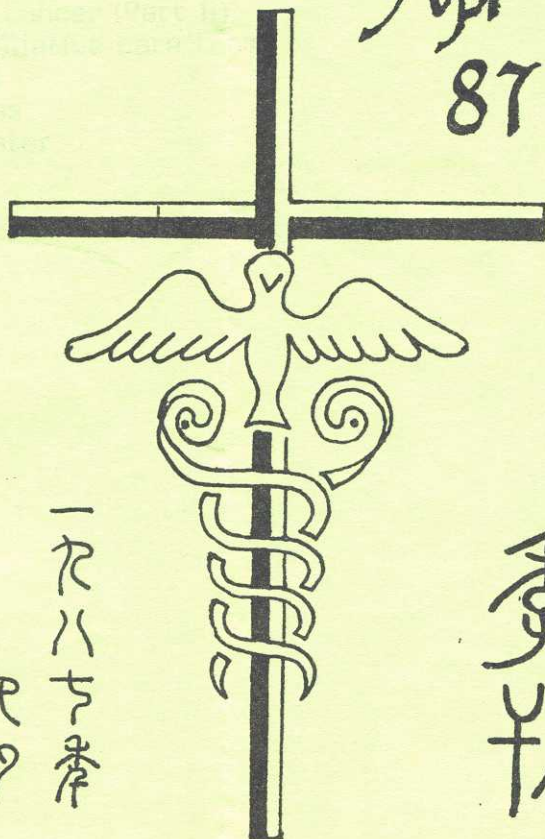


Guild of Saints Luke
 Cosmas & Damian
 Newsletter

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天主教醫士協會
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THE NEWSLETTER

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of the Guild of St. Luke, Sts. Cosmas & Damian

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MY ENCOUNTER WITH CANCER (PART II)

My two months' stay in Hong Kong gave me time to take stock of my life, and many thoughts and recollections passed through my mind.

Who is God? Where is God? Is God still alive today? These are real complex questions, more seriously discussed than solved. They are ones which everyone will sooner or later in his own way, somehow or other and in somewhere, come to ponder over them.

God is everything, all omnipotent, the Alpha and Omega, The Divine, Infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love. God is immanent, transcendent, benevolent, merciful, forgiving, patient.

He is the Creator of the Universe and He is still very much alive today.

In our lives there will surely come a time of reckoning with God and when it comes, we can only and must reap what we have sown during our earlier years. Our life here on earth is to revere, praise, love, serve and adore God, and to sow good seeds so that when the time comes there will be a good harvest.

When the moment of truth comes and we have not been pleasing to God, we may cry, we may regret, we may plead, we may curse, we may blame everybody except ourselves for not having thought of God before or sown good seeds. We will have to face God's judgement.

Our time on earth is for us to prepare ourselves to meet God and His judgement. Throw away this chance of preparation and then everything is gone, for there is no second chance.

The Catholic Church is for everybody. Give it. Live in it. It is the Sun, Life and Light, the Vital Spark, the Living Truth of the World. It should not be selfishly be kept in the dark. It should be made to shine forth everywhere and to everyone in all its power, majesty, glory and splendour. It is the greatest gift anyone can bestow on another. It is ours to share.

The Catholic faith is not for the intellectual, rich or power-

ful, for if it were so the first apostles would have been chosen from that circle. It is the loving trust in God, and that innate trust is in everybody. It is for him to express it. It is the living trust that exists in adversity. It is an ever going process where in there are periods of light and darkness, which has a way of going in and out of focus, but still a process which one takes part in.

The object of religion is for us sinners to repose in Thee, for our salvation, our sanctification. St. Augustine said, "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless unless it repose in Thee!"

The Church is not the property of any servant of God whoever he may be. She belongs to anyone who believes in her. No Catholic whether he be a servant of God or a member of the laity is above the Church laws and it is the especial duty of every servant of God to bring sinners back to God and not to ask anyone however bad a sinner he may be to go to another church.

