

The President's message

From my heart to yours...

We just received news that we will be getting into Singapore's second phase of reopening the Circuit Breaker (our local term for lockdown). This is when most retailers re-open and our photocopying vendor will begin operation. Yes, there are still members who are not online, waiting to receive this by post!

The past half year had us experiencing an unprecedented time in history. We were bombarded with images both nasty and nice from all over the world – sanitizers, masks, hospitals, coffins, overgrown shrubs, quiet streets, singing in balconies and glorious skies with rainbows. Many had mixed feeling about the lockdown – the introverts loved it, while extroverts hated it. Digital entrepreneurs grew their businesses, and as many brick and mortar firms wound up. Talk about disruption!

With the pandemic came the advent of a new way of life for us Singaporeans (and a slew of acronyms). Starting with CB, April 7 - where people WFH and students do HBL; SHN and LOA gets issued for those returning from travel. If you are a worker, you'll get classified and labelled "essential" or not. We "Zoom" all over for meetings, training, and drinks. Many new talents emerged as 'circuit-bakers' and sewing machines find new purpose as sidekicks of 'masks-crusaders'.

At the CAA, particularly in our Canossian United Facebook group, the Covid lockdown has driven our Alumnae from all over the world to show up as people with big and loving hearts. From virtual reunions to a group of netballers doing a planking challenge to raise funds for Canossaville - our girls have demonstrated that their fun initiatives on social media can make a difference to needy. For the very first time, too, CAA held an inter-religious prayer on the 4th April at 4pm.

We cannot deny a new way of life happening and many things will not be the same. But one thing will never change – the spirit of the Canossian student and their Heart for the poor. Looks like in this new normal, we would be seeing a lot more hearts popping up over virtual initiatives all over the Canossian world!

Via Veritas Vita



Objectives of the Canossian Alumni Association

i) to strengthen the network of former students of the Canossian schools and to develop a true spirit of loyalty and love for the Alma Mater.

ii) to be a channel of collaboration between the former students, the Canossian schools and the society at large.

Executive Committee

President : Veronica Tan

Vice President : Joan Teo Li Sian

Secretary : Jeraldine Lee

Asst Secretary : Frances Wong

Treasurer : Cecilia Nathen

Asst Treasurer : Martina Wong

Committee Members :

Nazhath Faheema

Janelene Leong

Jasmine Soh

Martha Fernandez

Sylvia Chua

Spiritual Director

Sr Louisa Lim

Sr Lily Tan – From Cross to Courage



Sr Lily Tan found that sitting with a dying person could teach us more lessons than books could give and heal us better than many treatments can. For the very first time, she shares her journey as a student, teacher, and a religious Sister within the Canossian walls and how it changed her from being a fearful person to someone with much peace, joy and inner freedom.

Sr Lily recollects her mother telling her that Japanese bombs were going off on the day she was born – in year 1943 –

smack in the middle of the World War II. She grew up as a timid and fearful child impacted much by the trauma of those dark days.

“As a child I feared many things – perhaps traumatized in a way. Scared of loud noises, death, etc. I was very timid. I remember in Primary One, I would cry at school, but was always comforted by very caring teachers – and that was when I really felt assured and loved.”

School was St Anthony's Convent in Middle Road where she studied till she completed her 'O' Levels – with Sr Calista as her classmate. As a student, she would join the Catechism classes

every Friday after school conducted by Mother Theresa Spadoni, an Italian nun,

whose Catechism classes were open to everyone. There, they learned about God, Jesus, Mary, the Sacraments and the gift of peace. Mother Bruna would also conduct retreats for the girls once a year. Sr Lily also vividly recalls seeing Sr Virginia giving food to the poor. “I was very touched by what she did and wanted to also reach out to the poor – that made me choose this vocation to be a nun.”

At 15, she asked to be baptized and at 19, she made her choice to join the Canossian Daughters of Charity as a Religious Sister. She had to leave for Australia for her postulancy and novice training. Her parents gave

her their blessings and had to raised money for her airfare there – \$600 for a one-way ticket - back in 1962.

Upon her return from Australia, she was sent to the Teachers' Training College with the late Sr Winnie Tan, Sr Bridget Foo and Sr Marie de Rosa, where they spent three years in a 'half day study and half day teach' arrangement. She spent a total of 6 years teaching in SACPS and 8 years in CCPS in the 70s as a teacher, respectively.

