterloo Road in Kowloon Tong.²⁷ Only two elderly sisters remained in the Motherhouse and several Chinese workers stayed behind to take care of the convent and the hospital, while the Japanese troops escorted the others to St. Teresa's Church. Afterward, every day for a few days another priest led the workmen to bring food to the sisters and the others there. The Japanese occupation began on Christmas Day, and the Japanese military imposed martial law on Hong Kong the very next day. Once the Japanese military ruled the territory, the fighting stopped. So on December 26, all those who had gone to St. Teresa's returned to the Motherhouse. The Precious Blood Sisters and the workmen who were walking home early in the morning had to stop repeatedly because of the Japanese soldiers' strict surveillance. They reached Shamshuipo at 3 p.m. that afternoon.²⁸ Then, on December 27, the Japanese military demanded the confiscation of both the convent and the hospital. After much negotiation, the Precious Blood Sisters kept the convent but lost the hospital building to the Japanese.

With the Japanese military staying next door, the sisters were at risk and under constant scrutiny. When 1942 arrived, the Japanese soldiers celebrated for three whole days, provoking great fear among the sisters, who prayed with the priest and were thus able to stay safe.²⁹ In such times, the sisters relied on their faith and prayer to persevere. The immediate future of the sisters and Hong Kong's population was dark indeed. There was an extreme shortage of everything, even rice was rationed,³⁰ and psychological

depression quickly set in. At that time, there were over 50 Precious Blood Sisters,³¹ some of whom were in the Motherhouse while the others were in isolated villages waiting for the war to end. Unfortunately, the sisters had yet to encounter their worst trials.

THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION OF THE BRITISH COLONY (DECEMBER 1941–AUGUST 1945)

The Sisters' Missionary Work

The Japanese occupation of Hong Kong lasted for three years and eight months. During this period, the Precious Blood Sisters who had already gone to the villages for evangelization, had no choice but to remain confined there until the end of the war. These Chinese sisters had inherited the long tradition of pastoral work from their predecessors. It was only after the Japanese surrendered that the sisters could return to the Motherhouse. The sisters not only lost contact with each other, they also had to try their best to hold onto their properties, as the hospital building was already under the control of the Japanese soldiers.³² The Japanese confiscated most of the furniture in the hospital, although the sisters managed to get some of it back. The Japanese troops occupied the hospital for some time, and did significant damage. When the sisters reclaimed the hospital on September 29, 1943, they hardly recognized it because of its emptiness and disorder.³³

During the Japanese occupation, the sisters used the convent as effectively as they could, bringing babies who had been abandoned on the streets back for care. The refectory of the novices became a temporary home for such babies. The sisters also cared for dying babies and gave them a final resting place. In September 1943, the sisters moved the ad hoc nursery from the convent to the hospital, which had finally been returned to them.³⁴ With a suitable place established for infant and toddler care, they expanded the orphanage in the Precious Blood Hospital and once again offered medical care to the locals.

The Sisters' Educational Pursuits

After the Japanese invasion, the Precious Blood Sisters' schools were closed. In May 1942, Tack Ching Girls' Middle School obtained permission from the Japanese to open for the students inside the Motherhouse.³⁵

It was the only school that the Chinese sisters were allowed to re-open. Because the sisters spent most of their time in the convent, they naturally shouldered most of the teaching tasks, including those required of the principal, academic affairs, ethics board, and the responsibilities of the home-room teachers. The sisters also hired several lay people to help as teachers. This was a blessing in disguise under the Japanese occupation as the sisters were able to build a solid foundation for the school. Gradually, more and more students were enrolled.³⁶ Compared to the past, when only one or two sisters stayed in one school, this was a rare opportunity for the many sisters to teach and care for the students' spiritual needs in such an enclosed environment.³⁷ The Chinese girls who attended the school also treasured the education and the spiritual support they received during such tumultuous times. The provision of education also attained the missionary objective of spreading the Gospel in a time of desolation, misery, and despair. Tack Ching Girls' Middle School remained the only regular education that the sisters offered throughout the Japanese occupation.³⁸

The Sisters' Critical Financial Situation and the Canonical Visitation of the Motherhouse, December 1943

In the beginning of the Japanese occupation, the Catholic Mission sought to protect the missionaries, the clergy, and the nuns. In mid-February 1942, Bishop Valtorta (then not only serving as Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong but also acting for the Italian consul) wrote to the Japanese military regarding the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood. The bishop addressed "The Officer in Charge, Financial Department, Imperial Japanese Forces, Hong Kong" in his letter,³⁹ seeking the Japanese authority's consent to allow the Chinese sisters to withdraw money from the Bank of China. As he explained, these Chinese women were Catholic religious sisters whose convent and hospital were adjacent to Castle Peak Road in Shamshuipo. He wrote, "There are altogether 120 persons. They need a minimum of \$800- a months [sic] for their living expenses."⁴⁰ In so doing, Bishop Valtorta begged the Japanese to allow the sisters to secure that amount from the bank each month to maintain themselves, even though it barely met their daily needs.

The Chinese sisters worked hard to cover their expenses. By 1942, they had survived with some savings. They sold what was not of immediate use in the convent for cash. They even grew vegetables for themselves

and to sell.⁴¹ On the record, they sought to secure various sources of income, including religious service, the provision of meals, the offering of medication, school fees, house rents, the sale of flour, and even the sale of pigs. The sisters were fortunate to have HK\$2,500 carried over from the previous year.⁴² The bishop provided them with a sum of HK\$7,200 in 1942 and they were able to withdraw the said amount of HK\$800 from the Bank of China that year. Overall, the sisters' income in 1942 was HK\$37,930.14.⁴³

The income was matched by a longer list of expenditures. The sisters had to pay for their meals, transportation, firewood, electricity, telephone service, medicine, clothing, land tax, teachers' salaries, and church maintenance. They were also expected to take care of the burial and funereal needs of the deceased sisters and novices. Another expense was the purchase of piglets to produce additional income, as mentioned above. Altogether, the sisters spent HK\$36,149.74,⁴⁴ leaving a savings of HK\$1,780.40 in 1942⁴⁵—a nearly unimaginable surplus.

Nonetheless, Bishop Valtorta soon asked the Chinese sisters to shoulder more of their own expenses. Despite his being able to help in obtaining the approval to withdraw money from the Bank of China, the bishop had his own financial problems. In October 1943, the bishop sent a note of instruction to Sr. Lucy that reflected the conditions of the Catholic Mission. He wrote, "I have a proposal to make, which is based (1) on the fact that this Mission of Hong Kong is having too many difficulties in providing for the maintenance of all its Missionaries; (2) your Convent has been and, as far [as] possible and according to your need, will continue to be helped with some monthly or some occasional allowance from the Papal Fund for War-Destitutes; ..."⁴⁶ The Papacy had been sending aid to the overseas missions. The bishop stated that the "Convent and the Precious Blood Hospital together should provide for the maintenance of the Priest in charge of Sham Shui Po, at least for the time being."⁴⁷ This meant that the Chinese sisters had to pay the priest serving the neighborhood. To explain his request, the bishop said that the priest was also the chaplain of the Precious Blood Sisters, whom he believed should be able to take care of the expenses.⁴⁸ He did not say for how long the sisters had to pay the priest; neither did he mention any way in which the Chinese sisters could try to raise their income. Most probably, he was hinting at the sisters' service in Tack Ching Girls' Middle School and the Precious Blood Hospital.

In late November 1943, Bishop Valtorta reminded Sr. Lucy of the upcoming canonical visitation of the Motherhouse in accordance with Canon Law. The visit would take place despite the Japanese occupation. In his letter of November 26, the bishop described the details of the occasion:⁴⁹

I beg to inform you that, as required by Canon Law, there will be a Canonical Visitation of the Convent of the Sisters in Sham Shui Po, starting on the 6th day of the month of December next.

The Visit will not be made personally by myself, but by two Delegates duly selected by me, namely the Rev. Fr. H. De. Angelis and the Rev. Fr. A. Poletti, according to my instructions and the questions which they have to put to the Sisters.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly *warn* all the Sisters that they are bound to answer according to their own conscience to the questions which may be asked from them. Furthermore, *all Sisters and Novices without exception* are absolutely free to talk without any interference whatever either to the Visitors above mentioned or to either of them or even to the Bishop personally and make complaints, suggestions etc., as they may desire to make [emphases added].

It was an event in which all of the members of the congregation must participate. There were no exemptions. In addition, every member must answer the questions truthfully and in consideration of the congregation's future benefit. The bishop's letter served as both a warning and a list of instructions. The visitation took place in December 1943.

A short while later, Bishop Valtorta expressed "his satisfaction to the Sisters for the sincere spirit and confidence with which they have answered the questions put to them" as they had made the visitation very successful.⁵⁰ In addition to the commendation, Bishop Valtorta asked the sisters to take note of several items without delay. In his letter of January 15, 1944, he made some recommendations regarding the current conditions.⁵¹ First, the superior general should solicit an assistant priest, approved by the bishop, to supervise the congregation. Second, the superior general should ensure that the rules and regulations be followed, especially with regard to the importance of silence. Third, there should be a more suitable residence for the novices, and a new mistress of novices should be elected as soon as possible.

Bishop Valtorta's emphasis on the above points was with reference to Canon Law. Requests were made regarding silence, meditation, the observance of the daily schedule, the separation of the novices from the

professed sisters, and the selection of the mistress of novices. The assignation of an assistant priest to the Motherhouse generated some immediate concerns. In particular, the relationship between the assistant priest and the superior general merited attention; specifically, whether the former asserted authority over the sisters on behalf of the bishop, or whether he only played the role of a nominal supervisor.

As the 1943 financial records show, the prospects were disappointing. It did not take long for the Papal Fund to run out and thus become unavailable to the missions. In mid-March 1944, Bishop Valtorta sent a notice to the Precious Blood Sisters. The financial conditions had worsened, and the bishop was giving the last bit of money from the Papal Fund—1,000 Yen—to the sisters.⁵² Bishop Valtorta wrote, “I regret to inform you that it seems certain that no more remittances can be expected from Rome in future and, consequently, I shall not be able to help you as in past months.”⁵³ Here the message was loud and clear. The Catholic Mission followed the decisions of Rome and now it was beyond the Papacy to assume the same responsibilities as in the past. Bishop Valtorta was precise in telling the sisters how to manage their finances in the wake of these changes. He asked them to suspend some of their work and instead to concentrate on their own education and medical endeavors. Bishop Valtorta said, “It is necessary to arrange matters in such a way as to make your income from the School and from the Hospital cover all your expenses, even if this were to mean the curtailing of some activities.”⁵⁴ Despite the Japanese occupation, the sisters were still running the school and the hospital, and they now had to depend *solely* on themselves, that is, what they earned through service, to sustain their livelihood. They were not to expect any assistance.

The Sixth General Chapter, July 1944

On July 27, 1944, the Precious Blood Sisters held their Sixth General Chapter. Bishop Valtorta, Fr. Ambrogio Poletti, PIME (the sisters’ chaplain), and Fr. Felix Joannes Shek Pau-pok (the Pro-Rector of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and the diocesan counselor) arrived at the Motherhouse.⁵⁵ The sisters present were Sr. Lucy, Sr. Joanna (the assistant superior general and the councilor), the other three councilors, and 29 others.⁵⁶ At that time, the total number of sisters who had taken vows was 57, but some were detained in the villages and had no communication with the Motherhouse. The sisters had long waited and prayed for the end of the war so that their community could finally be united.⁵⁷ The bishop

took a head count of the sisters who had already taken their vows and therefore were eligible to attend the General Chapter. Then the bishop led the prayer and asked Sr. Lucy to name two secretaries to record the elections.⁵⁸

Bishop Valtorta then explained the reasons for calling the Sixth General Chapter. The bishop was to appoint the superior general, the assistant superior general, the superior of the Precious Blood Hospital, the superior of the house in Macau, and the councilors. He made the ultimate decisions. He nominated all of the leading positions within the congregation, including the members of the council. Thus, the General Chapter was more than a routine event, as the bishop emphasized the challenges at hand. One such matter was the sisters' service in Macau. In the General Chapter, the bishop stated that he would name the superior of the Precious Blood Sisters' house in Macau, as he had high expectations for the pastoral work expected to occur there in the years to come.⁵⁹

Bishop Valtorta also announced the additional regulations for the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. There were several newly added regulations. First, the congregation should have two secretaries, one of whom would be responsible for the financial accounts and the other for records and documents.⁶⁰ Second, the superior general should hold a regular meeting every month and, if required, an ad hoc meeting for tackling special items. All of the councilors were obliged to attend the meetings and keep the discussion confidential.⁶¹ Third, the congregation should terminate the training of a novice who had personality problems and had ignored repeated advice from the sisters. If such difficulties happened with a sister who had taken temporary or final vows, the issue should be reported to the bishop.⁶² Fourth, the financial accounts should be given at the end of each month. Fifth, there should be an assistant superior and, if necessary, a secretary for each individual house of the sisters. This arrangement was to reinforce the work of the superior of the house. Sixth, the superior of each house had the authority to assign a particular sister to accompany any sister or novice who had to go out for service. The sisters went out in pairs.⁶³ In 1944, the bishop recognized the expanding agendas of the Precious Blood Sisters and the need to choose suitable personnel to do the extra work. The monthly meetings were another means to ensure the smooth operation of the congregation.

In the General Chapter, Bishop Valtorta appointed Sr. Lucy to continue as the superior general and Sr. Joanna to act as the assistant superior general, both of them for a third term. He also named the councilors,

the two secretaries, the mistress of novices, the superior of the hospital, and the superior of the sisters' house in Macau.⁶⁴ Toward the end of the General Chapter, the bishop stressed the importance of unity in serving to the best of one's ability, and in exploring the development of one's services. He said that the superior general Sr. Lucy should look after the sisters with the love of a mother. It is worth noting that the bishop asked the sisters to obey the superior general's orders "like that of soldiers,"⁶⁵ after which he reiterated that the sisters should care for each other in a loving manner. These admonitions fully prepared them for external threats and pressures. The bishop gave his blessings that the congregation would grow in stature and service.⁶⁶

THE END OF THE WAR AND THE POST-WAR YEARS

The Sisters' Daily Lives and Spiritual Needs

During the Japanese occupation, the Chinese sisters continued to pursue their spiritual growth in a difficult situation, and their faith and the mutual support of the community enabled them to deliver the necessary service. The sisters kept meticulously to a strict timetable as follows: rise at 5 a.m.; 30 minutes to prepare; in church from 5:30 to 7:15 a.m.; on duty from 7:15 to 8:15 a.m.; meal time from 8:15 to 9:00 a.m.; in school from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; tiffin, visitation of the Blessed Sacred Sacrament, and recreation from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.; in school from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.; on duty again from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.; supper and rest from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.; study from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m.; prayer from 7:15 to 7:45 p.m.; continued study from 7:45 to 8:30 p.m.; and in bed by 8:30 p.m.⁶⁷

The war ended in August 1945, and Sr. Lucy Chan and all of the Precious Blood Sisters sent a letter to Bishop Valtorta seeking the re-appointment of a chaplain to their convent.⁶⁸ Having emphasized the earlier hardships, the sisters expressed deep gratitude for the bishop's leadership and sympathy and high hopes for the future.⁶⁹ Having survived the war, they were anxious to grasp the opportunity to improve their community life and spirituality. They believed that the Lord had kept them safe and led them to the joyous present. Thus far, the Catholic Mission had survived on limited resources in a state of poverty—an inescapable reality in such distressful situations. In the letter, the sisters said that the local Chinese Catholics had kept their faith in God and their trust in the Church—a blessing despite the atmosphere of fear, loneliness, and



Fig. 4.1 The Sisters of the Precious Blood in Tack Ching Girls' Middle School in 1946. The front row, the fourth person from the left, Sr. Lucy Chan; the third person from the left, Sr. Joanna Tam. Sisters of the Precious Blood Archives, Hong Kong

psychological depression during the war years. At this time, the Chinese sisters were confident that the Church and the local people could persevere through the post-war difficulties. Together, they looked forward to greater happiness in the future (see Fig. 4.1).

Sr. Lucy and the Chinese sisters wrote particularly for the purpose of appealing to the bishop to reassign Fr. Ambrogio Poletti, PIME, as their chaplain. Fr. Poletti had a long and established relationship with the Precious Blood Sisters, as he had previously served in the villages near Haifeng and the other areas in Guangdong Province.⁷⁰ When the Japanese soldiers moved into Guangdong, they put Fr. Poletti in internment. He was released in 1942 and immediately left the mainland for Hong Kong,⁷¹ where he served as the chaplain for the Precious Blood Sisters in 1943 and 1944. Fr. Poletti had won the sisters' trust, and they believed that his presence was crucial to their post-war revival and development.

Why did the sisters send out this letter? It was a seven-page letter in Chinese from the Precious Blood Sisters to Bishop Valtorta, possibly written in August 1945. There was speculation that Bishop Valtorta would dispatch Fr. Poletti to the villages on the mainland, given that the war was now over. Thus, the sisters had to act fast. Sr. Lucy pleaded to keep Fr. Poletti in Hong Kong as their chaplain. In the letter, the sisters mentioned that Fr. Poletti had sacrificed a great deal for their wellbeing during the war. The sisters said that he had achieved much for them even under the most difficult circumstances.⁷² Sr. Lucy emphasized Fr. Poletti's previous guidance and the sisters' collective desire that he be the source of their spiritual enlightenment. In addition, Sr. Lucy was mindful of the numerous challenges that lay ahead. With his experience, Fr. Poletti could lead the sisters in their recovery from the war.⁷³ Sr. Lucy hoped that Bishop Valtorta would honor their plea, after having considered their sincerity and enthusiasm. The sisters wanted a priest that they could trust, one with a caring heart. On August 30, 1945, Sr. Lucy wrote to Bishop Valtorta again, this time a one-page letter in English. The timing was critical, as the sisters had heard that Fr. Poletti would leave for the mainland very soon.⁷⁴ Sr. Lucy described Fr. Poletti's generosity with both his time and his experience, and asked the bishop to retain the priest to meet their urgent need.

*The Purchase of the Precious Blood Church Building,
December 1946*

The Precious Blood Sisters needed a priest to negotiate with Bishop Valtorta. On December 9, 1946, Sr. Lucy Chan sent a request to Fr. Felix Joannes Shek Pau-pok to seek his help in talking to the bishop.⁷⁵ At that time, Fr. Shek was the priest in charge of the Precious Blood Parish.⁷⁶ Sr. Lucy was very concerned about the payment for the Precious Blood Church expected by the bishop. She started by saying that she had an important matter to resolve, but that due to the language barrier, she needed Fr. Shek to help her explain the matter in detail to Bishop Valtorta so that the issue could be resolved and the settlement recorded.⁷⁷

In the letter, written in Chinese, Sr. Lucy said that the sisters had agreed to purchase the church building from the bishop at the price of HK\$30,000. However, when she was about to sign the agreement with the lawyer, she realized that it stated that the building had been "given" to the Precious Blood Sisters, and that the sisters could only sell the property to the bishop and not anyone else in the future.⁷⁸

First, the superior general considered the matter difficult as the agreement should have stated “sold” rather than “given,” and she had already discussed the problem with the councilors. Second, Sr. Lucy also mentioned that the sisters had spent HK\$16,200 to erect two concrete cement structures on the site, which had originally had a single wooden building.⁷⁹ Moreover, the sisters had previously given HK\$15,000 to the bishop. Nevertheless, the agreement stated that the former payments were not counted and that the sisters now had to pay the exact amount of HK\$30,000.