I have the very good fortune to know some real servants of God, the honest, trustworthy, responsible, wise, understanding, reliable, sensible, humble, pragmatic dependable ones. But alas, I also have the greatest misfortune to know some who are best left to themselves. Should I give up my religion because of these odd ones? Definitely not. One believes in the Song of the Church and not Her singers. In spite of these so called servants of God and the cruel world, the Church will still grow, for this is God's world.

The world is really a wonderful and beautiful place to live in. It is full of the wondrous, awe inspiring, mysterious, fantastic works and manifestations of God. We need only to open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, to use our hands and feet to feel, to appreciate His works and then we will realise how small and insignificant we all are.

The story of man is one of wonder, mystery, faith, hope, charity, love, compassion, ambition, greed, power, folly, delusion and illusion.

What then is man? Man is nothing but the dusty toy of God. It was through His love that He made us and only by His love does

He save us - that is the long and short of man. From dust made into flesh, blood and a miracle fibre called the soul, man was made, and to dust will he ultimately return. That is the cycle for the material side of man, but not for the soul, for once formed it lives on until the end of the world.

Man is made in the image of God and to him is given an individual, characteristic life. mind and body more graceful than other animals, the power of apt and varied movements, the most sharp and delicate senses, wit, reason, memory like an immortal god.

The human body is the most intriguing, mystifying, challenging masterpiece of God. God made every man what he is. It is God's gift to man, but what man becomes later, is man's gift to God in return.

God gives man a brain and free will to choose for himself what is good or evil; he is not coerced to make his decision one way or the other. It is his entirely to decide which one to be.

Man is equipped with the power of intellect making him the highest form of life on this planet. His superiority over animals lies on a thin and chancy basis for from his articulate speech he slowly and laboriously developed the capacity of thinking and reasoning. His misery or happiness falls squarely upon himself alone.

I have often wondered at the saying that in the eyes of God all men are equal, I now know it is true. There is none superior or inferior; white, black or yellow is both beautiful and ugly. We are all the same and equal. It is only in the eyes of man that we are different and not equal.

Man has been lying and cheating for ages. Man is proud, man is egoistic, unreasonable. Man is cruel, crafty, destructive. Man is greedy, envious. Man is ambitious. Man lusts for power. Man never learns, is impatient and intolerant of his fellow man.

But man on the other hand can be if he would, for he definitely could, be honest, humble, meek, reasonable, kind, loving, creative, helpful, compassionate, truthful, upright, dependent, of high integrity. But would he?

What is this thing called life? Life is an abstract, intangible continuous process that goes on and on and then disappears at a time no man can control. It is an ever forward process. We have no say why life is given to us. We simply just have to accept it. We have to live through it in the best way we can and make the best of it.

Life is a complex thing - a confused mixture of thoughts, feelings and actions which are often contrary to one another. Life is forever changing and no two lives are ever the same. Life no matter how it is lived is a mystery, and to take it as it comes, asking no questions, but fighting to the very end - that is the creed.

Every moment of this strange and lovely gift from dawn to dusk is a miracle - somewhere and always a rose is opening its petals to the dawn; somewhere and always a flower is fading in the dusk. The incense that rises with the sun and the scents that fade in the dusk are gathered up sooner or later into the solitary fragrance which is God. Faintly, elusively, that fragrance lingers over all of us. Therefore,

"Look to this day!
For it is life, the very life of life -
In all its brief course,
lie all the varieties and realities of
our existence.
The bliss of growth,
The glory of action,
The splendour of achievement.
For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision.
But today well lived makes
Every yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore to this day!
Such is the salutation to this dawn."

Kalisda

The worth of life is not measured in its results but solely by the motive of one's heart and efforts of one's will. The nature and

efforts of one's will put out material wealth and put everyone, rich and poor alike, on an equal basis to express one's motive and effort.

The art of living is one of constant, sensible, right adjustments to our ever changing circumstances and surroundings.

Time and living just go on, but in our sojourn here, remember, -
"I will pass through this world but once.

Any good thing therefore that I can
do, or any kindness that I can
show to any
human being,
let me do it now.