After leaving the teaching profession, she went to Rome to study Theology and Formation and came back to see to the training and development of postulants and novices alongside Sr Marilyn Lim at Joyville and at Jalan Merbok. The next two decades after that were spent doing clinical pastoral work and ministering at various hospitals and at St Joseph's Home and Hospice.

In Clinical Pastoral Care, I had to learn to sit beside a terminally ill and dying patient, hold their hand and just be present. It is not easy when one is full of fear. But it was very healing, very profound learning. Overcoming fear through stillness.

Today, Sr Lily spends her time conducting retreats and doing spiritual direction at Lifesprings Spirituality Centre. She is also the local leader at the Canossian Convent in Jurong where she sees to the running of the Convent, the retreat house co-ordinating activities and does a once a week formation for the 12 sisters living there.

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SACSS Teacher, Mrs Magdalene Lim – Giving her 'heART' to others

Students fondly recall her copper-tooling classes, still-life drawing sessions and sewing embroidery projects to submit for their 'O' level exams, and many credited their love for art and craft to her lessons in school. Today, at 82, she is still busy working on her passion and preparing to launch a series of books with her post-retirement art works.

Mrs Magdalene Lim needs almost no introduction – because like many other long service Canossian educators, she's an icon in the Art department.

She started teaching at SACSS in 1957 and left in 2005. The following year, she joined Whitley Secondary School, which was much closer to her home, where she taught for another 13 years until 2018.

As I chatted with her for this article, I asked (quite hesitantly) if she had known she had a nickname at SAC "I know! 'Grasshopper!' I was always wearing green. For four out of five days in a week I'd be in green – so that's how the name stuck!" this grandmother of five, laughingly offered the explanation.

After 6 decades of teaching, Mrs Lim is now retired but continues her passion in creative pursuits – such as cooking, baking, drawing and colouring. She has lately been kept busy over the Christmas and Chinese New Year period - whipping up many of her delicacies like achar, kueh pie-tee, pineapple tarts and Sugi cakes - in between hosting family and friends with her spread of delicious cuisine.



Mrs Lim hosting lunch with a few of her former students of the 1980s and Mdm Kate Wong.

Recounting the joys of her SAC days "My memories of SAC are the selfless ways the Sisters helped the students and everyone working in the school." As a

teacher in Whitley Secondary School, she had boys doing embroidery as their art project – "Surprisingly they enjoyed it and got very good results!" Mrs Lim declared, beaming with much pride and joy.



In the past few years, Mrs Lim has been creating pieces of artwork in her spare time. Some of her creations hang along the corridors of St Joseph's Home. When the schools in the Bishan district were invited to contribute artworks for their constituency, her drawings of Bishan Park, rendered in black fine-line markers, were displayed proudly at the Bishan Community Club.

Having taught in SAC, I've learned to be humble, compassionate and treat every student as I would treat my own children, and to respect everyone as God's children. My motto has been to "Do unto others as you wish to be done to you."

Having left full time teaching for two years she misses teaching. In April, CAA had planned for a workshop to re-live the days of art and craft classes all over again, however due to the Covid, it had to be cancelled.

To keep herself occupied and her mind alert, Mrs Lim has been making rosaries and regularly does zentangle - a meditative artform creating structural patterns. She believes that drawing repeated patterns mindfully and engaging her hands deftly stringing beads and twisting wires can slow down mental deterioration. She is also working on publishing her works into colouring and activity books to promote mindfulness and enhance mental health and hopes to raise funds for causes with them. ✦ VT

SACSS Teacher, Madam Kathleen Wong – Value-added relationships



Recalling the fifteen years she spent at SACSS, Madam Kathleen Wong found that apart from giving of herself as a teacher, it was equally empowering for her to be on the receiving end of the many relationships she has built ~ meaningful, cherished and much valued .

Mdm Kate Wong was teaching at a government school when she got to know Sr Margaret Syn on a personal basis. She expressed her desire to teach at a Catholic school as she felt the need to find an environment where she could anchor her

faith, having gone through a rough patch then. In 1991, an opportunity presented and Mdm Wong was offered a teaching position at SACSS where she taught English, Literature, Drama and Religious Education.

I knew at the back of my mind that I needed a spiritual sanctuary - and in SACSS, I found that space where I was much supported.

“There is a deeper spiritual dimension at SAC; and it was visible. At assembly time we see the whole school in prayers, the teachers will share something of value pertaining to our virtues and charism. The many



celebrations and feast days were also significant. Educators had learning journeys and annual staff residential seminars for colleagues to bond.” Through these activities, Mdm Wong has forged lifelong friendships that lasts till today.

