

Dear friends, we are very sad by the sudden passing of Fr. Mario. It's a great loss for everyone here at Sts. Peter & Paul Church, especially the Chinese Apostolate. While we are mourning, grieving and shedding tears for our loss, the only consolation is knowing that Fr. Mario is no longer suffering. He is united with his family and friends, especially his mother whom he has never met. He is rejoicing in heaven and I'm sure he wants us to do the same here. So dry your tears; lift up your spirit and celebrate the life of Fr. Mario.

I would like share a couple stories with you about Fr. Mario. I met Fr. Mario here at Sts. Peter & Paul more than 30 years ago. My first impression was he speaks perfect Cantonese. In addition, he speaks Shanghaiese, and of course Mandarin, the official Chinese language. Not only is he fluent in the spoken language, he can read and write Chinese characters as well. That's quite an accomplishment for a non-native.

One time, when we were chatting, I asked Fr. Mario when he is going to take a vacation so he can enjoy some of the beautiful places in California. He stopped; looked at me in the eyes and said what vacation! I was stunned for a moment thinking to myself that everyone takes a vacation and why not him. Then he said I am here to serve and no time for vacation.

Another time, when he was asked to go to Canada, I asked him whether he could talk to the provincial to see if they could send someone else instead. He said, as a Salesian priest, I obey my superior. Wow! I was stunned again! This is just a glimpse of what Fr. Mario is like. He was a humble servant of God and his only purpose was to serve the people, which he did wonderfully not only here at Sts. Peter & Paul Church but elsewhere as well.

On the lighter side, when Fr. Mario sees me, he always says jokingly that you are bad. Of course, I didn't tell him that bad means good in the U.S. but I guess he knows it now.

Fr. Mario's life revolves around three principles: 1. To serve selflessly. 2. to obey unconditionally, and last but not least to have a small sense of humor.

Good bye Fr. Mario. We miss you. Although you are no longer with us, we know you are looking after us from above.

Thank you and God bless each one of you.