Let me not defer it or neglect it,
for I shall not pass this way again."

For every babe born, one dies - that is the cycle of events of life. It cannot be changed. Death is an event, an inevitable and sure thing. It is the process of dying that we fear and this fear is very real. We have no choice in the nature of our demise. Death gives us no chance to know him well; no chance to study him.

As for me I am hung up in the air. Am I completely cured? Will my cancerous process crop up again? When? Where? How? This thought of cancer will be with me to the very end. It is not a pleasant thought, but what can I do? I have to live with it. This cancerous road is in front of me and I will most probably travel on it to the land of no return. Will I be able to accept my mode of dying with calmness, serenity, and dignity? I really do not know. Will I be brave or will I die a coward's death? We have to face Death sensibly, philosophically. Tears will however, come to the living; it is only human and natural.

And when,

"After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;

Treason has done his worst; not steel nor poison,

Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing

Can touch him further." Shakespeare - Macbeth, Act III Sc: II

And what does Death bring us? It brings

"There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest." It brings peace, quietness, serenity, and surely,
"O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best." Burns.

We choose to make this world ugly, dirty, hard and cruel to live in. How very true of Wordsworth to have said, "it grieves my heart to think what man has made of man."

But this is God's world and we should not despair but live in hope. And whether we like it or not, whether we make the world pleasant or not, we have to altogether live in it. We are thrown together and to make the best out of our melting pot. We have to accept the changes and tremendous things that are happening around us - that is the world.

Therefore,

"Go placidly amid the noise and haste,
and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender,
be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly;
and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant;
they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons,
they are vexations to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others,
you may become vain and bitter; for always there will
be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career,
however humble; it is a real possession in
the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs;
for the world is full of trickery.

But let this not blind you to what
virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals;
and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection.
Neither be cynical about love;
for in the face of all avidity and disenchantment

It is as perennial as grass.

Take kindly, the counsels of the years,
gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you
in sudden misfortune.

But do not distress yourself with imaginings.

Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.
Beyond a whole discipline be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of Universe, no less than
the trees and stars; you have a right to be here.
And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt
the Universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God,
whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever
your labours and aspirations, in the noisy
confusion of life, keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams,
it is still a beautiful world.
Be careful. Strive to be happy.

Max Ehrmann - Desiderata

The preservation of mental well being and physical health is the sacred duty of everyone towards his own body. It is important to nurture both the body and mind. Health is the most precious possession a man can have, and health and a good state of mind is above all gold.

Good, well balanced food, sensibly taken, regular, consistent persevering exercises and adequate rest are requisites for a healthy body, and good books, stimulating and constructive discussions are essential for the development of the mind.

Man is gregarious by nature. He cannot live by himself alone. He must have friends and acquaintances, but true friends are indeed hard to find. Being hard to find, and having found it, a true friend is the greatest boon to man. It is indeed a gift from God.

In retrospect I say that God has guided me through my life and this ordeal. From the moment I was diagnosed until I completed

irradiation and chemotherapy, everything went on very smoothly and everything fell into proper places and times. If that is not the work of God, what is? I now realise more deeply than ever before the power of prayer.

From Hong Kong since 1946, I found very good and true friends. my religion, my profession, my Alice - the very best that any man can have, my second chance to be alive today. What more can I ask from Hong Kong?

I have shed tears of fear,
tears of depression,
tears of emptiness,
tears of hopelessness,
tears of sadness,
tears of regret,
tears of loneliness,
tears of hope,
tears of happiness,
tears of jubilation,
tears of gladness,
tears of gratitude to my God, my friends and
relatives.

What does my encounter with malignant lymphoma mean to me? It means that God is merciful, full of compassion, forgiveness and love and mercy and that He has given me a second chance to take better care of myself spiritually and physically, to appreciate Him and His works more, and to realise my limitations and capabilities.

And for all that, for my second chance to live, I humbly offer my hands for His works. Take my hands Lord.

To those who are afflicted by cancer or any disease. I will only be too glad to give whatever help and advice to them if only they would contact me.