As such, Sr. Lucy calculated that the sisters would spend a total sum of HK\$61,200 (instead of the originally agreed amount of HK\$30,000) for the Precious Blood Church, and thus she asked Fr. Shek to approach the bishop about rewriting the agreement. She also specified that the superior general and the councilors had to review the revised agreement before signing it.⁸⁰ Sr. Lucy hoped that Fr. Shek could represent the sisters on this matter, and she further hoped that Bishop Valtorta would understand the particulars of the issue and make a reasonable decision.

The Situation in 1948 and Looking Forward

The Seventh General Chapter took place on January 17, 1948. Bishop Valtorta appointed Sr. Lucy as the superior general and selected the other positions of the leadership of the congregation.⁸¹ The Precious Blood Sisters had been expanding in Shamshuiipo, with a complex centered on the Motherhouse. Even before moving to Shamshuiipo, the sisters had already managed Tack Ching School (primary section) for the children in the neighborhood. After the sisters settled there in 1929, the school was relocated to the building that was simultaneously erected right next to the Motherhouse. In 1938, the school also included the secondary section, and its ground floor housed a church for the people in Shamshuiipo. Moreover, the sisters managed the Precious Blood Hospital, which was adjacent to the convent and served the locals. The hospital provided some patients with completely free service in addition to accepting orphans.⁸²

By 1948, the Precious Blood Sisters already possessed several pieces of land on Crown Lease. The first piece of land was New Kowloon Inland Lot Number 1114 on Castle Peak Road, 34,500 square feet, housing three separate buildings: the convent, the school building (then accommodating 800–900 students, with the ground floor used as a church), and the four-story hospital. As the Hongkong Land & Real Estate Valuers described:

The property on this lot comprises a self-contained block, being bound on the North by Castle Peak Rd., on the East by Yen Chau Street [Yen Chow Street], on the South by Yu Chau Street [Un Chau Street] and on the West by Kiu Kiang Street. Three separate buildings are erected on the lot and are utilised as a Hospital[,], a school with a Church, and Sisters['] quarters.

The hospital building runs the full length of Kiu Kiang Street, with its main entrance facing Castle Peak Road. This building is four storeys high and is constructed of R.C.C. [Reinforced Cement Concrete] throughout.

The top floor of the hospital building is used as Sisters['] and nurses['] quarters, and is complete with dining rooms, parlours and bedrooms. Forty four private wards are provided on the first and second floors. There are three large childrens' [sic] wards with bedspace for approximately 40 children per ward. A maternity ward and an operation theatre are also provided on the first floor.

The school building stands to the right of the hospital building, facing Yen Chau Street [Yen Chow Street]. This building is three storeys high, and is designed to accommodate 800 to 900 children on the upper floors, while the ground floor is used as a Church. The length of the building is almost the full length of Yen Chau Street [Yen Chow Street]. A dormitory and dining room, with accommodation for about 12 boarders is provided on the top floor. The building is constructed of R.C.C. throughout.

Between the hospital and the school, towards the rear end of the hospital is a small erection formerly used as Sisters quarters, but owing to an increasing demand for classroom accommodation, the five rooms provided therein are now being used as classrooms and the Sisters have moved into the top floor of the hospital.⁸³

The Hongkong Land & Real Estate Valuers calculated that the land and the buildings had a market value of HK\$845,000 in 1948.⁸⁴

In addition, the sisters had acquired New Kowloon Inland Lot Number 182 on Un Chau Street (24,438 square feet). This land was located toward the rear of the Precious Blood Hospital and housed the first floor of a school at the time.⁸⁵ It was to be the new building for the Tack Ching Girls' Middle School. According to the valuers: "The sum of \$15,000.00 has been paid for pile driving on this site, and the Sisters have contracted to pay \$450,000.00 for the erection of the school."⁸⁶ They estimated that the school after completion would be worth HK\$600,000.⁸⁷

There was also New Kowloon Inland Lot Number 2827 of 7,104 square feet on Castle Peak Road, which was still unused at that point. It was situated west of the Precious Blood Hospital. The land lay bare with no buildings but had a market value of \$75,000.⁸⁸ The Congregation of

the Precious Blood Sisters thus owned three pieces of land on Un Chau Street and Castle Peak Road. The sisters had established a considerable presence in the Shamshuipo area.

On Hong Kong Island (in what was then called the City of Victoria), the Chinese sisters bought a four-story building in the Eastern District on Crown Lease. That property was located at the corner of Hennessy Road and Fenwick Street and was of high quality, with verandahs extending from each floor and equipped with flushing systems on all floors. This fourth lot was I.L. 2832 s.D.-No. 38, Hennessy Road (1,292 square feet).⁸⁹ The Hongkong Land & Real Estate Valuers estimated that “the market value of this property at prevailing rate—provided vacant possession could be granted—would be in the neighbourhood of \$140,000,000.”⁹⁰

It was wise for the Precious Blood Sisters to purchase the land mentioned above, as they were about to use these properties as security to borrow money from the bank for the construction of their school in 1948.⁹¹ They were able to provide the locals with education, medical services, and pastoral care.

Hence, the sisters asked that their properties be evaluated to secure loans from the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation to construct the building for the Tack Ching Girls’ Middle School on New Kowloon Inland Lot 182 on Un Chau Street. The sisters were able to borrow a maximum of HK\$500,000 from the bank, which they could access and pay back at any time. The bank requested an interest of 5 % per year subject to any possible increase in the future.⁹²

According to the letter that the Hongkong Land & Real Estate Valuers sent to the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation, the Precious Blood Sisters stated that they would not draw the whole sum immediately, but rather would “draw only as requisite for the completion of the new school building.”⁹³ As the letter stated, “With regard to repayment of the loan, the Sisters assure us [the Valuers] that after the school is completed, and in operation, they will undertake to return \$100,000.00 (Dollars one hundred thousand) per annum.”⁹⁴ It mentioned that the sisters would use the income mainly from the Precious Blood Hospital and Tack Ching Girls’ Middle School to pay back the loan.⁹⁵

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the 1940s, the Precious Blood Sisters endured poverty and fear under the Japanese occupation. They lived on very little but continued to serve the local population. Under the intense scrutiny of the Japanese military,

people barely survived in the colony. In such harsh times, the Chinese sisters suffered shortages of food and all kinds of necessities. They lived with the common folk and depended on their faith to get through the most desperate situations. In the Motherhouse, the sisters dedicated themselves to teaching their students and to providing them with essential psychological support. It was the worst time in their history, but paradoxically the best time to build a solid foundation for their educational pursuits. The sisters remained in service to the people and in close contact with the bishop and the Catholic Mission. Throughout the Japanese occupation, the bishop tried to ensure the safety of the foreign missionaries and the wellbeing of the local clergy and nuns. When the world was at war, the local Church could only accept whatever befell it and seek support from the Papacy, along with any financial assistance provided by the bishop. The colony of Hong Kong, the locals and the sisters stayed side-by-side and waited to reach the light at the end of the dark tunnel. In 1945 the Precious Blood Sisters were eventually able to step out of the turmoil and reunite.

The post-war conditions were no less challenging. The Chinese sisters had to rebuild their services through the demanding times after the war. Sr. Lucy led the sisters through test after test, proving that she was a superb leader. Looking toward the future, she paid close attention to the sisters' spirituality, their livelihood, and the direction of the community. Through the evolution of her own spirituality and understanding of human nature, she developed her own thoughts on the congregation and on her responsibilities as the superior. From humble beginnings, the Precious Blood Sisters fought to pursue education, medical service, and childcare. They came through the war more daring, more decisive, and more united in their endeavors. They fulfilled the vision of a close-knit community centered on the Motherhouse by providing greater services and facilities. Having established their foundation in the Shamshuiipo area, they were well prepared for the refugee years in the 1950s. The histories of the world, mainland China, and the colony of Hong Kong were interconnected, with more opportunities awaiting the Catholic sisters in the coming decade. They took risks, acquired resources, and expanded their service—emerging with the will to brave the obstacles faced by the rapidly growing population of Hong Kong in the 1950s.

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A New Chapter in Hong Kong's History: The 1950s

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW DECADE

Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, many refugees fled from the mainland to Hong Kong. The influx sparked a new chapter in Hong Kong's history as the population soared dramatically, from one or two million. The colony's composition became increasingly sophisticated due to the variety of people entering from different parts of China, many of whom spoke various dialects and had diverse backgrounds. Most of the refugees carried almost nothing with them during their flight to Hong Kong. Upon arrival, they had to find somewhere to stay, and many built squatter huts using wood frames, paperboard, aluminum and tin sheets. Many such "homes" were built on slopes and wherever else people found space. Hong Kong was soon covered in communities of scattered refugee shelters, such as King's Park, Kwun Tong, Shek Kip Mei, and Diamond Hill on Kowloon Peninsula and Chai Wan on Hong Kong Island.

The sudden influx of people generated unpredictable, unprecedented, and irresolvable problems for the British colonial government, which was not equipped to manage the new migrants. It took time for everyone to comprehend the magnitude of the new circumstances in Hong Kong, and the colonial government was eager to secure help from other parties, including the local Catholic Church, which quickly became one of the key players.

Changing Situations on the Mainland and in Hong Kong

In 1950, China began the Three-Self Movement—in local Catholic and Protestant churches—urging the Chinese Christians on the mainland to strictly follow the principles of self-support, self-administration, and self-propagation. The Chinese were no longer to depend on foreign missionaries, as the PRC government aimed to remove all foreign influence from Christian Churches. On September 23, 1950, the *People's Daily* published an editorial entitled “The Patriotic Movement of Christians.” It stated: “The declaration entitled ‘Direction of Endeavour for Chinese Christianity in the Construction of New China,’ signed by 1527 Christians, calls on all Christians of the country to sever relations between Christianity and imperialism, and to reform Christianity in China, making it self-governing, self-supporting, and self-promoting. This declaration, which was signed by many leading Chinese Christians states clearly that the political standpoint of the Christians of New China should be to oppose imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism, and to fight against war in the defense of peace, directing thus the endeavours of the religious circles of China into the right channels.”¹ In addition, the editorial highlighted: “The success of this movement [Three-Self Movement] will bring new life to Chinese Christianity, and will change people’s views and feelings concerning Christianity, since it draws a distinct line between religious activities and imperialistic aggressive activities. We believe, therefore, that the declaration signed by over 1500 Christians will be supported not only by patriotic Protestants, *but will find an echo also among patriotic Catholics*. It shows clearly which is the right direction for all religious believers to follow. Only in following this direction for all religious believers to follow. Only in following this direction can the religious world *rightfully claim to have a religious life of its own* [emphasis added].”²

In 1951, Premier Zhou Enlai met with the Chinese Catholic representatives, but the PRC government soon closed the only two Catholic universities on the mainland: Furen University, run by the German Society of the Divine Word in Beijing, and Zhendan University, run by the French Jesuits in Shanghai. What followed was the total elimination of Christian universities and colleges in China. That same year, the PRC expelled Archbishop Antonio Riberi, who was the Vatican’s internuncio to China, and nationalized all Catholic institutions.³

Beginning in 1951, China arrested and persecuted priests, nuns, and Chinese Catholics.⁴ In response, Pope Pius XII issued the apostolic letter *Cupimus Imprimis* to the Chinese Catholic Church on January 18,

1952. The Pontiff expressed his sincerest regards to the Chinese people and showed tremendous admiration for their great civilization.⁵ He emphasized the relevance of the “Christian virtues” to Chinese society: “The Catholic religion, far from being opposed to true doctrine or to those institutions of public or private life that are founded on justice, freedom, and charity, on the contrary, furthers, sustains and perfects them.”⁶ Nevertheless, the Pope was grieved to see China’s suppression of the longstanding Catholic Church, saying that “The Catholic Church is being represented and attacked as an enemy of your people; that its bishops, clergy, religious and nuns are frequently, alas, driven from their centres of activity.”⁷ What had befallen the clergy and the nuns, both Chinese and foreign, was miserable and depressing. The Chinese Catholic Church was in a state of crisis.

Pope Pius XII asserted that the Catholic Church had not sought to amass “worldly power” but “to proclaim and spread the truth of the Gospel” among all people on behalf of the heavenly kingdom.⁸ He assured the PRC that the Catholic Church did not pose a political threat to the rulers of the new China, as the Church had no intention of being an alternate source of authority on the mainland. Nevertheless, in the 1950s, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was determined to consolidate its rule and remove all perceived and/or hidden enemies. The “democratic parties” outside the CCP were incorporated into the Chinese Communists’ United Front in the form of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Then, the CCP removed any other seemingly irreconcilable establishments or put them under its supreme control. No Chinese citizen could pledge allegiance to a foreign power, including, in this case, the Vatican.

Pope Pius XII stated that the Vatican entrusted the Chinese clergy with the authority to run their local churches, and would continue to do so if the situation allowed: “Therefore, as soon as this Apostolic See saw the possibility of entrusting your dioceses to bishops who were your fellow-countrymen, it did so willingly.”⁹ He recalled the ordination of six Chinese bishops in Rome in 1926 as an indication of the Vatican’s long policy supporting the indigenization of the Chinese Catholic Church.¹⁰

Despite Pope Pius XII’s apostolic letter, the Chinese Catholic Church was subject to the close scrutiny of the PRC government. The foreign missionaries had no choice but to leave China. By the early 1950s, the PRC had expelled all missionaries from the country, except the American Maryknoll Bishop James Edward Walsh, who was wrongly accused of

being a spy. Many of the foreign missionaries who fled the mainland settled in Hong Kong, which proved to be a blessing, as the colony was in desperate need of all sources of aid. Hence, the Catholic priests and nuns, both Chinese and non-Chinese, who arrived in Hong Kong found themselves inundated with work. They were well qualified for the mission in Hong Kong, as they had studied and used the Chinese dialects, such as Cantonese and Hakka, on the mainland. The local Catholic churches provided emergency relief for the refugees and distributed food and daily necessities, clothing, medical care, and social welfare. They even made arrangements with the government to build better stone houses for the fire victims.

The Goal was a Native Clergy

The 1950s witnessed Hong Kong's dramatic evolution from a colony with gradual, sustained development to one experiencing explosive growth. Everyone involved struggled hard to meet the rapidly transforming environment, and the Precious Blood Sisters were no exception. They evolved with the changing situation by cultivating wider perspectives, greater responsibilities, and diverse outlooks. Shamshuipo remained a poor neighborhood with a constant influx of newcomers, demands, and complications. The Motherhouse in Shamshuipo symbolized the Precious Blood Sisters' extensive history serving society's most destitute members.

On October 7, 1954, Pope Pius XII issued the encyclical letter *Ad Sinarum Gentem* to the Chinese Catholics on the mainland, almost three years after his apostolic letter. He had seen the continuing deterioration of the Chinese Catholics' situation and had intended to express his sympathy and offer support. He described the situation on the mainland: "In recent years, however, the conditions of the Catholic Church in your midst have not improved in the least. The accusations and calumnies against the Apostolic See and those who keep themselves faithful to it have increased. The Apostolic Nuncio, who represented Our person among you has been expelled. The snares to deceive those less instructed in the truth have been intensified."¹¹ As such, the Pope was extremely disappointed in the false accusations against the Vatican and the Christian religion, and Sino-Vatican relations continued to decline.

Given the circumstances, Pope Pius XII chose to provide the Chinese Catholics with encouragement and spiritual strength to balance out the harsh treatment they had received. The pontiff stated, "The consciousness

of Our duty demands that We once more direct Our words to you through this Encyclical Letter, with the hope that it can become known to you. May it be of some comfort and encouragement for those who persevere staunchly and bravely in truth and virtue. To the others may it bring light and Our paternal admonitions.”¹² To the Precious Blood Sisters, who had maintained their dedication to God, the Church, and their own people through tremendous hardship, the letter signified a strong source of support. It acknowledged the devotion of anyone in the Catholic Church and offered blessings amid the hard work, sacrifice, and tough times.

In his missives to the Chinese Catholics on the mainland, Pope Pius XII reiterated that the Vatican's goal was to establish “a native clergy.”¹³ He said, “We desire, then, that the day may soon come—for this We send up to God most ardent petitions and suppliant prayers—when Bishops and priests of your own nation and in sufficient number can govern the Catholic Church in your immense country, and when there will no longer be need of help from foreign missionaries in your apostolate.”¹⁴ The Pope's call was also heard in Hong Kong, by the native clergy and sisters there, as confirmation that they were of equal status to the foreign missionaries in the colony.

THE SECOND BISHOP OF THE HONG KONG DIOCESE: LORENZO BIANCHI, PIME

Lorenzo (Lawrence) Bianchi, PIME, was the second bishop of the Hong Kong diocese. When Bishop Valtorta passed away in September 1951, Hong Kong's coadjutor bishop, Bishop Bianchi, became the bishop of the Hong Kong diocese. However, he was under house arrest in Haifeng, Guangdong Province, and only managed to return to Hong Kong in October 1952.¹⁵ At that time, Hong Kong's Catholic population was slightly more than 54,000.¹⁶ Bishop Bianchi was well known for his expansion of the Catholic Church's presence in Hong Kong. Many churches, schools, and institutions were established thanks to his vision for the local Church. More importantly, he maintained close cooperation with the government in all matters, especially with regard to the problems created by the influx of refugees from mainland China. In the 1950s, Hong Kong's government had urgently requested the Catholic Church's service.

Bishop Bianchi had frequent communications with the top governmental authorities. In April 1953, he wrote to Colonial Secretary R. B. Black: “With reference to Refugee work and assistance ... Refugee

Centres which have been established in various parts of the Colony ... owe their very existence to the kind support given by various Departments of the Government.”¹⁷ He assured the colonial secretary that “such work has received and is receiving my full attention and that it is my earnest desire to make my co-operation with the Government as practical and fruitful as possible.”¹⁸ The refugee problems captured the attention and utmost concern of both the Catholic Church and Hong Kong’s government. Following the Catholic priests, brothers, and sisters’ departure from mainland China, the colony became the focus of the Church’s missionary work. This involved the missionaries who were already in Hong Kong before the 1950s and those who went from China to Hong Kong in the early 1950s.

In reciprocity, the Hong Kong government was more than willing to answer the Catholic Church’s requests. The colonial secretary expressed his appreciation for the work of the Church and the diocesan representatives, who had been working with the different government departments.¹⁹ R. B. Black had been compliant with the Church, as he told the bishop in 1953: “I have noted your wishes that you would like to have correspondence about work carried out by Societies or Institutions in the Catholic Diocese channelled through you and I am informing Heads of Government Departments accordingly to ensure that you will be consulted in connection with such correspondence.”²⁰ The bishop kept a close eye on the Church’s progression in the ever-enlarging Hong Kong diocese and society. In 1954, the bishop established the “Bishop Bianchi Fund for Fire Victims” after an outbreak of disastrous fires in Hong Kong’s squatter communities. In response, the government agreed with the Church’s plan to use the money to build stone houses for the unfortunate victims, such as those living in Ngau Tau Kok in the Kowloon Peninsula.²¹ In this matter, the Catholic Church and Hong Kong’s government worked hand-in-hand.

