

Our Marist Connection...

The art of reading and being able to reflect on what one has read is a great gift and something not to be taken lightly. It can, in a very real sense, be like a spiritual journey, where one as an educator learns to see and to hear differently. The 'unexpected' can teach us so much about ourselves and the world that we live and work in.

Recently I purchased a book titled 'Goodbye Shanghai' by Sam Moshinsky. Sam is one of Melbourne's senior citizens who has made a significant contribution to not only the Australian Jewish community but also to the wider community and he rightly deserves his Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his service to this country since his arrival here in 1951 at the age of seventeen.



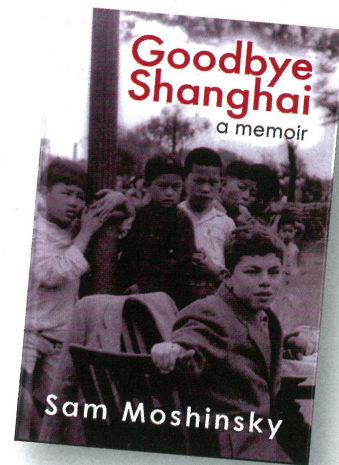
Staff and students from St Joan of Arc College. Sam's lifetime friend, Br Gilbert is pictured on the left.

The book devotes a chapter with photographs to Sam's education primarily at St Joan of Arc's College conducted by the Marist Brothers who were primarily from France. The Brothers also conducted St Francis Xavier's College in Hongkew having taken it

St Joan of Arc College in Shanghai in the 1940s



over from the Jesuits and Sam attended this college for his senior years. Recently, Brother Michael Green and I interviewed Sam Moshinsky here in Melbourne and his gratitude to the Brothers that taught him, particularly the Frenchman Brother Gilbert, was very evident. Sam, like his book, spoke of his school life with the Marists, his outstanding school reports and the fact that on graduation he gave the valedictory address. As one of the photographs with this report indicates, Sam later caught up with his former teacher Brother Gilbert many years later in France.



Brothers and Students from St Francis Xavier's College in the 1940s. Sam is standing in the second row, third from left.

...Goodbye Shanghai



Sam's story and that of the journey of his family from the Ukraine to Vladivostok to Shanghai to Melbourne, leaves one in awe, marvelling at their faith in themselves, in their neighbour, and in their God.

Sam autographed his memoir for us expressing his gratitude for all that the Marists had given him in China; and it is with gratitude to Sam Moshinsky, that we feel connected with the story of the Brothers in China that have gone before us.

The book is a memoir, and it provides a wonderful insight through words and photographs of what life was like for his Jewish community at that time of conflict in China. A Religious Education or History teacher would find this book a great resource for the classroom. One of the interesting comments from Sam in the book is the fact that to pass the year all students had to sit for the examination in religious education. Sam sat for the examination and received the prize for religion! In addition, apart from his ongoing education in the Jewish faith out of school hours, he had to reconcile the "rationality of physics with such beliefs as the 'Immaculate Conception' ... and the 'Ascension' of Jesus into heaven" (Page 160). A Brother Kevin was teaching Sam at the time and replied without hesitation "that the former required the power of reasoning, whilst the latter demanded the gift of faith" (Page 160). Whilst the Brother may have been correct on the given points;



Finally, some good advice comes from one of Sam's relatives in the book:

In life you have three important things to take care of. Who you marry, who your friends are and who you work with. Over the rest you have no control, so pray that you will be lucky – Miriam Moshinsky.

Needless to say, Sam Moshinsky has been very lucky and we thank him for being part of our story.

His book, *Goodbye Shanghai* is available at the Sunflower Bookshop in Elsternwick in Melbourne or at the Jewish Museum Bookshop in St Kilda. It is published by Mind Film and Publishing.

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Sam Moshinsky pictured with Br Gilbert at their reunion in Paris in the 1990s