I am a sinner Lord, and always will be. Watch therefore over me today and everyday and wherever I may be, for abandoned to myself, I shall surely betray Thee. I am weak, very weak; You are great, very great Lord.

FIRST STEPS OF A PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM

The Newsletter asked for a short article on the setting up and work of our recently formed "Palliative Care Team for the Terminally Ill", not a description I like but it has the virtue of being the current one and therefore understood.

Well, the task seemed to have fallen on me! I will try to describe how we came into being and outline some of the work that we do in the hopes that it will encourage other health workers to consider forming something similar.

I have recently been a doctor working at the Ruttonjee Sanatorium, a small hospital under the direction of the Columban Sisters, an Order of Catholic nuns principally recruited in Ireland and with an essentially practical notion of care for those around them. They therefore work as doctors, nurses, counsellors or administrators in the hospital. The Ruttonjee Sanatorium is a chest hospital that specialises in the treatment of tuberculosis but has always admitted quite a number of sufferers from lung cancer and it is this group that we were increasingly anxious to provide a better service for.

In the summer of last year, Lucy Chung arrived to establish the "Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care" funded by the Keswick Foundation and based in Ruttonjee Sanatorium and this was the stimulus that we needed to actually organise ourselves. In a small hospital we found ourselves able to form a small team simply on the basis of enthusiasm among the staff and within the current budget and staffing levels. Lines of communication are short and we were able to simply meet and exchange views, arrange stationery and pick a day to start accepting referrals. Within the secure atmosphere of the hospital we could settle for small expectations initially.

Lucy Chung had already lectured the ward nurses on some of the ideas and principles of "Patient-centred" terminal care so we were happy that acceptance on the wards would be easier with a sharper appreciation for our role.

The team consists of two nurses, a physiotherapist, a social worker, two counsellors, Lucy Chung as adviser and myself until recently as the doctor, I don't speak Cantonese the new doctor.

does! I seemed to be the only one who thought this was a big problem but it certainly felt as though it limited my contribution quite often.

Our workload is enormously wide and from the beginning we have tried to foster a sense of quality. By that I mean we should all be prepared to help in whatever way seems appropriate at any time. Perhaps one of the issues that provokes most anxiety is telling patients the honest truth about their illness, I feel we should all be prepared to answer any questions honestly when they are asked and to this end we are careful that the whole team is briefed. In fact there is widespread feeling that a doctor should at least be present when giving information of this sort and that, I understand. So the compromise is to encourage people to ask questions when the doctor is present with the assurance of honest answers being given. While on this issue it would perhaps be helpful to say that one cannot be dogmatic over what one tells people. Personally, I favour honesty, but many patients are careful not to ask the nature of their illness and this is a powerful clue as to what they are feeling and something we should all respect. In fact telling a patient he has terminal illness is often a great relief to the carers in sharing the burden, but we often have to carry this load entirely ourselves. Our solution is to give as many opportunities as we are able without pushing it down people's throats without their permission. We do a daily round of all our patients in a group of about three or four, and accompanied by the ward staff on each ward.

We also have a weekly conference away in the security of our office where we go through each patient at our leisure and check that we are fulfilling as many needs as we can, make referrals to each other and review progress. Equally importantly we look after each other as of course the work can be very stressful and all the advantages of a small team are lost unless every member feels secure and supported by his or her companions. I thought I would try and review some of the specific work under the traditional titles we hold but cannot emphasize too strongly how important it is to try and utilize personalities as much as learnt skills. I hope that makes sense, I'm not just the doctor but a fellow human.

Well perhaps I could start with myself!

My main skill is in therapeutics, that is the use of the modern pharmacopoeia to relieve symptoms, pain, dyspnoea, anxiety, therapy, depression, constipation, haemoptysis, etc.

The management of pain with careful use of morphine has been one of the major advances within hospice care and allows one to feel confident that this really does not have to be a problem anymore. Prescriptions are reviewed daily and even hourly if necessary, the patients are encouraged to learn something of their drugs and to take a part in decisions over drug use. I personally find this very rewarding and an enormous help in my own management.