As a teacher, Mdm Wong made the effort to take her girls for excursions and trips to museums. She would give Swensen's ice cream treats to those who did well for English tests and hold barbecue parties at her house on Teachers' Day every year.

Conferencing was something form teachers did, and that was where Mdm Wong felt she could get to know individual students better and be aware of those needing more attention, emotional support and love. To Mdm Wong, these were moments where she could really make a difference.



When asked about the proudest moments as a teacher she recalls many occasions, and among them was SACSS achieving 100% pass for English in the O and N level exams for a few years running, in the early 2000s.

The incident that takes the cake for her was at a Sec 4 graduation ceremony, where one of her form students took to the stage. This girl wasn't the regular goody-two shoes, but she gave a speech which left Mdm Wong dumbstruck.

She was one of those 'naughty' girls who was making trouble for every teacher she had! Angry, boisterous, and attention seeking – My tears just couldn't stop flowing when she thanked me in front of the whole school. That one was really my come-back kid!

Today, Mdm Wong still stays in touch and gets updated with many of her former students via Facebook. She says seeing them living good lives with meaningful careers makes her swell with gratitude and pride.✦



SAC Alumnae, Abigail Kathleen Yeo – Belief, the lifeblood for growth



There are unsung heroes in our midst everyday – we seldom see them around, much less think about them. Alumnae Abigail Kathleen Yeo works

in the medical profession – and what she does behind the scene is usually taken for granted.

As news of the COVID 19 spread across the world, we see pictures of tired health care workers slumped along corridors, doctors who had not slept for days, nurses running through wards pushing, cleaning and in-tubing infected patients. We realize it is a tough job and appreciate them. But little do we see the people at the back of the scene with tubes of blood samples – going through a higher volume than usual during this time – at a more rapid speed – testing blood (for illnesses other Covid). That's the job of a medical technologist, like Abigail Yeo – an essential service worker.

A grad of 2011, Abigail opted to work in the medical field. "I have always wanted to have a meaningful job that could benefit the society. If I did not join the medical field, I'd have become a teacher!" Talk about having a career inspired by our Mother Foundress!

At the 2019 Career Awareness Day (CAD) at SACPS, she got to realize her other "aspiration" of being a teacher for a day - having to stand in front of 3 classes of Primary 5 girls sharing about her work in a leading hospital.



"Participating in the CAD was my way of giving back to my Alma Mater. I hope to get our girls to better understand the world and jobs that they may not get to see around them. I remind them that with good character, values, diligence and persistence, they can achieve anything!"

Talk about achievements and belief, Abi confessed that having a teacher believe in her and taking a chance at giving her a leadership position allowed her to grow exponentially in terms of character and skills.

"I am very grateful to Mr Jason De Hamel when he chose me as Drum Major for the SAC Concert Band when I was 15. This position entailed heavy responsibilities and I was scared. I was terrified of public speaking and had no leadership experience." But she stepped up and took it on courageously. The lessons and challenges that came along were humbling, encouraging and life changing.



This highly energetic youngster, having to put in rather long hours at the hospital lab, still finds time to rock-climb, sing karaoke, bakes and regularly goes hunting for good food.

On the memories at SAC, Abigail cherishes 14th February every year! "Valentines are never the same after we leave school. Flowers, brownies, chocolates, handwritten notes, hugs, the list goes on and on. It is a day where everyone gets to shower their friends and teachers with lots of love and receive the same in return. It always warms my heart whenever I recall those times!"



Abi with Ms Daisy Tan and Mrs Susan Lopez at Africana, the Canossian Connect Party 2015

To a Millennial like Abi, what makes our education special? "In this day and age, it is very easy for individuals to get caught up with the notion of success – which to me, doesn't necessarily mean earning lots of money. It's about the difference I can make in people's lives and understanding how that difference can always go on to create a ripple effect in the world and make it a better place – Canossian style." ✦

Coffee, Tea and Bake – Binding and Mixing with Generations of SACians

When the CAA started the "Coffee, Tea and Me" series a year ago, baking and cooking had always been something on our list and we saw it fitting to commemorate the feast day of St Bakhita (8th Feb) with a Bake with Bakhita session held in the morning on the 15th February 2020.



