



胡頌恆神父 Father John WOTHERSPOON

胡頌恆神父是來自澳洲的傳教士，一直致力服務邊緣社群，身體力行，實踐天主教信仰。

胡神父出生於布里斯班，自幼受到家人和老師的鼓勵，立志幫助弱勢社群。在當地愛奧那書院完成中學學業後，他加入了主張向貧困者伸出援手的獻主會。胡神父在墨爾本完成神學院課程，並在蒙納士大學取得文學士學位和教育文憑。之後，他在墨爾本、布里斯班和珀斯的三所獻主會書院任教十年，並在維多利亞州的莫伊鎮積累了兩年牧靈經驗，支援鎮上許多有需要的海外移民。

1985年，胡神父響應教會呼籲，來到香港開展服務，以紓緩人手壓力。胡神父在香港中文大學學習了兩年粵語。當時他已38歲，學習新語言殊不容易，但他用心學習，在開始課程數月後已能用廣東話主持彌撒。

1985至1994年間，他在九龍城聖母院堂服務，除了在教堂工作外，亦協助籌辦其他活動，包括主要為窮困兒童開設的周六下午英語班，曾經有超過500名學生。

1995至2000年間，胡神父在大嶼山堂區工作，為梅窩、貝澳、塘福、大澳和東涌的社區服務，同時每週到訪石壁監獄和塘福懲教所。

2001至2008年間，胡神父前往中國內地，在肇慶的加美學校擔任英語老師，並與當地的教育部門合作，利用自己的工資，為外來家庭的孩子設立學習中心。

Father John Wotherspoon, a missionary from Australia, has worked relentlessly for those on the margins of society, putting the teachings of the Catholic faith into action.

Born in Brisbane, Fr John was encouraged by his family and teachers to help the disadvantaged from a young age. After finishing secondary school at Iona College in Brisbane, he joined the Oblate order of priests, which places a strong emphasis on helping the poor. Fr John completed his seminary studies in Melbourne and earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma of Education from Monash University. This was followed by ten years of teaching at the three Oblate colleges, in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, as well as two years of pastoral experience in the town of Moe, Victoria, where there were many overseas migrants in need of support.

In 1985, in response to a call for more Oblate personnel, Fr John came to Hong Kong and spent two years at The Chinese University of Hong Kong learning Cantonese. Learning to speak a new language at the age of 38 was no easy task, but he studied hard and managed to celebrate Mass in Cantonese just a few months after starting the course.

From 1985 to 1994, he served at Notre Dame Parish in Kowloon City, working in the church and helping with various activities, including a Saturday afternoon English Club that primarily served underprivileged children, which at one stage had more than 500 students.

From 1995 to 2000, Fr John continued his ministry on Lantau Island, supporting the communities in Mui Wo, Pui O, Tong Fuk, Tai O and Tung Chung, while also devoting time each week to visit Shek Pik Prison and Tong Fuk Correctional Institution.

From 2001 to 2008, Fr John went to the Chinese Mainland, where he taught English at the Canadian American School in Zhaoqing. He

自 2009 年以來，胡神父一直留守佐敦廟街，在油麻地聖保祿堂區工作，幫助無家者、更生人士、癮君子、性工作者、尋求庇護者和癌症病人，同時前往荔枝角、大欖、羅湖和喜靈洲的懲教設施進行探訪。他被譽為「廟街神父」，與團隊還提供中醫義診、理髮、英語課程及福音戒毒服務，並為無親無故的離世者安排殮葬。

2017 年，胡神父協助成立兩個非政府組織：「慈悲香港」和「Voice for Prisoners」（囚徒之聲）。

「Voice for Prisoners」協助在囚人士的探訪安排，幫助他們做好出庭準備，又鼓勵他們在服刑期間進修更生。組織亦資助數十名在囚人士在香港都會大學讀書，並贈予字典和教科書。

「慈悲香港」設有多個中心，專門照顧無家和吸毒者等有需要人士。新冠疫情期間，組織不僅為「麥難民」（在麥當勞快餐店借宿的人士）提供居所及一日三餐，還幫助染疫而被僱主趕走並滯留在港的外籍家庭傭工。組織又於廟街開設一家只僱用更生人士的食堂，胡神父的團隊也在這裏與懲教署人員合力處理假釋和保釋個案。

胡神父積極投入監獄牧職工作，過去十年來利用假期前往毒驟（運毒者）居住的國家，與傳媒和當地政府機關會面，共同打擊走私毒品到香港。他開展「家書計劃」，鼓勵因受騙運毒而在香港身陷囹圄的人士寫信回家，警示親友和同胞攜帶毒品入境香港的嚴重後果。胡神父更自設網站，揭露毒驟招募者的技倆，並冒險搜集證據，協助無辜毒驟爭取減刑。胡神父這場掃毒宣傳運動，不僅獲得上訴庭肯定其教育意義，更讓他獲得 2017 年「香港精神獎」的「全民投票獎」。

為表揚胡頌恆神父對香港和本校之貢獻，現恭請副校長頒授榮譽大學院士榮銜予胡頌恆神父。

used his salary to set up study centres in the city for children from migrant families, in collaboration with the local education authorities.

Since 2009, Fr John has been based on Temple Street in Jordan, working at St. Paul's Parish in Yau Ma Tei and helping homeless people, former prisoners, drug addicts, sex workers, asylum seekers and cancer patients. He also visits the correctional facilities in Lai Chi Kok, Tai Lam and Lo Wu, and on Hei Ling Chau. Revered as the "Temple Street Priest", he and his team offer free Chinese medicine consultations, haircuts, English lessons and drug rehabilitation through spiritual means. They also arrange burial services for individuals with no relatives.

In 2017, Fr John helped establish two non-government organisations, or NGOs: MercyHK and Voice for Prisoners.

Voice for Prisoners helps inmates by arranging visitors and preparing them for court cases, and by organising study courses aimed at rehabilitation. It subsidises dozens of prisoners to study at Hong Kong Metropolitan University and provides them with dictionaries and textbooks.

MercyHK operates several centres dedicated to caring for vulnerable people, including the homeless and drug addicts. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it provided food and accommodation to "McRefugees" — people who sleep overnight in 24-hour McDonald's restaurants — and foreign domestic helpers who were evicted by their employers after testing positive for Covid-19 and were left stranded in Hong Kong. Additionally, MercyHK runs a canteen on Temple Street that employs only former prisoners. It is also where Fr John's team works with Correctional Services Department staff on parole and bail cases.

Fr John's prison ministry has seen him using his holiday time over the past decade to travel to the home countries of drug mules. He has engaged with media and authorities to combat drug trafficking into Hong Kong. One of his initiatives encouraged individuals who had been deceived into trafficking drugs and were subsequently imprisoned in Hong Kong to write letters home, warning their families, friends and countrymen about the severe consequences of drug trafficking in Hong Kong. He also established a website to expose the tactics of drug mule recruiters and took risks to gather evidence to support appeals for reduced sentences for innocent drug mules. His tireless anti-drug campaign was recognised by the Court of Appeal for its educational value and earned him the People's Choice Award in "The Spirit of Hong Kong Awards" in 2017.

In recognition of Father John Wotherspoon's contribution to Hong Kong and the University, may I invite the Pro-chancellor to present him with the Honorary University Fellowship.