The Catholic congregations were working toward the common goal of taking care of the needy in Hong Kong. In addition to the Precious Blood Sisters’ orphanage in Shamshuipo, the St. Paul de Chartres Sisters had long managed an orphanage in their convent in Causeway Bay and the Canossian Sisters ran their foundling house on Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong Island.²² Even so, there was too much work, and the sisters struggled to shoulder the responsibility. In 1954, the government granted a parcel of land (New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 3773) to the Catholic Mission for

the construction of a church and a school in Shamshuipo,²³ which further expanded the Catholic Church's presence in the Shamshuipo district.

THE LEADERSHIP OF SR. LUCY CHAN

The Eighth General Chapter of the Precious Blood Sisters (February 2, 1951)

On February 2, 1951, the Precious Blood Sisters held their Eighth General Chapter. Bishop Enrico Valtorta—who passed away later that year—presided over the event at the Motherhouse. Fr. Paul Lau Wing-yiu, who served as an assistant at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Caine Road, was also present.²⁴ Sr. Lucy, the assistant superior general, the councilors, the mistress of novices, and 43 sisters participated in the assembly.²⁵ Bishop Valtorta explained that he had used his authority as the bishop to choose the superior general of the Precious Blood Sisters for the previous 12 years and 6 months. He said that he had done so because the sisters had been evolving into an independent congregation, and as such he was particularly concerned that they would achieve greater maturity.²⁶ Before attending the Eighth General Chapter, however, Bishop Valtorta went to Nanjing to consult Archbishop Antonio Riberi, whom the Vatican had appointed as its first internuncio to Nationalist China in 1946,²⁷ on whether he could continue to appoint the Precious Blood Sisters' superior general. The internuncio was responsible for ensuring that the practices of the local Catholic Church agreed with the Vatican's policies.²⁸ Bishop Valtorta informed the sisters that the archbishop had agreed that he could name their superior general as he had done before.²⁹

Bishop Valtorta chose Sr. Lucy as the superior general. Sr. Lucy was also named the superior of the Precious Blood Hospital. The bishop then selected the assistant superior general, the secretary of finance, the councilors, and the mistress of novices.³⁰ It is worth noting that Bishop Valtorta said that he was very pleased to have the Precious Blood Sisters as a member of the Diocese of Hong Kong. He urged the sisters to unite together in conformity, and told them that he was praying that they would come together in the fulfillment of their mission. He also asked the sisters to recognize the importance of unity and harmony within the community.³¹ Sr. Lucy had been the superior general for so long and had assumed a

respected leadership position within the congregation. The Precious Blood Sisters continued their important work among Hong Kong's rapidly expanding refugee population.

*Sr. Lucy's Fifth Term as Superior General (February 2,
1951–March 21, 1954)*

The Eighth General Chapter began Sr. Lucy's fifth term as superior general. She had been in the post for more than 12 years and the sisters had acknowledged her status as the Mother Superior. Thus, she was known as Mother Lucy Chan and commanded more esteem than anyone else in the history of the Precious Blood Sisters. None of the other superiors general, not even the foundress Sr. Clara Tam, was addressed as Mother by the Chinese sisters. The congregation continued to increase in size and in February 1951 there were 58 sisters who had taken vows.³² That number had grown to 71 by the end of Mother Lucy's fifth term in March 1954.³³ The Precious Blood Sisters had more vocations over the next several years. The sisters built on their own traditions of humility and perseverance, but they were still using the constitutions adopted in 1929. They had to respond to the demands of society, and their work had expanded as a result of the population explosion in Hong Kong in the 1950s. The complexity of the local society, the residents' demands and their problems had also multiplied.

Mother Lucy supervised the sisters, who worked in Hong Kong's various localities. She traveled regularly, even as far as Macau.³⁴ In addition to managing everyday business in the Motherhouse, she was in charge of the adjacent Precious Blood Hospital. Her roles as both the superior general of the congregation and the superior of the hospital kept her fully occupied. She also took care of the sisters in other areas of Hong Kong, traveling to the sisters' house in North Point, Hong Kong Island and to the convent in Fanling, in the New Territories. On such occasions, the hospital provided her with a car for easy transportation. Further away, Mother Lucy had to visit the novitiate, the clinic, and the sisters' house in Macau.³⁵ On top of all this, she headed the treasury of the congregation because the secretary of finance was also the principal of the Precious Blood Girls' Middle School in North Point and had difficulty traveling back to the Motherhouse to oversee the regular financial accounts.³⁶ Mother Lucy handled the many responsibilities of the superior general of the congregation, the superior of the hospital, and the supervisor of the finances for

the entire community, in addition to all aspects of service for the Precious Blood Sisters.

The Ninth General Chapter of the Precious Blood Sisters
(March 21, 1954)

On the afternoon of March 21, 1954, the Precious Blood Sisters held their Ninth General Chapter in the Motherhouse.³⁷ This time, Fr. Joannes Felix Shek Pau-pok, who was then vicar general of the Diocese of Hong Kong, presided over the assembly.³⁸ Also present was the chaplain of the sisters, Fr. Domenico Bazzo, PIME, who was concurrently the rector at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Caine Road.³⁹ Altogether, including Mother Lucy, the assistant superior general, the councilors and the mistress of novices, 51 sisters attended the General Chapter.⁴⁰ Fr. Shek stated that he represented the bishop in chairing the Ninth General Chapter and in choosing a suitable superior general in accordance with the rules of the Catholic Church. He prayed for the Holy Spirit's guidance in selecting the congregation's future leadership. Subsequently, all of the sisters who were present in the General Chapter selected two monitors from among themselves to assist in the elections.⁴¹ The sisters then vowed to keep the proceedings of the event confidential.

The first item was the election of the superior general. Unlike the previous General Chapter, in which Bishop Valtorta nominated the superior general, in the Ninth General Chapter, the 51 sisters anonymously cast their votes to fill the position. The two monitors collected all of the votes and brought them to the vicar general, Fr. Shek,⁴² who counted them to ensure that all of the sisters had participated.

Next, the first monitor quietly read out one ballot and the second monitor announced the name on the sheet so that the chairperson could record which person had been chosen.⁴³ This process continued until all 51 ballots had been read out and recorded. Finally, the election result was revealed—Mother Lucy Chan received a majority of the votes⁴⁴—and then the ballots were burnt. Fr. Shek reminded all present that Bishop Bianchi had to approve the result before Mother Lucy could assume office, in accordance with the regulations of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood.⁴⁵

With regard to the selection of the assistant superior general, the process was the same. The candidate who received enough votes from all of the sisters participating became the assistant superior general, the ballots

were burnt and everyone was reminded that the candidate could take office as soon as approval had been granted.⁴⁶ The assistant superior general was also named one of four councilors, and the other three councilor positions were filled in the same manner.

Each time the two monitors read out the name on the ballot and the chairperson made a record, which took quite some time as the monitors repeated the procedure for every single ballot for every elected position.⁴⁷ At the end of the assembly, Fr. Shek was pleased with the results. The vicar general emphasized the importance of the superior general's leadership in promoting the development of the Chinese sisters' mission. Then the sisters waited for Bishop Bianchi's blessing of the election results.⁴⁸ On March 25, the bishop arrived at the Motherhouse in Shamshuipo. The date had been chosen because it was the Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady.⁴⁹ The bishop formally acknowledged the election results of the Ninth General Chapter. Bishop Bianchi announced that Our Lady readily obeyed the Holy Spirit and followed God's will, and Mother Lucy officially became the superior general. The procedure represented the Chinese sisters' acceptance of God's decision and arrangement.⁵⁰

*Mother Lucy's Sixth and Last Term as Superior General
(March 21, 1954–July 27, 1957)*

Mother Lucy's sixth term as superior general was also her last term. By the end of 1957, she had led the congregation for 19 years, through the war, the recovery and the challenges of the refugee decade. She had been in office for so long that she was of comparable significance to the foundress Sr. Clara Tam in the history of the Precious Blood Sisters. The sisters still abided by the 1929 Constitutions. In 1954, there were 71 sisters who had taken their vows, and in 1957, that number reached 76.⁵¹ Instead of the superior general being appointed, as before, the sisters themselves elected Mother Lucy to the position in the Ninth General Chapter. The Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady had special meaning for the Chinese sisters, who were following God's call, shouldering their responsibilities, and fulfilling their mission.

With the passing of time, the Precious Blood Sisters had adapted to the sudden changes and demands. In her last term, Mother Lucy initiated some modifications "for a good cause."⁵² There were alterations to the Chinese sisters' professions and habits. With the approval of Bishop Bianchi, Mother Lucy revised the sisters' rules for professions. She decided

that each sister could receive her perpetual vows five years after she had taken her annual vows.⁵³ The superior general demanded a ceremony for the sisters' final profession, in which "a crown of thorns" and a ring were worn, the latter with an inscription identical to that on their belts.⁵⁴ This formality asserted the solemnity of the final profession and the enormous significance of religious life. In addition, the Chinese sisters adopted well-defined procedures for the different aspects of their community.

Mother Lucy also established firstly that the sisters' habits would have a strip hanging from the belt with the inscription of the Heart of Jesus and a chalice; secondly that the sisters' medal with the crucified Christ and Our Lady of Sorrow would be replaced by a crucifix; and thirdly that the sisters would each have a long gown for special occasions and profession in addition to their habits.⁵⁵ Such was the step-by-step regulation of the sisters' rules and the advancement of their public image. Subsequently, the Precious Blood Sisters acquired a stronger presence in their close contact with the poor and their enormous daily undertakings.

As before, Mother Lucy was also the superior of the Precious Blood Hospital in her final term. This time, she resided in the convent in the hospital. Because she supervised the matters of the Motherhouse, she went back and forth between the two institutions. Occasionally, the sisters asked for her advice, and she had an increasing number of charges entrusted to her care.⁵⁶ The assistant superior general continued as the supervisor and principal of the Precious Blood Girls' Middle School, which was undergoing an expansion. Thus, Mother Lucy did not assign any duties to the assistant superior general at the Motherhouse on the understanding that she would concentrate on the school's development.⁵⁷ Following the regulations, the assistant superior general attended the monthly meeting at the Motherhouse but otherwise she remained at the school in North Point, Hong Kong Island. Unless Mother Lucy had something urgent to discuss, the assistant superior general was rarely involved in other matters.

The Precious Blood Sisters were venturing into various service sectors and making sustainable progress, particularly among the squatters in Hong Kong. By Mother Lucy's last term, the Motherhouse had become more symbolic in nature as a source of comfort to the poor and those who were new to Hong Kong society.⁵⁸ The sisters served in the schools and elsewhere, and thus the physical Motherhouse was no longer the primary place of missionary service as it had been during the war years, when it housed Tack Ching Girls' Middle School.

THE SISTERS' MISSIONARY ENDEAVORS AND WELFARE SERVICES

Pastoral Work in the Parishes

The Chinese sisters expanded their missionary work to include the squatter communities in the remote parts of the New Territories, such as Sai Kung, Yuen Long, and Fanling. The sisters went out in pairs to assist the parish priests in the catechumen classes and read *Yaoli wenda* (*Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*) with the Chinese people, who came to learn about the Catholic doctrine. For a short time, the sisters were also serving in the parish in Tai Po Market, in the New Territories.⁵⁹ At that time, there were still three Precious Blood Sisters on the mainland in Huizhou, Guangdong Province.⁶⁰ They had been serving in the former St. Joseph Hospital in Huizhou, and after the CCP confiscated it, the three sisters moved out and took up residence in a small house nearby.⁶¹ They lacked the means to maintain a living, and were prevented from helping the locals. Consequently they asked the Communist authority to allow them to return to Hong Kong. At that time, only one of the three sisters, the most senior in age, was allowed to return to Hong Kong. The other two Precious Blood Sisters remained under house arrest in Huizhou, despite filing numerous applications to leave. Their requests were repeatedly denied without any reason given.

Free Medical and Childcare Services at Precious Blood Hospital

The Chinese sisters took care of the new migrants, providing them with medical care at Precious Blood Hospital, which admitted all patients free of charge.⁶² There is a Chinese phrase, *zengyi shiyao* meaning “giving out medical care and offering medication for free.” That was exactly what the sisters were doing. In addition to outpatients, the hospital accepted inpatients free of charge. At Precious Blood Hospital, there was a large ward for men and another for women. It was a tough time for everyone, and the migrants—who could barely make a living—preferred to stay out of the hospital even when ill rather than risk losing a few days or hours’ wages.

In those days, the Chinese sisters accepted orphans and abandoned babies. Police officers also brought in babies left on the streets.⁶³ The sisters, who were always ready to offer immediate assistance, were fortunate to receive donations from the locals and some overseas groups.

Early in September 1950, Mother Lucy was filled with gratitude for a contribution from the Holy Childhood Society of Paris that she received through Bishop Valtorta.⁶⁴ It was a huge sum of HK\$15,000 and she wrote a letter of thanks to the bishop on September 15, 1950.⁶⁵ A few days later, Bishop Valtorta wrote to Mother Lucy, asking her to communicate directly with the president of the Society in Paris, so that she might obtain the “‘allocation’ distinct from the Mission.”⁶⁶ She was told to include some photos of the children, preferably not in groups, with her report.⁶⁷ Bishop Valtorta thought that the Precious Blood Sisters could become a separate and individual recipient of the Society in Paris. At the end of the bishop’s letter to Mother Lucy, the following note was included: “H.E. our Bishop suggests that you ought to explain that since the Japanese occupation your Orphanage has been as crowded as those of other old Institutions in Hong-kong (that is St. Paul’s Orphanage and Canossian Orph.). So, His Lordship thinks that also your own could as well be put in the official list of the Superior Council of Paris.”⁶⁸ This affiliation would allow the Precious Blood Sisters to be recognized abroad; and in so doing, they could receive individual donations from Paris and would not need to share the sum with the other groups in the Hong Kong Catholic Mission.

The number of abandoned babies and children was increasing at an alarming rate, so the sisters decided to find additional accommodation, as the hospital was too crowded to take in more in addition to the growing number of inpatients.⁶⁹ The time had come for the sisters to manage their own orphanage. It was at the perfect time, given both the needs of society and the Precious Blood Congregation’s readiness to take on greater responsibilities.

The Precious Blood Orphanage: Fanling, the New Territories
(1952)

In 1952, the Precious Blood Sisters built an orphanage in Fanling, in the New Territories. Originally, the site was a farm of 12,000 square feet.⁷⁰ The sisters bought the land in 1951, and the construction of the orphanage commenced in June of that year. It took eight months to complete construction. On February 26, 1952, the orphanage’s official opening ceremony took place and the guest of honor was the wife of the colonial government’s governor.⁷¹ The opening ceremony was just one of the many times that the governor, his wife, and/or high officials attended the ceremonies of the voluntary agencies, illustrating the cooperation between

the colonial government and the Catholic Church in resolving social problems generated by the influx of refugees. It also demonstrated how much the government needed and welcomed the Church's aid.

The Precious Blood Orphanage accepted girls who had initially been taken in at the Precious Blood Hospital as infants and had grown up and learned to walk.⁷² The toddlers who could not walk so well remained under the care of the sisters at 123 Un Chau Street, Shamshuipo—an orphanage for infants also established in 1952. Once the girls could walk by themselves, they were sent to live at the Precious Blood Orphanage in Fanling. The sisters taught the older girls to read, write, and do handicraft work. Several lay teachers educated the girls as well, and because the grounds of the orphanage were large, the children could enjoy outdoor activities, which made it a much more suitable environment than the hospital. As is often seen in service among children and young women, the sisters stressed discipline in the daily lives of these girls—all of whom were considered fortunate to receive an education and learn useful skills.⁷³ More importantly, the sisters helped the girls cultivate a sense of appreciation for what they had, regardless of how little that might be.

As Chapter 2 notes, in their early history the Chinese sisters ran a boarding school on the grounds of the Italian Canossian Sisters' convent. At that time, the Chinese sisters already exercised strict discipline among the girl students, and they continued this heritage, having learned from experience in the community's earliest days when they were still the Tertiaries under the Canossian Sisters' supervision.

So, in 1952, any children above the age of three and those brought in by the priests and the government's Social Welfare Office lived in the Fanling orphanage.⁷⁴ At times, even the orphanage was too full to accept any more children—a reality that reflected the widespread poverty and plight of the communities. The orphanage was a good example for the sisters' work elsewhere, and they also looked after the sick and children in need at a clinic in Macau.⁷⁵

The Catholic Church also submitted plans to construct a church and a school in Fanling to achieve the eventual establishment of an independent parish in the area. At that time, the rector of the Tai Po parish, Fr. Ambrogio Poletti, PIME, celebrated Mass for the Catholics in Fanling. In mid-1953, Hong Kong's government informed Bishop Bianchi of its support for the project.⁷⁶ Fr. Poletti had already applied for the conversion of some farmlands, to the rear of Luen Wo Market, into building sites for

the erection of a church and a school. In 1954, St. Joseph's Church was established in Fanling, but it would take three more years for Fanling to become a separate parish (in 1957). Thereafter, Fr. Poletti became the rector of St. Joseph's Church⁷⁷ and cooperated closely with the Precious Blood Sisters.

The sisters reported their accounts of the orphanage to the Social Welfare Office, and they sought the bishop's help in finding an auditor for them. There were numerous communications on this matter, all reflecting the nature of the sisters' service. In January 1954, Mother Lucy wrote to Bishop Bianchi, "We beg to inform you that very soon we'll have to forward our accounts of the Orphanages for the financial year 1953–1954 to the Social Welfare Office for their perusal, we therefore beg Your Lordship to write to the Hon. Auditor Mr. [Charles] Mar and ask him to help us to audit our account a gratis, explaining to him that our Institution is a charitable one, relying entirely on public support, and that we'll be ever so thankful to him if he could help us to audit our accounts once a year."⁷⁸ The letterhead specified "Precious Blood Hospital, Castle Peak Road, Kowloon."⁷⁹ In response, the bishop solicited the free service of the auditor,⁸⁰ Mr. Mar of Charles Mar Fan & Co. (Certified Accountants and Chartered Secretaries).

In January 1955, Mother Lucy repeated her request to Bishop Bianchi.⁸¹ The bishop wrote to Mr. Mar the next day, explaining that the Catholic Mission required a great deal of generous support from Hong Kong society: "The Sisters and I are, undoubtedly, very grateful for this assistance—and would it be to presume too much to beg you to perform for them the same service this year?—Well, I do presume to ask you, and I feel sure *you will forgive my daring* [emphasis added]."⁸² Each time Mother Lucy made a humble request, Bishop Bianchi asked for outside support in the same manner.

The Precious Blood Congregation depended on help in any form, from any reliable source. On February 6, 1958, the then superior general—Sr. Katherine Lui—sent a letter of thanks to Mr. Mar, who had been providing the sisters with free service for many years. She wrote, "*We beg you* to be so kind as to help us to audit the statements of accounts of our Precious Blood Babies' Home and Orphanage for the financial year ended 31st December 1957 [emphasis added]."⁸³ The sisters gradually established their connections in society and tried to secure professional advice when deemed necessary (see Fig. 5.1).