The only thing that stopped us from organising a cooking session any earlier was obtaining a cooking studio that wouldn't cost an arm and a leg to rent.

Thanks to SACSS Principal, Ms Fiona Koh, who said yes to us using the SAC Home Econs Classroom. Another bonus was that Mrs Joseph had also agreed to run the session for us.



Nothing could stop us once the wheel started turning - not even the early stages of precautionary measures taken by schools for Covid-19. One Facebook post was all it took for the places to be snapped up within a weekend!

With prayer and full faith, our Exco support team and 22 "girls" turned up at SACSS before 9am, declared our travel history, took our temperatures, and proceeded to the kitchen.

Mrs Joseph was a consummate hostess. Having planned the desserts that we baked that morning, she also made sure we had a hearty marsala tea to warm up our morning. While we regaled at our exploits in the kitchen during our Home-Econs lessons, it turned out that none of the participants had ever cooked in this new kitchen.



They say 'once a teacher, always a teacher'. Even though it wasn't a Home Econs lesson per se, Mrs Joseph prepared Powerpoint slides to take us through the items we were going to prepare; not leaving out even the history of the kueh and social etiquette around eating a scone. Then she proceeded with a demonstration before setting us off to prepare our own Kueh Pisang. We also relived our experiences at baking rock buns, the basic go-to recipe to show the creaming method.



Maybe it was our eagerness when we were younger, we finally learnt why our rock buns were weapons of mass destruction in the past – we had overworked the dough! Finally, with our newfound skill, Mrs Joseph also led us to make sweet and savoury scones.



More than the goodies we got to take home, I think all of us treasured the memories of good times spent creating the everlasting

friendships from school. Ladies from the earliest of Mrs Joseph's classes sharing wisdom with the ladies from her more recent classes warmed all our hearts.

All participants asked for a sequel to this session. Hopefully, after this trying period, we may organise another session, this time led by new 'circuit bakers'?

✦SC



United Virtually in Common Endeavour powered by the Canossian Spirit

The Covid19 Circuit Breaker has allowed CAA to breakthrough and make history like never before and united Canossians from all over the world in a new 'normality' with prayers, reunions, crazy antics and even initiatives to raise funds for Canossaville through virtual and social media. Here are some of the initiatives that made us proud to be Canossians.

UNITED IN PRAYER VIA FACEBOOK LIVE



The 4th of April 2020, 4 pm was a historical moment for me, as I read out a verse from the Quran at the joint virtual prayer organised by Canossian Alumni Association (CAA).

It reminded me of days in St. Anthony's Canossian Secondary School, when non-Catholics, like me, joined the morning prayers by reading my own religious scriptures. SAC, being an Italian mission school founded firmly on Catholic principles, the intention, will and efforts to uphold multi-religious unity are

remarkable. The 444 (our code name for the date and time) joint prayers conducted via Facebook live for the Alumni, is exemplary of this inclusive nature of the Canossian family.

With my grey hijab-headscarf colour matching those of Sr Louisa and Sr Christina, I joined Veronica Tan, the President of CAA, in hosting this online session to pray for the COVID-19 situation. With the hope that God will hear us, we started with a reflection, during which Veronica reminded us about the Canossian "common endeavour" which unites us in such cause for humanity. Following her, I joined in spirit, by reciting a Muslim prayer, asking God to show his mercy on people and ease them of the suffering COVID-19 has brought upon us.

This was followed by prayers led by CAA Spiritual Director Sr Louisa -

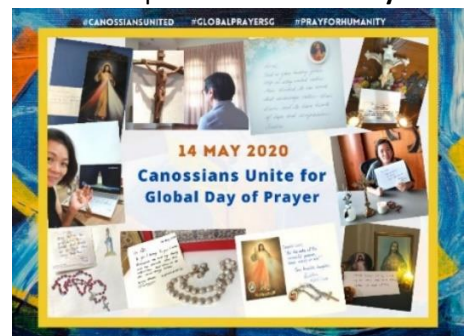
leading with the Lord's Prayer (The Our Father), Hail Mary and the Glory Be for the Catholics & Christians who were with us virtually. We ended the session with a closing prayer specially written by the Mother General, Sr Anna-Maria Babbini, read by Sr Christina Yeo, our Provincial Leader.