I also liaise with other doctors, advise on procedures like pleurodesis and chest tapping and make referrals where appropriate for specialist treatment like radiotherapy or chemotherapy.

I can also use my 'weight' to support application for financial assistance, housing, provisions of aids to employers etc.

Of course, I meet families and endeavour to help in any other way that I can, especially perhaps in providing time to review the illness, its progress and what we are planning.

The two nurses are really the heart and soul of the team, they are full time, they see more of the patients than anyone else and provide most of the time and support. They are therefore worked very hard physically and emotionally and have on a number of occasions, remarked that they felt as though they were 'drowning'.

All new referrals in the hospital come to them, they assess the patients in a number of areas including symptoms, psychological state, family and its characteristics, religious needs, nursing or medical needs. They begin to sketch a management plan and make referrals where necessary to other team members. They seem to get most of the paper work, poor things, and are certainly the ones most often identified in the hospital and by patients and their families as being 'the team'.

Patients are encouraged to use them as the main point of contact, likewise families. We have an out-patient clinic, for those of our patients who are at home, that the nurses run. We reassure

all our patients that they will be instantly readmitted at any time that it may be needed, night and day. We feel this is an important part of out-patient care. The nurses also liaise with the ward staff, do home visits as appropriate and will attend the funerals of our patients which, on the whole, appears to be welcomed by the families.

The physiotherapists I hardly dare remark on in this publication! Shall I say from a doctor's point of view they are a very valuable addition to the team and one for which many patients are very grateful. Some of the special skills that are welcome include chest physio to clear sputum and improve lung function, the encouragement of exercise and advice on aids to mobility, pain relief by physical means e.g., heat, cold, ultrasound etc. and the teaching of patients and their families to perform elementary chest physio. Maintaining independence for as long as possible through regular exercise of stiffening limbs is very important. The improvement in mood and well-being can be dramatic. Our pastoral care workers one an experienced nurse, are priceless and one of the cardinal teachers of this type of work. It is the provision of time to explore with patients their feelings, hopes and ideas that creates the sense of caring we strive for. Not only is this one of the greatest gifts to the patients but invariably they are the people who unearth the background to problems we have simply not perceived or I myself completely failed to appreciate. Why doesn't this patient want to go home for a while etc.! Inevitably one of our pastoral care workers has been into the family structure and relations. Illness of this variety stresses even the best arranged families and is a serious threat to all. If we can get a husband and wife and children making the best emotional use of such precious time they have, then we can be happier and more often thank the pastoral care workers who have been able to reconcile such momentous events in the life of that family.

The social workers, who are so lucky to have with us, work in two main areas. The first is specific advice on entitlements, source of help, finances, housing etc. Social workers frequently complain that this is their perceived role among medical staff that they feel limits from. quite inappropriately, and we would all agree heartily. The social worker is very pushed for time and therefore the fuller counselling role is, I know, frequently frustrated by

competing demands. We all hope this may be improved and one of our plans is to introduce bereavement counselling possibly including groups in which I hope the social worker may have the confidence to play a large role in view of their training.

Lucy Chung has given advice, encouragement, wisdom and has been a source of ideas. She gets busier daily and we can only say how sorry we are! She has much more experience and stands at a little distance from the team which gives her a very helpful perspective on the work.

What would we like? More time I supposed! We would like an occupational therapist, people spending long periods in hospital, often get very bored. Perhaps there's a volunteer out there?

Our confidence has grown in many ways even in the short time we have had. We really can control symptoms, people don't need to suffer and the question of euthanasia arises only to be dismissed. This is all about living to your fullest limits.

Not everyone wants or needs to know their diagnosis, its opportunities to ask and honest answers that are needed. A lot of families are enormously grateful to receive so much more support, we feel that a caring society should not leave its members to face terminal illness in ignorance and loneliness. Not should the caring professions fail to care for each other which is one of the principal values of the small team; happy staff are much more help to ill people.