Fig. 5.1 The Sisters of the Precious Blood and the children of the Precious Blood Orphanage in Fanling in 1958. The front row, the first person from the right is Sr. Katherine Lui. Sisters of the Precious Blood Archives, Hong Kong

Educational Pursuits

The Precious Blood Sisters also expanded their educational endeavors; specifically, the supervision of their students from kindergarten through middle school. In July 1951, the Chinese sisters began the construction of a building to house both the kindergarten and a playgroup on the site at the corner of Un Chau and Kiu Kiang Streets.⁸⁴ The building was completed in November of that year.

Most importantly, the sisters had long devoted much attention to the affiliated primary school of Tack Ching Girls' Middle School. The primary school was located at 86 Un Chau Street. Although the primary school had expanded its premises several times, there was always a dire need for more space. By mid-1951, Tack Ching had a student body of more than 2,500.⁸⁵ In 1952, the sisters began constructing a school building on the convent grounds on Castle Peak Road. The building was a two-story concrete structure that the sisters referred to as *shishi* meaning "the stone

house.” By December 1952, the building was complete and could accommodate around 350 students.⁸⁶

The sisters had tried to optimize the use of Tack Ching Girls' Middle School's campus. The address of the middle school was 125 Un Chau Street. In 1952, the school accepted a large number of students, but there were always applicants being declined, with great reluctance.⁸⁷ Thus, a three-story structure facing the existing school building was constructed. From a bird's eye view, the school buildings formed a U shape on the campus.⁸⁸ On the top floor of the three-story building, the sisters assigned a classroom for religious activities such as those of the Legion of Mary and other student societies,⁸⁹ in a deliberate attempt to enhance the religious atmosphere in the school.

By then, Tack Ching Girls' Middle School was still unable to accept all of the qualified applicants because of lack of space. The provision of educational institutions still fell short of the demand for schooling among the children in the neighborhood. So the sisters temporarily opened some rooms in the Motherhouse for the students of Tack Ching.⁹⁰ It was recorded in the archives that the sisters had not allowed outsiders to enter most areas in the convent, so despite strict regulations for using those rooms, the decision greatly inconvenienced the nuns. It was written that those sisters from other areas coming back to the Motherhouse “did not feel like returning home,” as they felt very uneasy there and had fewer opportunities to connect with the other sisters.

In addition to Tack Ching, the Precious Blood Sisters were also concerned with the development of Precious Blood Girls' Middle School on Hong Kong Island. Originally, it was called The Second Tack Ching Girls' Middle School, and was only later renamed Precious Blood Girls' Middle School.⁹¹ The school history preceded the Second World War. In those pre-war years, the school was called Tack Ying Middle School, and it re-opened after the war, in October 1945, in an old colonial building at Number 191 Wan Chai Road. Its name was changed to The Second Tack Ching Girls' Middle School and it received government subsidies beginning in May 1946.⁹² It was also able to offer primary-level classes at another site, on the second, third, and fourth floors of a building that the Precious Blood Sisters rented at 38 Hennessy Road (this became the affiliated primary school).⁹³ For some years, the school was situated on both Wan Chai and Hennessy Roads in Wan Chai, in the north of Hong Kong Island.⁹⁴

At the beginning of the 1950s, the school had some difficulty enlarging its campus and thus struggled to accommodate the growing number of applicants.⁹⁵ The sisters had been exploring a new site for the school on both government lots and private land. Eventually, they secured the generous support of a philanthropist, who helped buy the building at Number 1 Chung On Terrace, North Point. In August 1952, the Precious Blood Sisters obtained “permission to purchase Inland Lot No. 3548 together with the buildings thereon now known as No. 1 Chung On Terrace for the purpose of keeping a branch school.”⁹⁶ That summer, the sisters made certain modifications to the building so that the school could move there in the new academic year starting September 1952. On September 15, the school was renamed Precious Blood Girls’ Middle School and it opened in the newly renovated building. It offered three classes at the upper-middle level and quickly became a well structured middle school with approximately 1,300 students.⁹⁷ In May 1953, the Precious Blood Sisters acquired an adjacent piece of land (8,000 square feet),⁹⁸ which became the sports grounds for the girls, who spent time there during recess, physical education, and other activities.⁹⁹ The sisters recounted that the students had good opportunities to cultivate a sense of self-discipline.

The next several years saw significant developments at Precious Blood Girls’ Middle School. It came to have an affiliated kindergarten and an affiliated primary school. There were three sites: Precious Blood Girls’ Middle School at Number 1 Chung On Terrace, North Point; the affiliated primary school at the junction of Sing Woo and Hawthorn Roads; and the affiliated kindergarten at the corner of Holly and Hawthorn Roads in Happy Valley. In 1956, the student number had risen to more than 4,000¹⁰⁰ and according to the sisters’ records, the progress was totally beyond their expectations at that time.

The Novitiate of the Precious Blood Sisters

By 1956, the novitiate of the Precious Blood Sisters had been situated in Macau for exactly one decade. For some time, the sisters had been considering relocating the novitiate to Hong Kong.¹⁰¹ One reason was that the chaplain of the novitiate had passed away and the sisters were not at all satisfied with the priest who replaced him. In addition, Bishop Bianchi had repeatedly urged the Precious Blood Sisters to move the novitiate to Hong Kong.¹⁰² Finally, the sisters thanked God for His blessings, as they had found a suitable place for the relocation of the novitiate—Number

3 Chung On Terrace. It was an ideal selection as the surroundings were quiet and pleasant, which was essential to the training of the novices who required time and a suitable atmosphere for contemplation.¹⁰³

The Precious Blood Sisters renovated the building and included a chapel for the novices. In December 1956, all of the aspirants and novices moved from Macau back to this new novitiate in North Point, Hong Kong Island. Most importantly, the Precious Blood Sisters had finally erected their own novitiate in the Diocese of Hong Kong.¹⁰⁴ Establishing the local novitiate prompted others to recognize the sisters' important contributions and the training they received. The Precious Blood Sisters adapted to the changing situations, the concerns of the local bishop, and the objectives of the local mission. They responded to the circumstances in the Diocese of Hong Kong but still managed to fulfill one of the evolutionary goals of the Roman Catholic Church; that is, the indigenization of the local churches. The sisters' local history reflected and clarified the greater history of the Roman Catholic Church.

The End of Mother Lucy's Last Term

Toward the end of her leadership, Mother Lucy acknowledged the Precious Blood Sisters' increasing endeavors and saw the growing demand for additional resources. In her letter to Bishop Bianchi on May 31, 1957, she politely declined the request that the sisters open a new school. She reasoned that as the sisters were already using the full capacity of the existing premises, and were in dire need of more space, they must acquire new land if a new school was to be built. She told Bishop Bianchi to locate a site to build the school; if not, it would not be possible to agree to his plan.

Mother Lucy's letter illustrated the Precious Blood Sisters' situation and the prospects for the further expansion of their mission. She wrote that the Shamshuipo district was overwhelmed by the growing population and traffic, and that the "the former tranquility and peace" of the early years of the Motherhouse were long gone.¹⁰⁵ She said that Precious Blood Hospital was already too "blustering" for the patients, and solutions were needed to remedy the overcrowded situation.¹⁰⁶ Tack Ching Girls' Middle School had the new extension but was still bounded by the bustling traffic. With regard to the orphanage in Fanling, the sisters were already contemplating an expansion. Mother Lucy had led the sisters through unprecedented progress, but she also saw its external limitations. The sisters had

to liaise closely with the bishop regarding new sites and properties during the refugee years in the 1950s and 1960s.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The 1950s were watershed years in Hong Kong's history, with the exodus of refugees from mainland China. These migrants became the local population's new generation, who later contributed tremendously to building Hong Kong's status in the world. In the very beginning of the 1950s, the migrants from the mainland spoke different dialects and most of them lived on the edge of poverty, bringing few belongings with them and looking for any means to sustain their livelihoods. They changed the composition of the population and constituted a strong labor force for the development of Hong Kong's industries. It was an evolution from the war-stricken colony to the new society, in which there was a surplus of people to re-build the economy. Nevertheless, Hong Kong's colonial government was caught off guard by this sudden influx of people from the mainland and it sought the cooperation of all available parties that were capable of tackling the problems, such as the needs for housing, education, medical care, and childcare.

Meanwhile, the Catholic missionaries had left the mainland and arrived in Hong Kong. The Roman Catholic Church was not welcome in China, and despite the Pope's efforts to communicate with Beijing's government, the clergy and the sisters could not make themselves of use on the mainland. Instead, they had to find their mission on the other side of the border, in Hong Kong. The Communist revolution in China provoked unimaginable change in the country and in the missionary endeavors of the Roman Catholic Church. Together with the foreign missionaries who left the mainland for Hong Kong, the Precious Blood Sisters did their best to serve the newcomers and provide them with the basic necessities.

At Bishop Bianchi's request, the various societies and congregations founded schools, hospitals, clinics, and other relevant sources of support for the Chinese refugees. The Catholic Church and the colonial government cooperated in whatever ways they could to solve the problems. In these circumstances, the Precious Blood Sisters, under Mother Lucy's supreme leadership, answered the urgent demands of the people and the Catholic Mission. Once again, the sisters evolved, expanding their schools, the hospital, and social services. They secured a large piece of land in Fanling for their orphanage, and with the Motherhouse as their headquarters, they

labored tediously in settlements throughout the colony. The Chinese sisters had to take care of the spiritual and material needs of the poor. They taught the Catholic doctrine to the newcomers, educated their children, and managed whatever was asked of them. It was a time when everyone held on to the little they had, and made an enormous effort to gain more, no matter how small the amount.

NOTES

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3. Holy Spirit Study Centre Staff, Hong Kong, "A Chronology of the Catholic Church in China in the Context of Selected Dates in World and Chinese History," *Tripod*, No. 76 (1993), pp. 32–33.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
5. "Document #2 *Cupimus Imprimis*: The Catholic Church in China by Pope Peter XII, January 18, 1952," in *Papal Documents Related to China 1937–2005*, Research and Compiled by Elmer Wurth, MM, Edited by Betty Ann Maheu, MM (Hong Kong: Holy Spirit Study Centre, 2006), p. 57.
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13. *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.
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22. Letter from Bishop Bianchi to Mr. Shan Fai, Medical Department, Hong Kong, July 29, 1953, in English, one page, Box 33: Msgr. Lawrence Bianchi (Cont'd), HKCDA.
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24. "Rev. LAU, Wing-Yiu Paul," In Memoriam, Deceased Clergy & Religious Brothers, Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives, <http://archives.catholic.org.hk/In%20Memoriam/Clergy-Brother/P-Lau.htm> (accessed June 9, 2015).
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26. Ibid.
27. Richard Madsen explains that as the internuncio, Archbishop Antonio Riberi was "an ambassador charged both with representing the interests of the Vatican to the government and with ensuring that the internal policies of the Church conform with Vatican policy." The archbishop was expelled in 1951. Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in An Emerging Civil Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 35.
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The 1960s: A Decade of Revolutions

A DECADE OF REVOLUTIONS

The 1960s were host to multiple revolutions around the world. The Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) began in China in the second half of the 1960s. Copies of the English version of the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* were sent to developing countries in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In the 1960s, Mao Zedong was extremely fearful of imminent attack from the Soviet Union, and Sino-Soviet border disputes escalated almost to nuclear warfare in 1969 during the Zhenbao Island Incident along the Ussuri River in northeastern China. Simultaneously, the United States was engaged in the Vietnam War just south of mainland China. Given China's long-term antagonistic relations with the two superpowers, the Communist leaders in Beijing were deeply troubled and tried everything within their means to build up the country's military power. There had been prolonged conflicts, both inside China and in its foreign relations. Mao Zedong used the Cultural Revolution to eliminate his perceived rivals within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and to promote and consolidate his God-like authority over the entire country. The Cultural Revolution targeted alleged revisionists inside China, the Soviet revisionists, and the Americans who had been labeled as imperialists.

Mao Zedong publically referred to the United States as a *zhilaohu* or “paper tiger” to conceal his panic over a possible two-front war with the Soviets and the Americans. In the 1960s, Mao sought to ally with the developing countries in a united front against the Soviet Union and the

United States. The Cultural Revolution was mainly aimed at the Soviet Union, which Mao regarded as a greater enemy than the United States. In Europe, the ultra-leftists were hailing Mao Zedong as their hero. In Asia, the Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Burmese Communists continued their revolutions. The storm of leftist movements and revolutions swept over the world.

In the British colony of Hong Kong on the southern border of the mainland, the leftists studied what happened in China. In 1967, riots broke out in the colony, with demonstrators roaming and bombs exploding in the streets. A definitive history of the 1967 riots has yet to be written. Whereas the 1950s witnessed the struggle for survival among the new migrants in Hong Kong, the 1960s ushered in greater demands for relief that prompted well-planned social services and a solid vision for the future of society. In the second half of the 1960s, the riots exposed the frustrations of and political differences between those on the mainland and the Chinese patriots in Hong Kong. Paradoxically, the 1960s also saw economic growth, the search for a local identity, and Hong Kong's constantly altering landscape of squatter huts, factories, and buildings.

NEW LEADERSHIP: SISTER KATHERINE LUI

The 1960s also marked the beginning of Sr. Katherine Lui's leadership of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. In 1957, Mother Lucy—whose status was so significant that she was compared to the foundress, Sr. Clara Tam—ended her 19 years as the superior general of the Chinese sisters. Her successor was Sr. Katherine Lui, who became an equally respected figure in the history of the Precious Blood Sisters. Coincidentally, the terms of the superiors general—Clara Tam, Lucy Chan, and Katherine Lui—marked the three phases of the history of the Precious Blood Sisters.

Under Sr. Clara, the sisters achieved independence and recognition. Under the superb supervision of Mother Lucy, they persevered through hardships and established their presence in the colony. They devoted themselves to the destitute and the needy, venturing into various areas of service and offering assistance throughout Hong Kong.

In the 1960s and the early 1970s, Sr. Katherine Lui built on the solid foundations left by her predecessors. She led the sisters through additional challenges and guided them through the Roman Catholic Church's evolution. From 1962 to 1965, the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II)

made the significant and remarkable revelation of the Roman Catholic Church's global role. The Vatican recognized the differences in post-war situations, and then the Catholic churches around the world provided their corresponding responses to Vatican II's decisions. In Hong Kong, the Catholic Church and its various societies and congregations were following suit. On the reform frontier, the Precious Blood Sisters held their Tenth and Eleventh General Chapters. During this period, they fundamentally revised the perceptions of their role, the ways in which they fulfilled their mission and their place in Hong Kong's future.

THE TENTH (1957) AND ELEVENTH (1964) GENERAL CHAPTERS

The Tenth General Chapter (July 27, 1957)

On July 27, 1957, the Precious Blood Sisters held their Tenth General Chapter, which resulted in the election of the new superior general, who subsequently emerged as a prominent figure. The bishop of the Diocese of Hong Kong, Lorenzo Bianchi, presided over the proceedings at the Motherhouse in Shamshuipo.¹ Accompanying the bishop was Fr. John Liu Shek-kwong, who was then the diocesan consulter.² Mother Lucy, Sr. Katherine Lui, the councilors, the mistress of novices, and the secretary of the congregation were present. Altogether, 71 Precious Blood Sisters attended the meeting.³ The bishop took a head count, and then explained why those present had been summoned. First, he praised Mother Lucy for the many great achievements during her long leadership.⁴ Second, he noted that the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood was directly under the administration of the Diocese of Hong Kong, which gave him governance over the congregation in accordance with the regulations of the Catholic Church.⁵ Third, he approved the sisters' request to choose a new superior general to manage their affairs.

The election began with Fr. John Liu reading out the names of all the sisters present and counting their number. Having confirmed the participants, the bishop then asked the sisters to cast their votes. Bishop Bianchi stated that as Mother Lucy had been in the headship for so many years, she was no longer a candidate for the superior general but could be made a councilor.⁶ On this occasion, 71 sisters present had the right to vote and two sisters studying nursing and childcare in England (from 1952–1957) and one conducting pastoral care in Macau had mailed their ballots back

to the Motherhouse earlier. Seventy-four ballots were cast.⁷ Upon finishing their study in England, the two aforementioned sisters served as superiors, one at the hospital and the other at the orphanage in Hong Kong. They were the first Precious Blood Sisters to study abroad. Their English proficiency and their journey demonstrated the sisters' rising status, education and professionalism.⁸

During the election, the sisters handed their ballots to the bishop, who then put them in a box and ensured that there were 71. He then ordered the secretary to read out the names on the ballots and Fr. Liu recorded the results. When the election was over, Sr. Katherine Lui had received more than half of the votes and was thus named the new superior general of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Bishop Bianchi approved her election and then all of the ballots were burned.⁹

Next, the process to elect an assistant superior general ensued. The procedures were the same, and with the majority of the votes and the bishop's endorsement, Mother Lucy became the assistant superior general and the first councilor.¹⁰ The other three councilors were then duly elected and endorsed by the bishop,¹¹ who told the sisters to keep the proceedings of the General Chapter confidential, in accordance with the regulations of the Catholic Church. Once the elections were finished, the bishop led a prayer and ended the General Chapter. The new council's members then chose the mistress of novices and the secretary of the congregation.¹² Sr. Katherine Lui assumed the position of superior general in 1957 and led the congregation through the 1960s.

The Succession of Sister Katherine as the Superior General: Four Years and No General Chapter in 1960

Sr. Katherine served as superior general for a three-year term, from July 27, 1957 to July 26, 1960, with Bishop Bianchi's approval. Three months before July 1960, Sr. Katherine repeatedly asked the bishop to call the General Chapter at that time.¹³ She had not finished revising and amending the constitutions of the Precious Blood Sisters,¹⁴ and thus the bishop sent a reply to Sr. Katherine on June 21, 1960: "As your Congregation is of Diocesan Right, its furtherance and supervision are among the main concerns of our pastoral care."¹⁵ The bishop remarked that Sr. Katherine had been well aware that the constitutions were currently "under study, in view of a general revision" given the prevailing situations in the diocese

and in Hong Kong.¹⁶ He noted that one of the major concerns was the superior general's tenure of office. There had been a proposal to change the length of the superior general's term from the existing three years to six years, which would result in the General Chapter being held once every six years, rather than every three.¹⁷ In his letter, Bishop Bianchi said that he had already informed the Vatican of these crucial considerations and the proposed alterations.

Ultimately, Bishop Bianchi declared that Sr. Katherine's tenure would be extended by three years, from 1960 to 1963, and subsequently postponed the General Chapter for three more years. The Vatican had approved the changes, which were "Given under Our Hand and Seal, from the Diocesan Curia, on the 21st June, 1960."¹⁸

In May 1961, Bishop Bianchi urged Sr. Katherine to speed up the revision and amendment of the constitutions.¹⁹ Upon receiving the request, Sr. Katherine immediately summoned the council of the congregation, which decided that she would spend a month working solely on the revision with whatever assistance was required. It took some time for Sr. Katherine and the sisters to complete the revision, which was submitted to Bishop Bianchi. Fr. Vincent Lau Wang-sun was responsible for translating the constitutions into English before sending them to the Vatican for approval.²⁰ In April 1963, Bishop Bianchi informed the sisters that the Vatican had given its consent to the revision. Nevertheless, he asked for further changes and the translation of certain parts of the document.²¹ On April 17, Bishop Bianchi wrote to Sr. Katherine: "Your Congregation's Constitutions have been returned by the S. Congregation of Propaganda—approved, but with the order to carry out, in the original text, a few changes (clearly indicated) [text underlined in the original letter]."²² The bishop asked that the additional revision be completed "as soon as possible,"²³ which required more time from the superior general and the sisters.