With God's grace, the first-ever online joint prayer was well-received by our Alumni. I felt refreshed. The COVID-19 situation stirred a sense of uncertainty and confusion. Praying together with my fellow Canossians not only made us calm but also made me feel integrated with a strong-spirited community. I echo the sentiments of my fellow ExCo member Sylvia Chua who said in a Facebook post, "I hope that the next time we have the joint prayer, it will be to give thanks to God for keeping us safe and returning our life to normalcy." ✠NF

The Live broadcast of the **Feast Day of Our Lady of Fatima**, on the 13th of May, was streamed in a Watch Party event on Canossians United Facebook page.



On the 14th May, the CAA made another invitation in union with Pope Francis' request for a **Global Day of Prayer and Fasting**. Lay Canossians in Singapore also united to pray to honour the Feast of St Magdalene.



29 APRIL 2020 – 3PM & 9PM SG TIME.

A VIRTUAL RENION OF OVER 150 STUDENTS ALL OVER THE WORLD!

(Excerpted from the Facebook post of **Kirsten Koh**)

If there's ever a tried and tested way of picking the right school for your children, the secret could be in the school song. Or it could be in the heritage. Or it could be in the spirit of the founding 'fathers'. In mine and many of these amazing women, we have been blessed to be schooled in the spirit of St Magdalene of Canossa. Once a Canossian girl, always a Canossian girl.

This morning (UK time), a huge group of us Canossian girls (of different generations, including ex and current principals and teachers) got together on Zoom to share our lockdown experiences as well as share our happiness through connecting with one another in this shared difficult time. We prayed, we laughed, we shed a few joyful tears and we got to sing the best school song in the world - a song that will probably resonate throughout our lives, in good (times) or bad.

Feeling blessed, grateful and overflowing with peace. Thank you everyone for coming on to meet us from all over the world! Stay well, stay safe and via veritas vita! #CanossianUnitedMeets

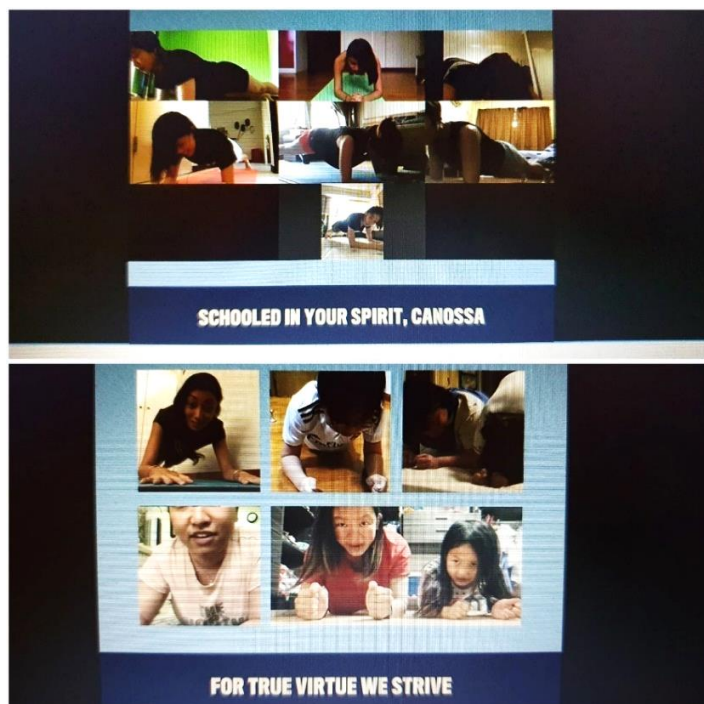


PLANKING FOR A CANOSSIAN CAUSE.