Perhaps one day health care will be more like this?

I leave with great sadness and wish all my fellow staff health and happiness on the future and especially the promotion of terminal care in Hong Kong.

-Dr. Mark Cullem
Ruttonjee Sanatorium

今日心聲

公教醫生，名字多麼動聽，當每個醫生談及自己如何善待病人時，都會引來尊重的目光，「那位祇喜歡訴苦的孤苦伶仃老婆婆……」、「那位臨終病人的痛苦……」，當工作辛勞過甚時發脾氣亦是情有可原的。如果你的理想是到落後地區治療貧苦大眾，人家會點頭稱善，然而，若果以上一切說話，一切事件都發生在一位牙醫身上，那個角色不再是全科醫生而是一個口腔疾病的醫者，給旁人的感覺又會是多麼的可笑呢？這是一點兒公教牙醫的苦悶——不那麼容易和別人分享工作方面的感受。

一直以來，牙醫給人的印象是為錢的，當和別人說到自己的職業時，通常對方的反應祇有兩類：第一種是眼睛一亮，覺得你非富則貴；第二種是心底一亮，覺得將來就算有這方面的病痛都可有靠山了！自己選讀了 Public Health 碩士，一方面有興趣走教學的路，一方面自覺長期做診所的工作

不大適合自己，自己喜歡在診所外多接觸些人物。
對於一個公教年青人來說，牙醫的工作不似社工，
導人向善，服務意味重；亦不似全科醫生，救人
性命；牙醫工作精細而勞神，活動範圍又小，
一天忙碌後心神體能疲倦，能有機會在工作上
及工作後聯想起天主的確難之又難。

世界牙醫普遍過剩，畢業後前景不明朗，
信仰停滯不前，今天的苦悶盡浮現在眼前……

Sammy Lou

(This article is written by a dental member and outlines the frustrations of a Catholic dentist.)

Lord
help me to see
the plight of those around me
the conditions in which my brothers live.

Lord
help me to hear
the cry of the anguished
the whisper of the hopeless
the plea of the forgotten.

Lord
help me to recognize the stench of poverty
the odor of illness
the air of loneliness.

Lord
help me to realize
why some people have no taste for life
no palate for living.

Lord
help me to reach out and touch
these my brothers
with humility, reverence and love.

Amen.

-from Christopher Prayers for Today

WORDS FROM THE MASTER

Dear Members,

Technology is amoral, but the application of technology can and do bring up problems of immense moral concern. What is technologically possible is not always morally admissable. One of the most important area in biomedical advance of direct concern to doctors at present is in the field of reproduction. Baby M case and the English High Court and Lords' rulings on sterilization of mentally handicapped girl are just two incidents that have made recent headlines.

In the new horizon of biomedical technology which makes it possible for man to intervene in procreation and the un-born child, it is important that moral guidelines should be available in order that man of conscience may not go astray. It is for this purpose that the Church through the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued the "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and the Dignity of Procreation, Replies to Certain Questions of the Day". This 40-page document is an important one, but it is also a contentious document. Some people branded it "ultra-conservative", "rather radiculous", and "a document born into obsolescence". The S.C.M.P. and the Time magazine have published articles on the document soon after it was published. This Instruction does not just condemn artificial insemination, in-vitro fertililzation, surrogate motherhood and embryo experiment, but has detailed the moral reasons leading to their rejections. It also has offered guidelines on such procedures such as prenatal diagnosis and intrauterine therapy. The full text has been published in Kung Kao Pao, and the Sunday Examiner has carried the official summary. I urge you to study this carefully (if you are interested but have mislaid your copy or cannot find one, please let me know and I will send you a reprint. We hope to carry some articles related to this topic in the next issue of the Newsletter.

This reminds me that the next issue will be published by the next Council as we will have our Annual General Meeting soon, in .

late June or early July. The AGM will be followed by the Annual Dinner and this is the highlight of the year's events. So please look out for the circular and make an effort to come.

Looking forward to seeing you at the AGM (and all Guild activities).

Yours in Christ,

George Chan