Approaching the end of Sr. Katherine's term in July 1963, Bishop Bianchi extended her headship for one more year so that she could complete the revised constitutions. He asked her to "remain in office" and carry out her duties "normally and freely."²⁴ Thus, Sr. Katherine was the superior general for seven years, from the end of the Tenth General Chapter in 1957 to the eve of the Eleventh General Chapter in 1964.²⁵

In December 1963, Sr. Katherine sent both the English and Chinese versions of the revised constitutions to the bishop, who told the Precious

Blood Sisters to print out copies and familiarize themselves with the new changes before their final adoption at the next General Chapter.²⁶ In April 1964, the sisters distributed the printed copies of the revision within the congregation and studied them. Sr. Katherine invited Rev. Leo Chan Pak-leung, who was the vicar general of the Diocese of Hong Kong,²⁷ to explain the new constitutions to the sisters in the Motherhouse. Sr. Katherine also sent the new constitutions to Bishop D. Paulo José Tavares in Macau and Bishops Stanislaus Lo Kuang and Paul Ch'eng Shih-kuang in Taiwan²⁸ in light of society's changing needs and the world's shifting circumstances.

The Eleventh General Chapter (July 28, 1964)

The Eleventh General Chapter of the Precious Blood Sisters was held on July 28, 1964.²⁹ Both Bishop Bianchi and Rev. Leo Chan attended and, as usual, the superior general, the assistant superior general, the councilors, the mistress of novices, and the secretary of the congregation were present. Forty-two sisters took part in the elections. The bishop began by confirming the correct number and names of the nuns.³⁰ Then, he announced the rules of the election. He instructed the sisters to vote in accordance with God's wishes, and to ignore their own personal interests. By placing their ballots before the Lord, the sisters were acting with the benefits of the general public in mind, serving justice and the common good.³¹ Every sister who was present cast her votes and kept her decisions secret. No one was allowed to vote for herself. The sisters chose two monitors and a secretary to assist throughout the election process.

The first election result was that Sr. Katherine Lui received enough votes to enter her next term as superior general.³² Bishop Bianchi gave his blessings and the ballots were burned. Following the election rules, the sisters knelt before Sr. Katherine, held her hand, and kissed her ring to show their obedience to the superior general. Then, they chose the councilors. The assistant superior general was also the first councilor,³³ and the other councilors voted into office included Mother Lucy.³⁴ Thus, the new council came into being. The most significant aspect of the Eleventh General Chapter was that the Precious Blood Sisters agreed on the revised constitutions (hereafter referred to as the 1964 Constitutions). The sisters promised to work hard, unite, and progress to a higher stage of development. Emphases were placed on obedience, cooperation, and the advancement of the congregation.³⁵

THE 1964 CONSTITUTIONS

The General and Specific Purposes of the Congregation of the Precious Blood Sisters

According to the 1964 Constitutions, the sisters belonged to a religious congregation known as the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ or more succinctly, The Sisters of the Precious Blood, of Hong Kong.³⁶ It was “a religious Congregation of Diocesan Law,” whose sisters professed “simple vows, temporary or perpetual.”³⁷ In general, the sisters focused on firstly “the glory of God” and secondly their “personal sanctification” through the profession of vows and particular devotion to the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Mother of Sorrows, and Saint Joseph.³⁸

More specifically, the Precious Blood Sisters were tasked with “the saving and sanctification of souls” through firstly apostolic works, secondly education, thirdly charity, and fourthly other activities deemed essential to the ordinary folks in the mission.³⁹ Thus, the Chinese sisters prioritized the needs of the local people, offering various services that provided their fellow Chinese with the opportunity to know about God.

The general purpose of the 1964 Constitutions followed the primary principle of the 1929 Constitutions, which stated that the sisters strictly followed the constitutions and vows, for their sanctification through the worship of the Precious Blood of Christ and in honor of Our Lady of Sorrows and Saint Joseph.⁴⁰ However, the 1929 Constitutions outlined concrete measures in the congregation’s secondary principle, which comprised firstly the teaching of the doctrine, secondly the opening of schools, thirdly the care of orphans, and fourthly the establishment of a hospital. These items were a bit different from the specific purposes mentioned above in the 1964 Constitutions. In 1929, the bishop had asked the Chinese sisters to provide their people with charitable services to help in the sanctification of others.⁴¹

Admission into the Congregation

The 1964 Constitutions stated that the Precious Blood Sisters were bound to the congregation through the profession of religious vows, temporary or perpetual. Thus, they were aggregated temporarily or perpetually to the

congregation in accordance with the nature of their vows.⁴² This raised the question, who could be admitted into the congregation?

The 1964 Constitutions stated that the congregation could consider the application of a Catholic woman who had been baptized for at least two years.⁴³ She should be “motivated by a right intention, not prevented by any legitimate impediment, mentally and physically fit to bear the burdens of the religious life.”⁴⁴ In addition, she must be “willing to work for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls,” which was the general purpose of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood.⁴⁵ The interested party had to submit her birth certificate (or other legally binding document), a certificate of baptism and confirmation, “recent testimonials of good character and conduct, and of freedom from impediments, signed by the applicant’s parish priest or spiritual director,” a certificate of satisfactory mental and physical health from a doctor appointed by the superior general of the Precious Blood Sisters, and all of the documents related to her education “such as Certificate of Middle, Secondary or Normal School, University, diplomas of Nursing, etc.”⁴⁶ Without any one of these documents, the Precious Blood Sisters would not consider an application.

In the past, the 1929 Constitutions stated that a Catholic woman with good virtues and behavior could apply for entry into the congregation. She should have the correct motives, without any barriers, and should abide by the constitutions (according to Canon Law 538).⁴⁷ However, the 1929 Constitutions did not mention how long a woman should have been baptized before her application. With regard to the required documents, the 1929 Constitutions did not mention the need for a birth certificate and only asked for a doctor’s certificate to prove the applicant’s physical health, and there was no mention of mental health as in the 1964 Constitutions.⁴⁸ The 1929 Constitutions stated that an applicant should have a certificate proving the completion of either a primary or secondary education. If none was available, the bishop’s approval was needed. The 1929 Constitutions also included some unique items that reflected the social conditions of the time. First, there was the request of a document proving that the applicant was unmarried, or one proving that she had withdrawn from a marriage arrangement. Second, the applicant should not have a loan, nor an earlier rejection from another congregation. Third, an applicant seeking refugee status could not apply for admission without the bishop’s consent.⁴⁹ Fourth, the applicant should be above the age of 16.⁵⁰

The Various Stages of Training and Formation

Before becoming a member of the community, the aspirant passed through the stages of postulancy and the training and examination of a novice. There were “no short cuts” and “no exceptions” in the process.⁵¹ Every applicant had to meet the requirements for becoming an aspirant, and afterward, she had to pass the different examinations to proceed to a higher grade of training. As a professed sister, she took her temporary vows before the profession of her final vows.

The postulancy was a time of probation enabling the applicant to have a “first-hand experience of the religious life.”⁵² During this period, the superiors observed and judged whether the postulant should proceed to become a novice. The period of postulancy typically lasted six months. It could be extended an additional six months, but no more than that. According to the 1964 Constitutions, the postulants lived apart from the rest of the community. “No relations or communications” were permitted between the postulants and the others.⁵³ As the 1964 Constitutions stated, “They may, however, gather together in church or chapel at the time of sacred functions, and in the refectory at mealtime.”⁵⁴ The postulants wore “a plain and becoming dress,” which was different from that worn by the novices.⁵⁵

The superior general of the Congregation of the Precious Blood Sisters retained the right to admit the postulants to the novitiate.⁵⁶ The novices wore the same habit worn by the professed sisters, but without the crucifix and the belt. They also wore the special medal of Our Lady of Sorrows, which distinguished them from the professed sisters. The 1964 Constitutions stated: “The Novitiate [novitiate] begins with the reception of the novices’ religious habit ... The local Ordinary or a priest delegated by him shall officiate ... at this vestition [investiture] ceremony, which marks the formal beginning of the Novitiate [novitiate].”⁵⁷ The novitiate lasted “one full and uninterrupted year” called the canonical year. It was complete “on the day after the first anniversary of its formal beginning.”⁵⁸ Then, after the canonical year, the novitiate lasted six more months *in the novitiate house* in preparation for the *first temporary vows*.⁵⁹ According to the 1964 Constitutions: “Professed Sisters, whether with perpetual or temporary vows, precede among themselves according to seniority by first profession; Novices, according to seniority by reception of religious habit; Postulants, according to seniority by admission into Postulancy.”⁶⁰

The 1964 Constitutions followed the 1929 Constitutions, which stipulated that the postulants must be separated from the professed sisters and that there should be no interactions between the two parties.⁶¹ The 1929 Constitutions stated that the postulants wore a black habit that differed from that worn by the novices. The superior general paid close attention to the postulants' health and wellbeing,⁶² and admission to the novitiate required the approval of the superior general and the bishop.⁶³ The novices wore the same habit as the professed sisters, except that the former wore the medal of Our Lady of Sorrows.⁶⁴ The abovementioned regulations for the postulants and novices were continued in the 1964 Constitutions. Even in 1929 there was a special ceremony for the novices' change of habit.⁶⁵ The novices were separated from the professed sisters, without any communication,⁶⁶ and the novitiate lasted one year, as in the 1964 Constitutions.⁶⁷

The Sisters' Professions

As the 1964 Constitutions stated, "The right to admit the novices to their first temporary profession belongs to the Superior General with the deliberate vote of her Council; the right to admit to the following temporary professions and to perpetual profession belongs also to the Superior General, but with her Council's consultative vote only."⁶⁸ At the end of their novitiate, the novices professed their temporary vows "for one year, three times in succession; then, once for three years" and afterward, they professed their perpetual vows.⁶⁹ Thus, it took six more years for a sister to make final profession.

The indigenization of the Catholic Church was manifested in the following manner. The sisters kept their baptismal names at the time of their profession and after their profession.⁷⁰ To conform to the Chinese custom, the sisters were addressed by their family names (surnames) instead of their religious names. The 1964 Constitutions allowed the Chinese sisters "to be called by their surnames, followed by the appellative 'sau nui' (= Sister)."⁷¹ "*Sau nui*" is the Cantonese pronunciation for the two Chinese characters meaning "sister" (Pinyin is *xiumü*).

There were three vows: poverty, chastity, and obedience. The 1964 Constitutions said, "By the vow of poverty, a Sister renounces the right to exercise independent ownership over material possessions."⁷² The vow of chastity forbade "all acts, words, thoughts and desires contrary to chastity," which contradicted the 6th and 9th Commandments, and it included

“the obligation of observing celibacy.”⁷³ The vow of obedience bound the sister to obey “the formal commands” of their superiors in any matter that was related to “the observance of the vows and the Constitutions.”⁷⁴

According to the 1929 Constitutions, the novice made her first profession after the novitiate with the approval of the superior.⁷⁵ There was a ceremony for this purpose, and after the profession, the sister could formally use her baptismal name but she retained her family name (surname) following the Chinese tradition. This stayed the same in the 1964 Constitutions, but the latter were very precise about the number of times the sisters professed the temporary vows and how many years must pass before they could make perpetual vows.

Leadership Ranks for the Congregation

The congregation’s leadership structure was written in the 1964 Constitutions and included the superior general, who must be “always and everywhere in the Congregation, during her tenure of office”; the vicar general/assistant superior general; the councilors general, who were ranked according to the time of election or appointment; the ex-superiors general; the (local) superior of the Motherhouse; the secretary general; the treasurer general; the mistress of novices; the regional superiors; the territorial superiors; the local superiors; the professed sisters with perpetual vows; the professed sisters with temporary vows; the novices; and the postulants.⁷⁶ At the end of her term, the sister relinquished her title and rights and returned to her previous position in the congregation.⁷⁷ This was the case for every position except the superior general.

The Superior General and the General Chapter of the Precious Blood Sisters

The major change in the 1964 Constitutions was the length of the superior general’s term, which extended from three to six years. The 1964 Constitutions stated that the election of the superior general should take place on the second day of the General Chapter;⁷⁸ specifically, “On the election day, in the house of the General Chapter, the local Ordinary or his delegate shall celebrate ... the Mass of the Holy Ghost, and all members of the General Chapter shall pray more fervently for God’s assistance in the election.”⁷⁹ Likewise, “The Superior General holds her office for a term of six years. She can be re-elected for a second term, but not

successively for a third term, without a special approval of the Ordinaries of the places in which the Congregation has houses.”⁸⁰ Thus, in addition to extending the term, limitations were placed on how long the superior general could head the congregation. With regard to the superior general’s authority, the 1964 Constitutions affirmed that she assumed the administration of the entire congregation in accordance with Canon Law and the Constitutions.⁸¹

Once the superior general was elected, six councilors were chosen in six separate elections.⁸² The first councilor elected became “the Vicar General or Assistant Superior General,” and would “take the Superior General’s place and authority” whenever the superior general was away or was incapable of performing her duties.⁸³ According to the 1964 Constitutions: “The General Chapter shall be held, ordinarily, *every six years*, when the election of the Superior General must be made [emphasis added].”⁸⁴ Thus, the frequency of the General Chapter was also changed from every three to every six years.

The 1929 Constitutions regarded the General Chapter to be of prime significance.⁸⁵ At that time, the Precious Blood Sisters had only one convent: the Motherhouse in Shamshuipo. The position of superior general had a term of three years, after which the tenure could be continued.⁸⁶ The superior general and the council chose the local superiors with the bishop’s approval. The sisters who could attend the General Chapter were the incumbent superior general, the former superiors general or those persons specially invited, the four councilors, the mistress of novices, the secretary of the congregation, and the sister-representatives (each representing three sisters, as all sisters had the right to vote).⁸⁷ Likewise, the General Chapter took place every three years.⁸⁸

The major changes in 1964 were the extension of the superior general’s term from three to six years and the frequency of the General Chapter, which changed from every three to every six years. Moreover, the hierarchy of the leadership was much simpler in 1929 than it was in the 1960s.

The Religious Habit

The sisters’ religious habit carried an air of solemnity and demanded respect, especially in Chinese society. According to the 1964 Constitutions, the superior general and the council of the congregation were supposed to ensure that all the sisters wore the same habit in both form and material, inside and outside the convents (houses), and that there should be no

“abuses and innovations” in their appearance.⁸⁹ Only in an emergency and for a “grave reason,” should the superior general use her judgment and allow a sister to forgo the habit.⁹⁰

According to the 1964 Constitutions, all professed sisters were to wear a black habit of “the same form and material” with the white coif and black veil.⁹¹ In summer, the habit and coif were white and the veil was black. Moreover, “On their breast, hanging by a cotton string round the neck, they shall wear a silver crucifix.”⁹² The sisters also wore a waist belt that symbolized the holy vows. It is worth noting that the professed sisters with perpetual vows wore “a simple silver ring on the ring finger of their right hand.”⁹³ There were two special guidelines. First, the sisters dressed entirely in white when they were on duty in the hospitals and clinics. Second, they wore the black habit throughout the year if they were doing missionary work in the villages, in keeping with the Chinese tradition.⁹⁴ In such circumstances, the novices wore the same habit as the professed sisters, but they did not have the belt and wore the medal of Our Lady of Sorrows, which was not worn by the professed sisters.

The 1964 Constitutions added certain details not found in the 1929 Constitutions, which simply stated that both the novices and the sisters wore the black habit.⁹⁵ According to the 1929 Constitutions, they wore a small black coat covering their shoulders, their chest, and their back, a small black cap, and a black veil. The 1929 Constitutions also stated that the professed sisters wore a medal with Christ on one side and Our Lady of Sorrows on the other.⁹⁶

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD SISTERS IN THE 1960S

The Membership and Leadership of the Precious Blood Congregation

At the beginning of the 1960s, the congregation had 89 sisters.⁹⁷ Every now and then, there were novices who made their first temporary profession at the end of their novitiate. Toward the end of 1960 there were seven such women; in 1961 there were six; in 1962 there were five; in 1963 there were four; and in May 1964 there was one.⁹⁸ Thus, there were 23 women who made their first profession by May 1964. At the same time four sisters died during this period. By the end of superior general Sr. Katherine’s first term, in July 1964, there were 108 sisters in the congregation.⁹⁹ In Sr. Katherine’s second term, the number of newly professed

sisters increased.¹⁰⁰ In November 1964, there were two novices who made their first profession at the end of their novitiate.¹⁰¹ In 1965, there were seven such women; in 1966 there were six; in 1967 there were four; in 1968 there were five; in 1969 there were five; and in 1970 there were seven. Thus, there were 36 newly professed sisters during Sr. Katherine's second term, from July 1964 to July 1970.¹⁰² One sister died in 1969 and another left the congregation that same year, so by July 1970, there were 142 sisters in the congregation.¹⁰³

During Sr. Katherine's first term, the leadership fell to the superior general, the assistant superior general, the two councilors, the mistress of novices, and the secretary of the congregation.¹⁰⁴ In Sr. Katherine's second term, the leadership was conducted by the superior general, the assistant superior general, the five councilors (one of whom was the secretary of the congregation), the treasurer general, and the mistress of novices.¹⁰⁵

From 1960 to 1970, there was an increase in the number of superiors in various localities. In Sr. Katherine's first term, she was also the superior of the Motherhouse in Shamshuipo. There were: two superiors in the Precious Blood Hospital; two superiors in the babies' home at 123 Un Chau Street (established in 1952); one superior in the orphanage and another in the home for the elderly in Fanling; and officially one superior in the convent and another in the novitiate in North Point, although Mother Lucy took up both positions. Outside Hong Kong, there were two superiors in Taiwan, one in each of the two convents, and two in Macau, one in the convent and the other in the clinic.¹⁰⁶ During Sr. Katherine's second term, there were the additional positions of a superior in the girls' home in Fanling; a superior in the convent on the top floor of Holy Trinity College; a superior in a public cancer hospital; a superior in the convent in a public housing estate; and a superior in a clinic of Caritas of the Catholic Church (see Fig. 6.1). In Macau, the number of superiors increased to five. In Taiwan, the number increased to four.¹⁰⁷

Educational Pursuits

In the 1960s, the Precious Blood Sisters had the following schools: Tack Ching Girls' Middle School and its affiliated primary school in Shamshuipo; Precious Blood Girls' Middle School in North Point and its affiliated primary school and kindergarten in Happy Valley; a primary school in Fanling; and a primary school on the ground floor of a seven-story public housing estate in Tsuen Wan.¹⁰⁸ These schools co-organized sports



Fig. 6.1 The Sisters of the Precious Blood outside the convent in Fanling in 1969. The front row, the third person from the left, Sr. Katherine Lui; the fourth person from the left, Bishop Francis Hsu Chen-ping. Sisters of the Precious Blood Archives, Hong Kong

activities and had connections with other local schools. In November 1962, Tack Ching Girls' Middle School applied for government subsidies to pay for the staff salaries. The teachers were subsidized different amounts (HK\$100–HK\$300) each month depending on their qualifications.¹⁰⁹ Around the same time, the affiliated primary school and kindergarten of Precious Blood Girls' Middle School arranged school buses for their students in Happy Valley.