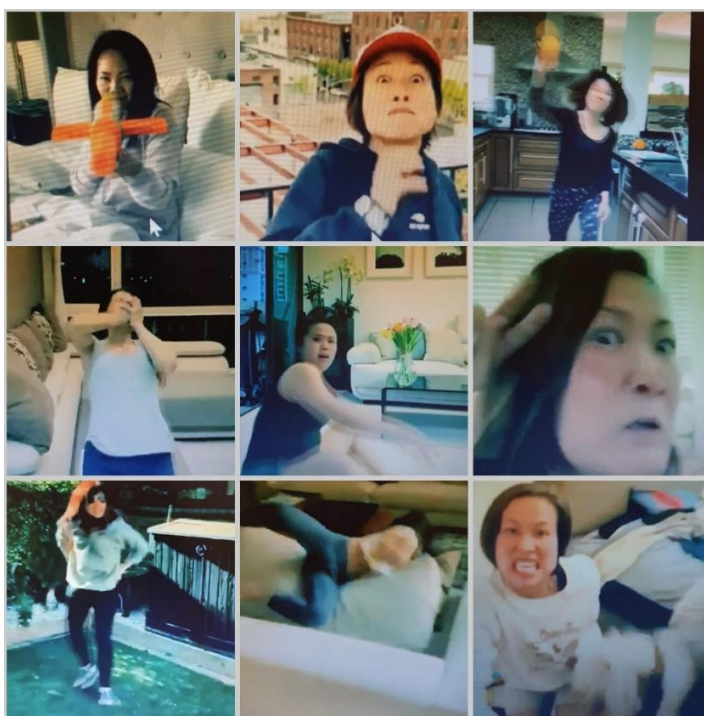
When Canossians have fun, they also think of the less fortunate. The SAC Planking Challenge began with a group of Alumnae from the Netball team – and gradually gained momentum among classmates and different pockets of girls. The challenge – Planking and singing the school song simultaneously!

The invitation was from the Facebook post of **Ng Su-An**, who initiated this viral planking challenge to raise funds for Canossaville. This initiative managed to help Canossaville achieve the stipulated target on giving.sg by the end of May. Kudos!

"Join past, present and future Canossians in the #SACPLANKINGCHALLENGE as we raise awareness for the Canossaville fundraiser to help students from lower-income families tide through this period of uncertainty."



FROM THE CHARITY TO THE WACKY!



With a special niche in performing arts, SACSS has not only produced popular personalities for the broadcast media, but talents outside the entertainment industry that are certainly worth a watch over a weekend's browsing on Facebook - hilariously wacky! Head honcho **Marion Chin** posted a video clip that garnered laughs and many amusing reactions! She called it the "Lockdown Fight Challenge – Convent Girls' Style".

From the post of Marion Chin :

"Presenting a special bunch of SACians + some of their children & a very excited pup. Videos taken from Singapore, Hong Kong, California, Maui, London & New York - distance didn't stop us from creating something fun. xoxoxo #conventgirls"

While we, SAC girls, do not really get into physical fights – we can totally get it that sometimes you have to roll with the punches of life – and who better to know it, and deal with it than a girl who sings "Courageously with heads held high!" growing up?✦

Obituary & Tribute – Ms Grace Chew Ping Ping, Vice Principal SACSS



The Canossian family grieved the demise of Ms Grace Chew on the 4th of May, 2020. She spent the last 4 years in SACSS as the VP and was still a part of the staff when she was diagnosed with cancer. News of her passing came during the time when the school was having home-based learning.

In a memorial montage shown to the students a month after, the Canossian family celebrated her life and thanked God for the gift of this “Amazing Grace” who had inspired many who crossed her path. Here’s an excerpt from the tribute :

“Grace led a full life with an indomitable spirit. Not only did she triumph in the field of netball and golf, she was an honest and reliable friend and colleague who liked to laugh, liked to be serious and was incredibly others-centred always. Everywhere she went, Grace impacted people with her infectious smile, kindness and generosity. Even in Grace’s physical weakness, she graced us with the lessons of acceptance and abundant courage as she struggled with realities of her dying body. Her final months were intense with medical appointments and chemotherapy. Yet they were also filled with peace and gratitude.

In her, we saw a selfless and dedicated leader, mentor and friend, who would set aside precious time to journey with us – reminding us that we are precious to her and to God. In her, we saw the face of Christ, one ever ready with radiant smiles and hugs for those around her. In her, we saw the triumph of the Cross – one that she gracefully embraced for what it meant to live a life of dignity and what it meant to let go and let God.”

We are grateful for her unwavering support and close partnership with the CAA and pray for perpetual light to shine upon her.

EVENTS: CANOSSIAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION 43RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WITH NOMINATION AND VOTING FOR A NEW EXCO TERM

DATE : 26TH SEPTEMBER 2020 (SATURDAY)

TIME : 3PM

LOCATION : FROM YOUR HOMES – VIA VIRTUAL

MEMBERS WILL BE RECEIVING AN OFFICIAL NOTICE AND NOMINATION FORMS A MONTH PRIOR. PLEASE LOOK OUT FOR IT IN YOUR MAILBOXES. VIRTUAL ID WILL BE GIVEN UPON REGISTRATION.

Join us on social media more updates : [Canossians United on Facebook](#) & [Canossian Alumni Association on Instagram](#)