

Saints

You will have noticed that the theme for the assemblies this week has been Saints. The Revd Murphy spoke to you on Monday about All Saints Day (which is tomorrow) and All Hallows Eve (which is this evening). I hope that you learned a little about the origin of the words and the importance All Saints Day plays in the Christian Church calendar.

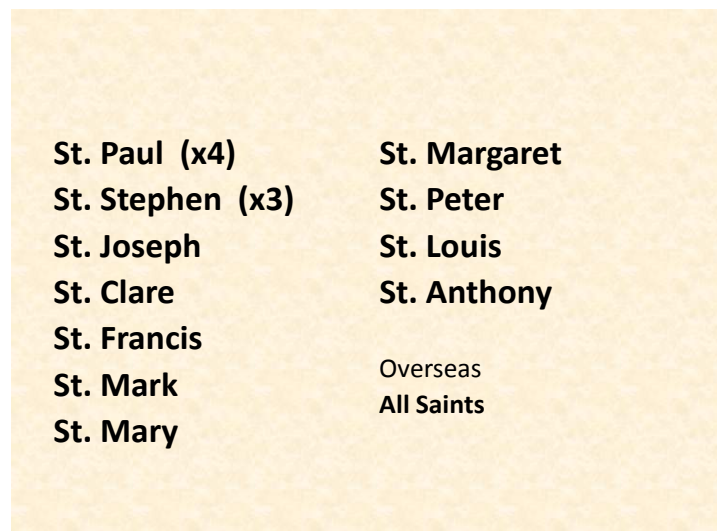
This morning I would like to build on what Father Philip told you last Monday and provide you with some examples of the use of the word Saint in a variety of contexts across the world.

The obvious example of the use of the word Saint (which Father Philip explained to you comes from the Latin word 'Sanctus' meaning Holy) is in the name of our College. Named after the holy name Paul the College name is emblazoned on the College badge above the stage in this hall and also on the badges you are wearing on the pockets of your shirts. The badge gives the full name of our school, Saint Paul's College. At some point in the past the word Saint was abbreviated or shortened to St. I do not know when this occurred. However, there are many examples in the English speaking world where Saint Paul is used in the naming of schools, hospitals, universities, cities and so forth.



Let me give you two examples of other places in the world that have taken up the Saint name. The first example comes from the South American country of Brazil. That country's largest city is Sao Paulo and its nearby port city is called Santos. The language spoken in Brazil is Portuguese. In English, Sao Paulo means St. Paul and Santos can be translated as Saints. The second example comes from the state of California in the United States of America. California was once occupied by indigenous Indian tribes before the arrival of Spanish explorers and falling under the administration of Spain. In fact, California did not become a state within the United States until 1848, only three years before our College opened. Many of the original settlements had Spanish names and continue to do so today. San Francisco is Spanish for St. Francis and Los Angeles in Spanish means The Angels.

Of course, we need not look beyond Hong Kong to find numerous examples of the word Saint in the naming of institutions, particularly schools. The following is a selection of Saints used in the naming of Hong Kong schools. In this regard, St. Paul leads the way with four secondary schools bearing his name. I could go on with many hundreds of examples from around the world. Furthermore, some schools bear the name All Saints rather than referring to a specific saint.



St. Paul (x4)	St. Margaret
St. Stephen (x3)	St. Peter
St. Joseph	St. Louis
St. Clare	St. Anthony
St. Francis	
St. Mark	Overseas
St. Mary	All Saints

Last year Mr. Mak the Vice Principal, Mr. Wong the OLE Master and I attended an International Boys' Schools conference hosted by St. Christopher's School in Richmond, Virginia. The school is also known in the city of Richmond as Saints. The word Saints is displayed in many places around the School's baseball and

football grounds, leaving opposing teams in no doubt as to whom they are playing and where.

St. Christopher's, Richmond



The use of the nickname 'the Saints' is very common with sporting teams. In American football the New Orleans team has the nickname 'the Saints' as has Southampton in soccer's English Premier League. Interestingly, Manchester United goes by the nickname 'the Red Devils'. Obviously, Manchester United is not a Godly team!

But why have sporting teams adopted the nickname 'the Saints'? Maybe it has something to do with the strength that a saint might bring to the team or possibly with the protection that a saint might provide to the players. Whatever the reason, the crowds that cheer at their matches frequently refer to their beloved Saints. A favourite song sung at games is the first verse of an American Christian hymn from around 1890.

Oh, when the saints go marching in

Oh, when the saints go marching in

I want to be in that number

When the saints go marching in

I noticed that at the finals of the Inter-School Swimming last week that the cheer team from St. Joseph's College sang this song as part of their repertoire of chants. Maybe our cheer team should remind SJC next year that there are now two Saints in the A Division competition!

This morning's hymn is one of the most famous and well-known hymns in the Christian hymn book. The words of the verses we sang (and of the verses we did not sing today) are very powerful indeed. However, it is the third verse that truly resonates in the context of our College.

*O may thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold,
fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
and win, with them, the victor's crown of gold.*

Alleluia

As boys of St. Paul's College you are soldiers, soldiers who are faithful, true and bold. You are boys prepared to fight for Justice, Honour, Truth and Virtue as did the Old Boys who nobly fought for these four precepts in days of old. Along with the SPC alumni you shall win and with them wear the victor's crown of gold.

Alleluia or Praise be to God.

Dr. J.R. Kennard