In July 1964, Fr. Lido Mencarini, PIME, who was the vicar general of the diocese, made a formal request to the Precious Blood Sisters with regard to Catholic education in Hong Kong. In his letter to Sr. Katherine he said that Bishop Bianchi had decided to form the Diocesan Board of Education “to foster and co-ordinate Catholic education, to promote an atmosphere of mutual understanding and cooperation among all Catholic Schools of the Diocese and to present a solid, unique front and policy to the Education Department [of the Hong Kong government].”¹¹⁰ Fr.

Mencarini asked Sr. Katherine to introduce the Precious Blood Sisters' representative to the Diocesan Board of Education. According to his description, the proposed board would be built "on the basis of a large representation," including representatives from "almost every teaching Religious Congregation (whether of Men or Women)," a representative from the schools of the diocese, a representative from the schools of the parishes, and a lay Catholic with much experience in the local educational system.¹¹¹

Coincidentally, the Precious Blood Sisters had plans to expand their educational pursuits. In a letter from Sr. Katherine to Bishop Bianchi in June 1966, she explained that the premises of Tack Ching Girls' Middle School had become insufficient for its students. Thus, the Precious Blood Sisters planned to move the school from 125 Un Chau Street (located there since December 1948) to 101 Castle Peak Road (where the entrance to the middle school's new building was, actually, Lot N.K.I.L. 579 adjacent to the Motherhouse).¹¹² To achieve this, they had to raise funds to build a completely new campus for Tack Ching Girls' Middle School, which also meant tearing down the original primary school buildings (on Lot N.K.I.L. 579).¹¹³ Sr. Katherine obtained the bishop's approval for the performance of a Cantonese play and singing games to raise funds at City Hall, Central, Hong Kong Island in December 1966. In April 1967, Sr. Katherine also received the bishop's permission to hold a bazaar in Tack Ching to raise funds.¹¹⁴ Then, in October 1967, she wrote to the bishop about the new Tack Ching campus at 101 Castle Peak Road. She said that the entire construction project cost HK\$4 million, and that the sisters had managed to raise HK\$3.4 million. They needed HK\$0.6 million, but were unable to borrow money from the bank due to the severe financial conditions in the colony in 1967.¹¹⁵ At that time, the construction was completed, and the sisters had no choice but to try to borrow money from Bishop Bianchi. At the end of 1967, Sr. Katherine informed the bishop that the bazaar would take place in Tack Ching, with 99,999 raffle tickets issued at one dollar each to raise additional funds.¹¹⁶ In 1968, Tack Ching Girls' Middle School finally moved to 101 Castle Peak Road.

Pastoral Care

Officially, the Precious Blood Sisters focused on five geographical fields in their mission: Sai Kung, Tai Long, Fanling, and Yuen Long in the New Territories and Huizhou in Guangdong Province. From 1960 to 1962,

there were three sisters performing permanent missionary work in Sai Kung, which is in the eastern part of the New Territories. There were two other sisters helping out occasionally. From 1962 onward, the Precious Blood Sisters sent between two and four nuns to conduct pastoral care there. The sisters worked in shifts with at least two of them staying there most of the time. In Sai Kung, they served in the church parish and went out to preach in the villages. They visited every household to connect with the locals.¹¹⁷ The sisters also conducted pastoral care in Chek Keng and Tai Long, which are further east of Sai Kung. In the early 1960s, there were two or three sisters performing missionary work in these remote villages, going out and calling on the families in faraway areas.¹¹⁸

In Fanling, which is further north in the New Territories, two sisters were in charge of pastoral care in the parish church. As one of them was of senior age and the other was of poor health, they hired a local woman to do the household work, to cook and to clean.¹¹⁹ There was a small fire at one point, but not much damage was done.

In the northwest of the New Territories, the Precious Blood Sisters also had a presence. In Yuen Long, on the western side of the New Territories, the sisters had a better residence—a house with one living and dining room, one bedroom, a kitchen, and a flushing toilet. It still cost the sisters HK\$3,000 for construction.¹²⁰ In Yuen Long, they worked in the parish church, where there was a fishpond close by. Several sisters served in the parish, and there were also changes in personnel. The sisters maintained a mutually helpful relationship with the parish priest, Fr. Thomas U Uen-chi.¹²¹ He was the rector of Ss. Peter and Paul Church in Yuen Long from 1962 to 1969.

One official missionary field of the Precious Blood Sisters ultimately proved to be beyond their reach. Huizhou, in Guangdong Province, had once housed the St. Joseph Hospital (before 1949, as mentioned in Chapter 5). In the 1960s, the two sisters in Huizhou, Srs. Anna Yeung and Maria Chan, were forbidden to return to Hong Kong. The Precious Blood Sisters used every means at their disposal to save their fellow sisters from house arrest, but they were repeatedly unsuccessful.¹²² During the Cultural Revolution, Srs. Anna and Maria suffered under the persecution of the Red Guards. Sr. Anna, who had joined the congregation in 1921 and made her first profession in 1923, had relatives in Huizhou. She became the superior of the Precious Blood Hospital in 1944; subsequently, she went to serve in St. Joseph Hospital in Huizhou in 1948. By 1970, she was already 67 years old. Sr. Maria, who joined the congregation in

1932 and made her first profession in 1934, had served in Macau and in other cities on the mainland before going to Huizhou in 1951. She was ten years younger than Sr. Anna. Eventually, in April 1993 Srs. Anna and Maria were able to leave Huizhou and return to Hong Kong.

THE NEW WORDING OF CERTAIN ARTICLES IN THE 1964 CONSTITUTIONS (1967) AND THE SPECIAL CHAPTER OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD SISTERS (AUGUST 1969)

In December 1967, Bishop Bianchi formally replied to Sr. Katherine regarding her petition for the dispensation of certain articles of the 1964 Constitutions¹²³ through a letter from Fr. Edmondo Bruzzone, PIME (Chancellor of the Diocese of Hong Kong) to Sr. Katherine. According to this letter of December 28, the bishop asked for the rewording rather than the dispensation of the articles in question. Fr. Bruzzone wrote, “Rather than a dispensation, the Bishop proposes a new wording of the Articles in question. The new wording incorporates the dispensations asked. If you find it comprehensive enough, consider it official.”¹²⁴ The reason for accepting the rewording instead of the dispensation of the articles was as follows: “The Constitutions have been approved by Rome (S.C. of P.F.) and no Article can be ‘taken off’ ... minor modifications are allowed, by the Bishop’s authority, since you are of diocesan law—*while naturally preparing for a new revision of your Constitutions in the spirit of Vatican II* [emphasis added].”¹²⁵

Five of the articles were reworded. Number 2 of Article 36 became: “After the canonical year, the Noviciate lasts another year, to be passed in the Noviciate house, in preparation for the first temporary profession.”¹²⁶ The bishop had agreed with Sr. Katherine’s argument to change the original “six months” to “one full year” to provide the novices with better training.¹²⁷

Article 68 became: “After ten years of perpetual profession, a Sister who desires to rejuvenate her spiritual life by this method, may be allowed—at the discretion of the Superior General—to make a second Noviciate, for a period of not more than one year.”¹²⁸ This revision met Sr. Katherine’s request to allow the superior general to decide whether she would give the sister a full year of “second Noviciate.”¹²⁹ Sr. Katherine had explained that there was a great demand for trained personnel and she needed to decide whether it was possible to grant the concerned sister the entire year of

renewal. With the rewording, the year of “second Noviciate” became an option rather than an entitlement.

The rewording of Article 112 was a reconsideration of the existing circumstances, as the sisters were already very much occupied with their work. Article 112 became: “Near the entrance, if possible, of every house of the Congregation, there shall be a reception room, where the Sisters may receive those who wish to see them—but always with the permission of the local Superior, who may also, at her discretion, appoint a suitable companion to be present during the visit.”¹³⁰ In the original article, a sister could not see a visitor alone and must be accompanied by another sister. Nevertheless, Sr. Katherine had said that doing so was difficult, and that the matter should be left to the superior of the house.¹³¹ This revision reflected the need for greater flexibility.

Number 2 of Article 114 became: “When granting a Sister permission to go out, the local Superior may also—at her discretion—assign her a suitable companion.”¹³² In the original article, a sister could not go out alone and must have another sister accompany her when going out. It was often difficult, however, for the superior to find a companion, as the other sisters had their own duties to attend to.¹³³ Finally, Article 132 was reworded in response to Sr. Katherine’s request that each sister have a medical check-up at least once every two years if she was in good health, rather than “once a year,” as stated in the original article.¹³⁴

In August 1969, the Precious Blood Sisters held a chapter to discuss the necessary reforms for the congregation in response to Vatican II. This was a significant step forward to embrace the change brought forth by the historical event in the Roman Catholic Church. The sisters defined the spirit of the congregation as their love of God and the people as their greatest treasure, to be spread among their neighbors.¹³⁵ The sisters believed that different congregations were founded under different circumstances, following the spirit and purposes of the founders. Thus, every congregation had unique traditions, history, culture, and missions. The Precious Blood Sisters inherited the spirit of their foundress, Sr. Clara Tam, in worshipping the Precious Blood of Christ, following the path of the sacrifice of Christ, and thus believing in their own self-sacrifice for the love of the people. It was only through this formation that the sisters could sustain their service, sanctify themselves, and focus on prayer and the apostolic work. The sisters focused on charity work. They interpreted the three vows in the following manner: chastity was living in the unity of Christ and the Church; poverty was sharing the poverty of Christ; and

obedience was learning from Christ in obeying God's will. In this way, the sisters experienced the presence of Christ in their community.

The Precious Blood spirit emphasized serving the society's most deprived as an expression of kindness and love, which were also traditional Chinese virtues.¹³⁶ To be precise, the poorest were those residing in Hong Kong's resettlement areas. The sisters followed Christ in spreading the Gospel and doing apostolic work among the poor, which identified and signified the congregation's mission. The Precious Blood spirit was implemented through hard work, sacrifice, and the imitation of Christ. The sisters believed that they should reflect on the Precious Blood spirit in their outlook. They sacrificed themselves for the service of others. Moreover, they responded to the changing circumstances in accordance with the resolutions of Vatican II. They were determined to cultivate God's message among the young people, so that the latter would continue to be devout Catholics after leaving school or recreational centers. The sisters encouraged lay Catholics to keep Christ in their hearts in all situations: political, cultural, occupational and familial.¹³⁷ The laity had the opportunity to engage in direct apostolic work through the Catholic Center, catechumen classes, and other such activities. They held regular meetings and activities, such as seminars on specific topics, religious groups, and the Legion of Mary. They maintained their faith in the workplace and kept up their good spirit and energy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Precious Blood Sisters experienced an evolution in the 1960s. The 1964 Constitutions and the subsequent rewording of certain clauses reflected the need for greater flexibility in the sisters' service. More importantly, the sisters' efforts to embrace these changes demonstrated their progression in thought and outlook during this transformative decade. They expanded their service in education and pastoral care. The number of schools they managed was impressive, as was their enduring pastoral service in the rural areas of the New Territories.

Through the years, the sisters had enhanced their own educational qualifications, training, and professionalism. Together with Hong Kong society, the sisters responded to the demands for greater expertise in establishing institutions for educating the new generation. It was only through education that the children of poor families could move upward in society and help create a better future for Hong Kong. There were also tremen-

dous demands for work from the new migrants. It was a decade in which every individual struggled to stand firm, secure a place in the workforce, and provide for his or her family.

Sr. Katherine's leadership moved the congregation to higher ground. The superior general was extraordinarily talented, with an in-depth understanding of the history and heritage of the Precious Blood Sisters. She built her vision for the congregation on the achievements of her predecessors. In response to Vatican II, Sr. Katherine asked the Precious Blood Sisters to be adaptable and open to the enlightened ideas emanating from this important event in the history of the Roman Catholic Church.

Although the 1960s ushered in great change, the decade also witnessed disturbances in Hong Kong society as a result of the political and social upheavals on the mainland. The 1967 riots were violent, and the Chinese sisters were cautious in the face of the social crisis, coping courageously with the threatening circumstances. The 1960s were exceptional years, characterized by the hard work of the local residents, the building of new institutions in Hong Kong society, and the eagerness of the Hong Kong Catholic Mission to contribute to the betterment of the colony. On the international stage, there were calls for revolution from the different corners of the world. Hong Kong was on the periphery of the great turmoil playing out just across the border on the mainland. China's Cultural Revolution lasted until 1976. In the early 1970s, the Precious Blood Sisters continued to face challenges in their mission and their responsibilities within the local Catholic Church.

NOTES

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70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*
72. The 1964 Constitutions, p. 18.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
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75. The 1929 Constitutions, pp. 40, 44–46.
76. The 1964 Constitutions, p. 2.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
78. The 1964 Constitutions, p. 55.
79. *Ibid.*
80. The 1964 Constitutions, p. 63.
81. *Ibid.*
82. The 1964 Constitutions, p. 58.
83. *Ibid.*
84. The 1964 Constitutions, p. 52.
85. The 1929 Constitutions, pp. 3–4.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
87. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
89. The 1964 Constitutions, p. 7.
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*
95. The 1929 Constitutions, pp. 47–48.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
97. “The Second Half of the First Term of the Superior General, Sr. Katherine Lui (July 27, 1960–July 27, 1964),” written by Sr. Lui, n.d., p. 1, History of the Congregation, Box 1.11, SPBA.
98. *Ibid.*
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100. “The Second Term of the Superior General, Sr. Katherine Lui (July 27, 1964–July 28, 1970),” written by Sr. Lui, n.d., in Chinese, 11 pages, p. 2, History of the Congregation, Box 1.11, SPBA.
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103. *Ibid.*

104. "The Second Half of the First Term of the Superior General, Sr. Katherine Lui (July 27, 1960–July 27, 1964)," written by Sr. Lui, n.d., p. 2, History of the Congregation, Box 1.11, SPBA.
105. "The Second Term of the Superior General, Sr. Katherine Lui (July 27, 1964–July 28, 1970)," written by Sr. Lui, n.d., pp. 2–3, History of the Congregation, Box 1.11, SPBA.
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108. "The Second Half of the First Term of the Superior General, Sr. Katherine Lui (July 27, 1960–July 27, 1964)," written by Sr. Lui, n.d., p. 5, History of the Congregation, Box 1.11, SPBA.
109. Ibid.
110. Letter from the Vicar General of the Diocese of Hong Kong, Fr. Lido Mencarini, PIME to Sr. Katherine Lui, July 27, 1964, in English, one page, History of the Congregation, Box 1.8, SPBA.
111. Ibid.
112. Letter from Sr. Katherine Lui to Bishop Lawrence (Lorenzo) Bianchi, June 26, 1966, in English, one page, and the reply from Fr. Edmondo Bruzzone, PIME (Chancellor of the Diocese of Hong Kong) to Sr. Katherine at the bottom of this letter, n.d., History of the Congregation, Box 1.8, SPBA.
113. Photos of Tack Ching Girls' Middle School, Photos F3, SPBA.
114. Letter from Sr. Katherine to Bishop Bianchi, April 12, 1967, in English, one page, and the reply from Fr. Edmondo Bruzzone, PIME to Sr. Katherine also at the bottom of this letter, n.d., History of the Congregation, Box 1.8, SPBA.
115. Letter from Sr. Katherine to Bishop Bianchi, October 25, 1967, in Chinese, one page, History of the Congregation, Box 1.8, SPBA.
116. Letter from Sr. Katherine to Bishop Bianchi, December 19, 1967, in English, one page, History of the Congregation, Box 1.8, SPBA.
117. "The Second Half of the First Term of the Superior General, Sr. Katherine Lui (July 27, 1960–July 27, 1964)," written by Sr. Lui, n.d., p. 4, History of the Congregation, Box 1.11, SPBA.
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119. Ibid.
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122. "The Second Half of the First Term of the Superior General, Sr. Katherine Lui (July 27, 1960–July 27, 1964)," written by Sr. Lui, n.d., p. 5, History of the Congregation, Box 1.11, SPBA.
123. Letter from Fr. Edmondo Bruzzone, PIME to Sr. Katherine, December 28, 1967, in English, two pages, History of the Congregation, Box 1.3, SPBA.
124. *Ibid.*, first page.
125. *Ibid.*
126. Letter from Fr. Bruzzone, PIME to Sr. Katherine, December 28, 1967, second page.
127. Letter from Auxiliary Bishop Francis Hsu to Bishop Bianchi, December 22, 1967, two pages, History of the Congregation, Box 1.3, SPBA.
128. Letter from Fr. Bruzzone, PIME to Sr. Katherine, December 28, 1967, second page.
129. Letter from Bishop Hsu to Bishop Bianchi, December 22, 1967, two pages.
130. Letter from Fr. Bruzzone, PIME to Sr. Katherine, December 28, 1967, second page.
131. Letter from Bishop Hsu to Bishop Bianchi, December 22, 1967, two pages.
132. Letter from Fr. Bruzzone, PIME to Sr. Katherine, December 28, 1967, second page.
133. Letter from Bishop Hsu to Bishop Bianchi, December 22, 1967, two pages.
134. *Ibid.*; Letter from Fr. Bruzzone, PIME to Sr. Katherine, December 28, 1967, second page.
135. "Information on the Special Chapter of the Precious Blood Sisters," 1969, SPBA.
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1971–1973 and Beyond

THE LAST THREE YEARS OF SISTER KATHERINE LUI'S LEADERSHIP

Superior general Sr. Katherine Lui's final term was from 1970 to 1973. Since 1957 she had led the Precious Blood Sisters through the influx of refugees, turbulent riots, and economic recovery. During her last three years in office she helped the sisters navigate the momentous changes generated by the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965; hereafter, Vatican II). From 1969 through the early 1970s, the sisters studied the decisions of Vatican II, which shaped the transformation of how they perceived their role in society. They also adjusted their own outlook and thoughts.

Sr. Katherine's second term of office ended on July 28, 1970. The 1964 Constitutions stated that each term served by the superior general should last six years. Thus, according to the regulations, the Precious Blood Sisters were expected to summon a General Chapter to elect the new superior general and council and to discuss important matters including the revision of the constitutions.¹ The sisters knew that they must be well equipped for the Twelfth General Chapter, and felt that ample time for preparation was required to ensure fruitful results.

Thus, in January 1970, the sisters organized a preparatory committee of 13 members for the Twelfth General Chapter that specifically included three local superiors; eight sister-representatives who belonged evenly to the four fields of their missionary work: catechesis, education, medical care, and social welfare; and two other sister-representatives.² The sisters'

goal was to gather opinions on most, if not all, areas of their work without omitting any aspects of their mission. The preparatory committee ensured that the General Chapter would be held in July and August 1970. The first meeting of the preparatory committee took place in February 1970. Sr. Katherine was not on this committee, which met once every month. The committee's fourth meeting in April 1970 was only three months away from the Chapter, so at that time the sisters released the official documents and reports on their many areas of work to facilitate the proceedings.³

On April 23, 1970, Sr. Katherine wrote to the third bishop of the Diocese of Hong Kong, Francis Hsu Chen-ping, regarding the revision of Article 183 of the 1964 Constitutions.⁴ Article 183 addressed who had the right to participate in the discussion and the election sessions of the General Chapter. The original article stated that sisters who had already professed temporary and permanent vows on the day of the announcement of the General Chapter could elect representatives to participate in the discussion sessions and vote for them. It also said that sisters who happened to make their final profession on that same day could be chosen as representatives. This meant that the sisters who had professed temporary vows could only choose representatives but could *not* be chosen as representatives themselves. Sr. Katherine sought to revise Article 183 to allow *all of the sisters* who had professed temporary and permanent vows to elect representatives to participate in the discussion sessions in the General Chapter and to be elected as representatives themselves.⁵ Moreover, Sr. Katherine asked that all sisters (not only the representatives) be given the right to attend the elections and cast their own votes⁶—even those sisters who were not present at the General Chapter owing to their duties and/or being abroad would be allowed to cast their votes by mail.⁷ On April 25, Bishop Francis Hsu approved the revision of Article 183 in accordance with Sr. Katherine's request.⁸

THE TWELFTH GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD SISTERS (JULY 29–AUGUST 23, 1970)

The Twelfth General Chapter took place in July and August 1970. On July 29, the General Chapter elected the superior general and the council. From July 30 to August 1, the sisters revised the handbook of the previous General Chapter. Subsequently, from August 4 to 23, there were both general and group discussions for five days every week, with the sisters taking breaks on the weekends.⁹

Bishop Francis Hsu, the First Chinese Bishop to Head the Diocese of Hong Kong

The General Chapter met in the auditorium of Tack Ching Girls' Middle School on July 29, 1970,¹⁰ with Bishop Francis Hsu presiding. Bishop Hsu was the third bishop of the Diocese of Hong Kong and his ascendance was of tremendous significance, as it meant the handing over of the diocese from the Italian priests to the local clergy.¹¹ Bishop Hsu was the first Chinese bishop to head the Diocese of Hong Kong. His term of office lasted from October 26, 1969 to May 23, 1973 when he died suddenly of a heart attack.¹² His death was a tremendous shock to the local society. His time in office also marked a crucial period in the history of the Hong Kong Catholic Church, which was in the process of responding to the challenges presented by Vatican II.

Bishop Hsu was a historical figure. His status as the first Chinese bishop appointed to head the Diocese of Hong Kong held very fond memories for members of the local Church. Born into a Protestant family in Shanghai in 1920, he later studied at St. John's University there and at Oxford University in England. He converted to Catholicism while he was teaching at a university in Nanjing in the 1940s. After the establishment of the PRC, he left the mainland for Hong Kong. In the second half of the 1950s, he studied at Beda College in Rome and in March 1959 he was ordained a priest.¹³ He spent his subsequent years in Hong Kong, serving the Catholic Church through its Chinese paper *Kung Kao Po*, the Catholic Center, the Catholic Truth Society, the Diocesan Public Relations Office, and the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission. He was consecrated bishop in October 1967 and named the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Hong Kong in 1968.¹⁴ In 1969, he was appointed the third bishop of Hong Kong and installed on October 26. Bishop Hsu's younger brother was the late Professor Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, a prominent historian of modern China at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

The Twelfth General Chapter (July 29, 1970)

Bishop Hsu chaired the General Chapter on July 29, 1970. There were two other priests in attendance: the vicar general, Fr. Peter Lei Wang-kei and the vice chancellor of the Chancery Office, Fr. Francis Wong Tak-cheung.¹⁵ The superior general, the assistant superior general, the five other councilors and the mistress of novices were also present, alongside the 94 sisters participating in the General Chapter. The proceedings began

with Fr. Lei taking a head count, after which he advised the sisters about the election.

Bishop Hsu told the sisters to cast their votes according to their conscience, following the Holy Spirit, to elect the most appropriate superior general and councilors. After the election, he suggested that the sisters discuss the work needed to reform the congregation. He emphasized the Chinese traditions of the middle way and moderation; that is, “the new” might not always be good and “the old” still had value.¹⁶ He said that there was and had always been a gap between the older and younger generations that led to a lack of coordination within any society and congregation. He asked the Lord to provide them with guidance, and noted that the senior sisters had the experience while their younger counterparts had the enthusiasm.

During the election, a sister had to receive more than half of the votes to be elected as the superior general. Two sisters acted as monitors for the election and another as the secretary to record the process. Afterward, all of the sisters cast their votes. Sr. Katherine received more than one half of the votes, but she had already been the superior general for two terms. Thus, Bishop Hsu instructed Sr. Katherine to continue as the superior general subject to the approval of the bishops of places where the Precious Blood Sisters had their convents. This was in accordance with the 1964 Constitutions. Since Bishop Hsu knew he could not approve such an election result alone, he had previously contacted the bishops of Macau, Taipei, Kaoshiung, and southern Taiwan—all of whom had agreed that they did not want to see the same sister serving as superior general for 18 years under the rapidly changing circumstances, unless it was absolutely necessary.¹⁷ A compromise was suggested in which Sr. Katherine would be allowed to continue her tenure for three additional years instead of six, at which time she would no longer be eligible. Bishop Hsu agreed that this would satisfy the wishes of both the Catholic Church and the Precious Blood Sisters.¹⁸ Sr. Katherine agreed to the arrangement and the participating sisters applauded the decision and congratulated her. Then, the bishop left and Sr. Katherine chaired the election of the six councilors.¹⁹

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD SISTERS FROM 1970 TO 1973

The Members of the Congregation, the Leadership, and the Superiors

In July 1970 there were 142 sisters. In 1971 and 1972, 12 sisters made their first profession. Three sisters died in 1970 and 1971, and one sister

left the community in 1972. Thus, by the end of Sr. Katherine's time in office, there were 150 sisters.²⁰ The leadership of the Precious Blood Sisters at that time included Sr. Katherine, the assistant superior general, the five other councilors, the treasurer, the secretary and the mistress of novices.²¹ There were quite a number of local superiors. From 1970 to 1973, there was a superior in each of the following locations: the Motherhouse, the Precious Blood Hospital, and the nursery in Shamshuipo; the convent in Fanling and the girls' home there; the convent in North Point and the novitiate there; the convent in Taipei, the convent in Kaoshiung, and the mission field in the southern part of Taiwan; the convent in Macau and the clinic there; the convent in Wah Fu Housing Estate, Hong Kong Island; the convent in Holy Trinity College; the convent in a public cancer hospital; and the convent in Sai Kung.²²

The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Precious Blood Sisters and Their Missionary and Educational Work

In 1972 the sisters celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of their congregation. Bishop Hsu received a letter on February 21 from the Apostolic Nunciature to China in Taipei—"a special message" from the Pope and the Secretary of State of the Vatican regarding the anniversary—asking him to convey the best wishes and "sentiments of high esteem" to the sisters.²³

The sisters had several additional tasks during this period, including running a center for the catechists from Malaysia, assisting the catechumen classes at St. Teresa's Church in Kowloon Tong, the Catholic Center choir, the catechumen classes at the church in San Po Kong (in the northeast part of Kowloon), and the embroidery classes in Caritas.²⁴ In Sai Kung, the sisters had been helping out with pastoral work; later, a two-story convent was erected for them there. The sisters also asked the leadership of the congregation to send help to the Sunday class being conducted in a small village in Sai Kung. The sisters continued their service in Tai Long and Chek Keng until March 1971. Their convent was then given back to the diocese. In Fanling, the sisters' work continued as usual except for the addition of medical care in a hospital there.²⁵ There were also sisters serving in the parishes elsewhere. Moreover, the sisters worked for the Catholic paper, *Kung Kao Po*.²⁶

In an interesting development, Bishop Hsu invited the sisters to establish a meal service for him and the priests in the Catholic Mission on Caine Road, Hong Kong Island.²⁷ The sisters eventually agreed and began to

supervise the catering and the kitchen, paying particular attention to the conditions of those priests who were ill. The meal service was challenging because of the difficulties of working with the lay employees there. Special arrangements were made for a room for the Precious Blood Sisters to use as an office and for rest,²⁸ and the bishop also gave the sisters a monthly stipend.

Meanwhile, the sisters continued running their various schools, with particular emphasis on Tack Ching Girls' Middle School, where a sister was appointed to succeed her predecessor as the principal.²⁹ Precious Blood Girls' Middle School commemorated its silver jubilee and invited Bishop Hsu to celebrate the Mass. The school held a celebration, a banquet, and published an anniversary publication. In a time when there were inadequate educational opportunities for children, the sisters also managed a kindergarten on the rooftop of the seven-story housing estate.³⁰

The Thirteenth General Chapter (August 19, 1973)

In preparation for the Thirteenth General Chapter, the sisters reflected on the reform of the Universal Church and its communities. They compiled a Chinese-language booklet entitled *Benhui jingshen yu zhanwang: zuotian, jintian, mingtian* (*The Mission and Vision of Our Congregation: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*).³¹ The sisters believed that the Universal Church was a valuable instrument for spreading the Gospel, and its reform triggered consequent reform in the communities within the Church,³² as the latter reflected the former. During the process, the Precious Blood Sisters were asked to pay particular attention to the evolution and the needs of the outside world,³³ which involved rethinking the spirituality of their own community and its influence over their vocation, prayer, and meditation.³⁴ The sisters understood that Vatican II focused on the local churches, and that as an indigenous congregation they should reinforce their service on behalf of the Hong Kong Church and Diocese.³⁵ In their community lives, they continued to witness to society's poor and set plans for the future highlighting four aspects of their mission: the necessity of spreading the Good News, identifying with the local Church, the significance of community life, and the importance of the spiritual life.³⁶ In summary, the Precious Blood Sisters responded to Vatican II through self-reflection in every dimension of their service, their relations with the diocese, and their religious lives.

In August 1973, the Precious Blood Sisters convened the Thirteenth General Chapter in Tack Ching Girls' Middle School. Chairing the event was Bishop Peter Lei, who was consecrated titular bishop in 1971 and served as vicar capitular in 1973.³⁷ A Chinese priest was present to advise the sisters.³⁸ In addition to Sr. Katherine, the assistant superior general, and the councilors, there were 120 sisters in attendance. Twenty-three sisters were absent from the occasion. During the election process, two sisters served as secretaries, two as monitors, and six as helpers.³⁹ All of the sisters participating in the General Chapter had the right to vote for the new superior general. Sr. Katherine's successor received more than half of the votes and led the congregation in the years ahead. The sisters also elected the assistant superior general, who was the first councilor, followed by the remaining five councilors.⁴⁰ Afterward, Bishop Lei reminded the newly elected of their responsibilities and encouraged the sisters to cooperate in the congregation's development. He urged them to put their ideals into practice, and his advice completed the election process.

THE SISTERS' RESPONSE TO THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: THE 1973 HANDBOOK

The Intermingling of the Traditions and the Sisters' Evolution

The Precious Blood Sisters studied and responded to the changes instituted by Vatican II during three assemblies: the Special Chapter of 1969, the Twelfth General Chapter of 1970, and the Thirteenth General Chapter of 1973. After the conclusion of the Thirteenth General Chapter, the sisters published *Yesu Baoxue nüxiubui xiunnü shouce* (*The Handbook of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood*) in 1973 (in Chinese; hereafter called the 1973 Handbook).⁴¹ The 1973 Handbook was a revised edition of the decisions of the Thirteenth General Chapter of the Precious Blood Sisters, and it explained in detail the sisters' understanding of the Gospel, the profession, community life, the importance of prayer, and their service in direct evangelization, education, medical care, and social welfare.

The foreword of the 1973 Handbook said that the sisters, who received their calling from God and were willing to dedicate themselves to the very many people of the Church, had openly declared to live a community life under a "new and special name" in the spirit of the Good News.⁴² More importantly, the Handbook stated that the sisters' community life,

achieved through the profession of the three vows, was not the purpose of their dedication but rather the means to achieve their true purpose, following Jesus Christ.⁴³ As the sisters dedicated themselves to following Christ, their life in the Church grew richer and their service became increasingly multifaceted—developments noted on the first page of the foreword. Simultaneously, the Handbook stressed that each individual sister in the congregation must continuously seek self-improvement to realize her life of dedication.⁴⁴ Here, the emphasis was on “reforming and renewing oneself” and as the present author argues, such was the sisters’ basic response to Vatican II. They knew that they had to evolve with the times and the circumstances.

As their history shows, the Precious Blood Sisters inherited and continued the old traditions of nurturing a special devotion to Christ. Thus, the 1973 Handbook stated that although the sisters were in a constant state of renewal, they must also always abide by their vows so that their thoughts and actions pointed to a singular purpose: that is, becoming a witness of Christ in this world and, in particular, a witness of the poverty in society (also noted on the first page of the foreword).⁴⁵ This was specific to the spirit of the Precious Blood Sisters. The Handbook asked the sisters to share their knowledge, skills, blessings, and material possessions with everyone in the community, and “to live in the world but not to follow the materialistic world in their own spirituality” (“*huoyushi er bushuyushi*”).⁴⁶

The foreword included three quotations. The first was “Every member of a congregation should focus on finding God through observation and meditation above all other things, to unite in mind and spirit with God, to join together for salvation through the love of oneself as the apostle and to work toward the heavenly kingdom.”⁴⁷ The second was “The priority of the sisters was to worship God above all other things.”⁴⁸ Third, the sisters had “to live the life of Christ in God to the best of their ability.”⁴⁹

The 1973 Handbook identified the sisters’ duty, which was to celebrate the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. The sisters served as the witness of life for God through spreading the Good News; serving the people; poverty, chastity, and obedience; and the freedom and joy of living as God’s children.⁵⁰ Having reflected on Vatican II, the sisters felt that they should build on the spirit of their foundress, Sr. Clara Tam. They believed that every congregation had something special, a charism, to contribute to the Catholic Church. To uphold their specific charism, the Precious Blood Sisters strove to be loyal to the spirit and purpose of their foundress, to retain the wholeness of their traditions, and to preserve the congregation’s heritage.⁵¹

*Particular Emphasis on Community Life and the Importance
of Conversation Within the Community*

The Precious Blood Sisters emphasized community life.⁵² They said that the congregation engaged in missionary work, and thus, they should promote and nurture community life because it was only through cooperation, unity, and loving relationships that they could enhance the effectiveness of their work.⁵³ The community had sisters of different ages, personalities, educational standards, and family backgrounds. Nevertheless, the sisters stressed that they had already become one under Christ, and that there should be no ranks among them.⁵⁴ They championed coordination within the community, balanced by each individual sister's needs.

Reflecting on the development of the Church, the sisters recognized a growing emphasis on conversation. According to the sisters, there must be faith and love behind each conversation as all those involved must listen to one another to understand God's messages and establish a close bond.⁵⁵ To achieve this, the sisters held talks in the convent to facilitate unity and mutual support among themselves. They acknowledged the importance of purpose, preparation, acceptance, and respect for each other's differences—both strengths and weaknesses.⁵⁶ Their efforts led to many practical and constructive results. In addition to the group discussions, the sisters believed that communication at the individual level, especially between a superior and a sister, was vital. The sisters were encouraged to talk to their superiors and enhance the understanding between the leadership and the rest of the community as a way of fostering cooperation among the members of the congregation.⁵⁷ The superiors led the congregation, and thus were required to arrange regular meetings within the community not only to build congeniality, but more importantly to instill the trust, sincerity, and guidance needed to promote communication between the sisters of separate convents or houses.⁵⁸

There were some concrete guidelines for how the sisters were to enrich their community life and conversations among themselves. First, they must realize that it was through conversation that they established confidence in one another and understood and accepted different opinions.⁵⁹ Second, they should read more books on the cultivation of personality and psychology and learn the necessary social skills to enhance communication within the community.⁶⁰ Third, the congregation should provide the sisters, including the superiors, with more opportunities for mutual consultation. Fourth, the sisters should make use of the superiors' advice

and regular talks to deepen the identity of their own community. It is worth noting that there was a consensus among the sisters that community life and conversation went hand in hand, and their emphasis on the willingness to listen, to express oneself, and to engage in conversation was a response to Hong Kong's increasingly complicated society. The colony was home to rising social issues and greater demands from the locals. The times were changing.

Modification of the Religious Habit

Shortly after Vatican II, the Precious Blood Sisters changed their habit to make it more convenient for their work in the localities. It was not the first time that they had modified their habit. Initially, in 1922, when they left the Canossian Sisters' convent, they were wearing the same black habit with a simple veil and a large medal featuring the crucified Christ on one side and Our Lady of Sorrows on the other. Then, in July 1947, the sisters altered their habit for the first time. It was a simple switch of color. They wore a white habit in summer and a black one in winter, but with the same medal. In December 1956, all of the sisters stopped wearing the medal and instead wore a large silver crucifix. In 1964, sisters who had professed perpetual vows wore a silver ring on the right ring finger. The sisters began wearing a modified habit after the Special Chapter in 1969, and by 1970, they all wore the modified habit.

As every change required a period of experimentation, the sisters took a year (from 1969 to 1970) to switch to the modified habit. The 1973 Handbook contained a detailed description of the modified habit in response to the call for greater service to society in Vatican II. The Handbook wrote that Vatican II asked that the sisters' habit be a symbol of their dedication to God—simple, plain, and appropriate. More importantly, Vatican II stated that the sisters should be able to fulfill their tasks and adjust to the needs of the place and the time while wearing the habit.⁶¹ Thus, the sisters believed that the habit should be decent, uniform, clean and tidy in accordance with the Church's instruction and the status of their service in society. The 1973 Handbook outlined that postulants could choose to wear simple, plain clothes. Novices wore a simple modified habit that was very much like that worn by the professed sisters.⁶²

The sisters' habit was of a standard form.⁶³ First, its hem was 9–12 inches from the ground. Second, the top of the habit featured symmetrical folding while the bottom, below the waist, folded four times in the front

and four times in the back. Third, the sleeves of the white habit were 2 inches from the wrists, whereas those of the black habit were longer. The sleeves were 5 to 6 inches wide. Fourth, the veil reached the waist and the headpiece was a simple arched shape with a ¼-inch white margin. Fifth, the sisters wore plain socks and black shoes, except the sister-nurses, who wore white shoes. Finally, their overcoats were to be the same color as their habit. This modified version suited Hong Kong's weather and humidity and facilitated the sisters' work.

The Significance of Prayer

The Precious Blood Sisters were devoted to the cultivation of their inner strength through prayer.⁶⁴ The types of prayer were ceremonial (the most significant), communal, and personal.⁶⁵ It was through prayer that the sisters experienced renewal. The ceremonial prayers included those said in Mass, the sacraments, and the daily readings.⁶⁶ The sisters had special hours devoted to the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament—their most treasured and honored tradition.⁶⁷ For communal prayer, the sisters had regular schedules. There were gatherings for Bible study and shared prayer in every convent to strengthen the sisters' bonds.⁶⁸ The entire community of sisters also had an annual retreat, and the sisters in each convent had a monthly retreat.⁶⁹ In addition, the sisters had times for meditation to cultivate their spirituality.

The sisters emphasized prayer in their daily lives.⁷⁰ On a personal basis, they studied the daily Bible and understood the meanings through practice.⁷¹ Every day, the sisters prayed the Rosary together or alone. During the monthly retreat, the sisters studied the history of the congregation to better understand the spirit of their foundress. It was also during the monthly retreat that they contemplated how to put their ideas into use in daily life despite a changing society. In addition, the sisters spent time meditating in accordance with their personal needs.

The 1973 Handbook stated that renewal involved a change in outlook to adjust to the dramatic changes in society.⁷² The challenge was how to change without destroying the current way of life within the Church. What did it mean to adjust to the circumstances? How could they respond to people's demands without abandoning the congregation's inherent characteristics? The sisters needed an in-depth understanding of the trends in world situations, and they recognized the vital importance of prayer in their future pursuits.

The Warnings of the Foundress, Sr. Clara Tam

Despite the changes that resulted from Vatican II, the sisters held onto their own history and the wisdom of Sr. Clara to create new concepts based on past teachings. The 1973 Handbook listed the warnings of Sr. Clara, and there were quite a few of them.⁷³ Sr. Clara had warned that the congregation would lose its vitality if certain malpractices and mistakes occurred, such as the sisters losing heart in prayer or becoming so preoccupied with the company of their relatives and friends that they neglected their own spiritual growth.⁷⁴ There was also the temptation of life's luxuries. Sr. Clara warned that the sisters could not cultivate their spirituality if they had difficulty observing quiet for self-reflection or if they refused to obey the orders of the superiors. She also spoke against the superiors lacking compassion for the other sisters, and advised the novices to guard against the loss of motivation in their own formation. Sr. Clara warned against factionalism, disputes, arrogance in community life, gossiping about others, having ill feelings against others, making decisions without consulting others, and showing off within the community.⁷⁵

Apostolic Work

The 1973 Handbook stated that the spread of the Gospel was the Catholic Church's sole mission,⁷⁶ through which the Church made its presence in the human world; otherwise, it failed to exist. Accordingly, the Handbook warned against any member of the Church considering this mission an occupation by which to earn a livelihood or an optional task.⁷⁷ Instead, the sisters were expected to see it as the fundamental mission of a Christian or even their entire Church—the origin of the Church's life, reality, and appearance.⁷⁸ The Precious Blood Sisters believed that the mission reflected the true image of the congregation, and as such it was Sr. Clara's original reason for establishing the congregation. The sisters always remembered their own mission and carried on in the spirit of their foundress through their dedication to religious life amid their reflection on the current changing circumstances.⁷⁹

The sisters understood the intimate relationship between dedication to religious life and the spread of the Gospel.⁸⁰ The 1973 Handbook stated that dedication to community life was a means of spreading the Good News to the people. Thus, all of the sisters knew that their work had great

significance and value, in that their methods and attitudes corresponded with the mission to spread the Gospel. In addition, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood belonged to and shared close ties with the Diocese of Hong Kong, and the former fulfilled the developments and needs of the latter in the most comprehensive manner.⁸¹ It is worth noting that the Handbook stated that the sisters' work should be balanced in its entirety to promote the spirit of the Universal Catholic Church, and that their work should not be confined to Hong Kong.⁸² They had four areas of work: evangelization, education, medical care, and social work.

Preaching the Good News

The 1973 Handbook highlighted two aspects of the sisters' missionary work: direct evangelization and the indirect preaching of the Good News.⁸³ Regarding direct evangelization, the sisters had to retain the spirit of their missionary work, to spread the Good News in accordance with the characteristics of their congregation and the existing situations so that they could exert the most influence on the locals.⁸⁴ To achieve their missionary work, the sisters advanced their own learning in the most comprehensive and satisfactory manner. They built their character and spirituality along with their expertise, knowledge, and skills. The Handbook listed the modes of formation. The sisters could go abroad for further study, attend classes and seminars on catechesis and theology, and register for related university programs, take courses in psychology and physiology, acquire professional skills, learn how to communicate with local people and understand their real concerns, and be willing to cooperate with local administrators with regard to their work.⁸⁵ These emphases on the acquisition of professional education and cooperation with the lay authorities in the missionary work were direct responses to Vatican II. Nevertheless, the Chinese sisters were engaging in such endeavors to some extent before Vatican II, and their efforts were in line with the practical considerations of Vatican II later in the 1960s.

Education in Their Schools

In addition to evangelization work, the sisters continued their educational pursuits. They recognized that education was of prime importance to the ever-changing world. Hong Kong society was rapidly progressing and its

youth needed to equip themselves with the skills to face the challenges. The sisters focused on certain tasks.⁸⁶ They retained the tradition of attending to poor children, to give them the chance to receive an education. So their schools offered subsidies to students who required financial support. The principals were told to accept as many children as possible from needy families.⁸⁷

Through education, the sisters explained the Bible to the students, and while the sisters taught the doctrine, they also stressed the importance of stimulating the students in thought and in life. In school, the sisters separated the Catholic and non-Catholic students to enhance the faith of the former and encourage them to participate more in the Church and parish activities, and to prepare the latter to study the Bible.⁸⁸ It was suggested that there should be counseling centers in the schools if possible, supervised by the sisters, experienced teachers, or social workers. In addition, the sisters considered home visits a priority in their educational work.⁸⁹ They believed that it was necessary to establish good connections with the students' parents and to help facilitate the education offered by the schools.

Medical Services

The sisters had been providing medical services for a long time. The 1973 Handbook stated that the work was an imitation of Christ healing the sick,⁹⁰ but it clarified that the Church was not a medical institution, but rather evidence of the love of Christ in the human world. The Church catered to the needs of all people, regardless of their status, wealth, rank, or power. The Precious Blood Sisters understood that they followed in Christ's footsteps. This was their tradition, their belief and one of their fundamental characteristics. In the Chinese environment, the sisters emphasized the ethical value of society; that is, paying special attention to the sick and their families.⁹¹ With this in mind, they offered service at very low prices that most people could afford, and they were a non-profit community. The sisters employed lay staff, nurses, doctors, and others. In the 1970s, they maintained their service in the form of a well-structured organization, with planning and executive committees.⁹² In recognition of the lay staff's contribution to the Church, the sisters devoted time for sharing and gathering with the hospital staff,⁹³ in addition to providing further training.

Social Services

The sisters believed that they should be leading people toward Christ by making a difference in society.⁹⁴ They worked in the lower-class neighborhoods for the children of problematic families, providing comprehensive services that included character-building, physical and psychological well-being, and hygiene. At that time, the sisters made sure that the children in their custody received an education, and they continued to have contact with the girls even after they left the homes.⁹⁵ The girls' homes and nurseries had structured management, finance, and social services. The sisters ensured that the employees had the relevant expertise and professional knowledge. In this way the sisters continued their good work, enriching their service with the trust of the lay people, which Vatican II highlighted and encouraged.

THE YEARS BEYOND

Emphasis on Service Outside the Congregational Establishment

In 1977, the sisters created a simpler revised attachment to the 1973 Handbook. It was entitled *Yesu Baoxue nüxiuhui xiunü shouce bubian* (*The Revised Attachment to the Handbook of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood*).⁹⁶ It asserted that the community was united for the same purpose.⁹⁷ The sisters relied on their community life and solidarity to continue serving the local people. Moreover, they upheld the spirit of sacrifice displayed by Christ, stressing love and understanding within the community, and loyalty to and responsibility for their work. Their service was a constant reminder of their devotion to community life, and the constitutions and handbook guided them. In addition to prayer, the sisters read and studied the constitutions and the handbook daily, sharing their thoughts and reflections.⁹⁸ The ultimate purpose was to uphold the spirit of Christ, with a particular emphasis on the interrelationship between religious life and the apostles' tasks.

According to the sisters, the inherent nature of religious life included all kinds of charitable tasks, welfare services, and missionary work, which the Church had delegated to the congregation and the congregation had committed under its name.⁹⁹ Thus, the sisters embraced the apostolic spirit so that their work fulfilled the congregation's mission.¹⁰⁰ The 1970s required a response to the pressing needs of society and the world.¹⁰¹

Since Vatican II, the sisters could work in institutions both inside and outside their congregation, but there were some guidelines. First, the sisters were expected to constantly reflect on and improve their work to increase the congregation's cohesion and witness the Good News. Second, they were asked to increase their pastoral work in the parishes and in the diocese. Third, they had to prioritize their apostolic works and serve the people with sincerity. Fourth, they should focus on the needs of the poor, and they themselves were to live lives of poverty. Fifth, they must consider their individual motivations, knowledge, and skills before engaging in new endeavors. After Vatican II, the sisters established small communities in various localities to carry out new tasks.¹⁰² The emphases were on serving those in need and reaching out beyond their own congregational establishments.

Reflecting on the Formation and Renewal of the Sisters

The congregation's growth did not depend on the number of its members, but rather on their spirituality.¹⁰³ Thus, the sisters' formation was a significant part of their dedicated lives. It is worth noting that the sisters' formation and renewal, whether spiritual or academic, were instrumental to the fulfillment of their mission.¹⁰⁴ There was also an emphasis on academic advancement. The sisters embraced the aims of enhancing their qualifications, developing their own potential, and more effectively catering to the demands of the time. In this way, the congregation would be united as a whole and contributing to the Church.

A detailed and systematic plan for the formation of the novices and the sisters was further developed.¹⁰⁵ It was of utmost importance to form a group of instructors with the superior general as the leader. The superiors of the convents led their sisters to a life of perfection, and thus the former belonged to the group. There were various stages in the formation of the sisters that required the coordination and planning of the superiors. The instructors simultaneously equipped themselves with new knowledge and skills. While the sisters were in their temporary profession, they were under the guidance of the relevant instructors.¹⁰⁶

In 1977, the revised attachment paid particular attention to the permanently professed sisters.¹⁰⁷ After having taken their final vows, the sisters announced their life-long devotion to God. There was some concrete advice on fostering the holistic development of the sisters. First, there should be a spiritual director to help the sisters attain a wholesome prayer

life before final profession. Second, the Precious Blood Sisters themselves should guide their fellow sisters throughout the preparation for final profession. During the process of preparation, the sisters engaged in minor tasks with minimal emotional attachment.¹⁰⁸ They reflected on their religious life, the constitutions, and the sisters' handbook and studied and shared their thoughts on the Biblical readings and the Church documents. Then, the sisters moved on to deeper contemplative prayer. Those sisters who had made their final profession at least ten years before had one full year of renewal, designated to focus on the enhancement of their congregational spirit, spirituality, and vocational training. It was a time for refreshing the mind and spirit.¹⁰⁹

The Precious Blood Sisters regarded their traditional values as the spirit and guiding principle of the congregation,¹¹⁰ a fact that was repeatedly emphasized in their constitutions and handbooks. During formation and renewal, the sisters were reminded to follow closely the constitutions and handbooks, which passed on the traditions of the Precious Blood Sisters from one generation to another. The respect for each one's unique characteristics was of crucial significance in that it guided their apostolic spirit, which was revealed in their religious life and apostolic work.¹¹¹ From the sisters' perspectives, their religious lives and apostolic works were mutually reinforcing. Religious life demanded the cultivation of one's spirituality while apostolic work involved serving others. The sisters could only spread the Good News through their religious lives and their apostolic work, and while they had to adapt to the existing situations, the success of their work depended mainly on their spirituality. That was the lesson of the revised attachment of 1977.

Attitude Toward Further Study

Given the rapid changes in the contemporary world, the sisters needed to increase their learning in both spirituality and practical skills to promote their work.¹¹² Since Vatican II, the sisters had engaged further in advanced education both locally and abroad. The congregation maintained close connections with the sisters in study, especially those who went overseas. There was an emphasis on these sisters' learning objectives and mission to ensure that their knowledge and spiritually were compatible.¹¹³ There was also an arrangement that the sisters in the same region maintain contact with each other during the period of study, and the sisters in study shared their learning with the community whenever possible.¹¹⁴

The Precious Blood Sisters highlighted the importance of learning about China's traditions, Chinese culture, and traditional virtues to foster their spirituality and promote the indigenization of Christianity in Chinese society. Christianity and Chinese culture and values informed the sisters' spirituality and they learned about the necessity of holistic personal development. That was the key message in the post-Vatican II period, a repeated focus on the cultivation of the inner self and the understanding of the outside world.

The Congregation as a Religious Body

The Precious Blood Sisters stressed that the congregation was a religious body, with members who were dedicated to the eternal ideals and aims and living for their mission under the direction of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁵ The administrative structures and management systems were the means to supporting the sisters in fulfilling their ideals. The success of the sisters' mission was measured by the effectiveness of the congregation's administration and management. The sisters, in their General Chapters, elected the superior general and the council, which ensured that all of the sisters had the right to choose the candidates for those positions.¹¹⁶ This solicited the widest opinion and confirmed representative leadership. Those elected in turn vowed to serve to the best of their ability.

Under the superior general and the council, there were six administrative subgroups that were supposed to be mutually connected and supportive. These subgroups took care of the external administration, the internal administration, the cultivation of the sisters, the personal relations, apostolic work, and finance.¹¹⁷ The external administration paid close attention to the activities of the Church, the diocese, other societies and congregations, and world affairs. The sisters sent representatives to external meetings, issued letters for outside reading, and made announcements when necessary.¹¹⁸ The congregation had to maintain ties with other Church bodies. The internal administration oversaw the sisters' lives, discipline, wellbeing, spirituality, internal communication, and the superiors' meetings. This subgroup looked into every matter within the congregation.

The subgroup that promoted the cultivation of the sisters oversaw matters of personality, spirituality, knowledge, skills, and professional training. It arranged activities designed to enhance the sisters' spiritual lives and monitored the instructors for the sisters' formation.¹¹⁹ Another subgroup handled the personal relations among the sisters, paying

careful attention to and supporting each individual sister while maintaining confidentiality.¹²⁰

The subgroup for apostolic work identified the sisters' objectives, direction, and operation thereby enabling them to fulfill their mission of spreading the Good News. The congregation monitored and supervised the sisters' apostolic work, in accordance with the congregation's priorities, the personnel involved, and the material needs. This subgroup was responsible for contacting outside organizations.¹²¹ Finally, the subgroup for finance handled the congregation's financial reports.

This well structured organization was meant to help the sisters respond to the changes brought forth by Vatican II, as they expanded the dimensions of their work both inside and outside their congregation with an eye toward further expansion. They maintained their Chinese culture and values and embraced the traditions and spirit of their foundress—fully responding to the call of Vatican II.

CONCLUSION

Today the Precious Blood Sisters serve societies in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and mainland China. They take pride in themselves as an exclusively Chinese congregation and support their mission by following the counsel of their bishops and attending to orphans and other children, the sick and the poor.

Having gained independence from humble beginnings, the Chinese sisters took every opportunity to sustain their livelihood and that of the congregation. That was why many of them responded to the bishops' directives and conducted evangelization work in faraway areas in Guangdong Province, instructing women and children in the early decades of the twentieth century. Eventually, the outbreak of the Second World War impeded the sisters' mission in the interior of Guangdong and removed them from any contact with the Motherhouse in Shamshuipo, Kowloon Peninsula. The war years were a test of their faith, perseverance, and courage.

The earliest generation of the Precious Blood Sisters came from Catholic families in Macau, with the Tams being the most prominent. Their religious upbringing fostered their spirituality and vocation to lead religious lives. Throughout their history, the sisters emphasized humility and self-sacrifice, which were characteristic of the Chinese traditional culture and nationalism in the modern era. From the sisters' perspective, there was no incompatibility between Christianity and Chinese values. Rather, their belief in Christ

and virtue of obedience enabled them to contribute to the mission of the Hong Kong Catholic Church. The Chinese sisters made grassroots connections among the women and children in Guangdong's villages. Together with their fellow Chinese, the sisters struggled to survive in harsh circumstances, labored to make a living, and kept up their spirits despite an unforeseeable future. The Precious Blood Sisters were a part of the Hong Kong Church, which belonged to the Universal Catholic Church.

When studying the Chinese Catholic Church in the first half of the twentieth century, historians tend to rely on the archives kept by foreign missionaries, which contain little data on the average Chinese converts; namely, society's poorest members. This book uses the Chinese-language materials of the Precious Blood Sisters' archives in Hong Kong. Their writings, records and statistics are extremely rare, which makes them priceless sources of Chinese women's perceptions of the foreign missionaries, the endeavors of the Catholic mission, and the relations between the Chinese and the foreigners. The Congregation of the Precious Blood Sisters has provided historians with insights into the mentality of the Chinese Catholics in the modern Chinese Catholic Church.

The Precious Blood Sisters' history is closely linked to the development of the Hong Kong Mission and the Universal Catholic Church. The decision to grant the sisters' independence was made by Bishop Pozzoni, who paid strict attention to Pope Benedict XV's apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* calling for the indigenization of the Chinese Catholic Church in 1919. Nevertheless, this was not a one-way communication from Rome to the local missionaries. Wishing to expand the mission fields in China, the Pope recognized the importance of upgrading the status of Chinese priests, in addition to founding local congregations of Chinese sisters. The process had been circular, with Rome making its demands of the foreign Catholic orders, which sent out their missionaries to China. The foreign priests established parishes in the localities and then asked for sisters to go to the mission fields to pursue evangelization with the Chinese women and children. In the early twentieth century, the China Mission's enormous potential, demonstrated by the achievements in the localities, inspired the Pope to advocate and push for the indigenization of the Chinese Catholic Church. It was a circular process, with constant communication between Rome and the local churches in China. Together, Rome, the China Mission, and the Hong Kong Mission evolved through the decades, responding to the changes on the mainland and modern China's historical development. Evolution was constant and wide reaching.

In studying the sisters, this book highlights the evolution of the Universal Catholic Church. Although the foreign missionaries' initial goal was the evangelization of the Chinese, they realized that it was they, themselves, who were being evangelized through their work in Chinese society as they got to know the Chinese people, learned the Chinese traditions, customs and culture. The Precious Blood Sisters were a source of evangelization for the foreign missionaries, who came to toil with them for the Hong Kong Mission.

The Congregation of the Precious Blood Sisters was a succinct model of the formation of local congregations of Chinese nuns. They set the model for the Chinese Catholic Church after China's opening to the world in the 1980s. They continued to live out their vocation after the New China in 1949, and followed the changes of Vatican II through the 1970s. They have carefully preserved the history of their evangelization apostolate in Hong Kong and mainland China since the 1920s, and used what they learned in later endeavors. They continued to contribute to the indigenization of the Chinese Catholic Church through their presence in Hong Kong during the harsh circumstances of the refugee decades of the 1950s and 1960s. In the early years of the twenty-first century, the Precious Blood Sisters traveled to the mainland and assisted with the formation of additional congregations of nuns. They adjusted to Vatican II, and their experience provided their counterparts on the mainland with insightful recommendations and support.

By studying this indigenous congregation in Hong Kong, this book illustrates the evolution of the Chinese Catholic Church and of the Universal Church in the twentieth century. It further details the formation and growth of native sisters. The Hong Kong Mission is an indispensable part of the history of the Chinese Catholic Church.

NOTES

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29. “The Third Term of the Superior General, Sr. Katherine Lui” (July 29, 1970–July 29, 1973), written by Sr. Lui, n.d., p. 8, History of the Congregation, Box 1.11, SPBA.
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64. The 1973 Handbook, "The Inner Motivation—Prayer," pp. 24–32.
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71. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
72. The 1973 Handbook, "Conclusion," p. 32.
73. The 1973 Handbook, "Appendix," pp. 33–34.
74. *Ibid.*, pp. 33.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.
76. The 1973 Handbook, "The Apostolic Work," p. 39.
77. *Ibid.*
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81. *Ibid.*
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83. The 1973 Handbook, "The Apostolic Work," p. 42.
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89. The 1973 Handbook, "The Apostolic Work," p. 51.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
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