

# MIC MISSION NEWS

VOL. 48, Nº 2 | APRIL • MAY • JUNE 2021 | \$5.00



*To sow seeds of joy and hope! — Since 1923*

*100 Years  
of an Undaunted Mission*



TOGETHER,  
LET'S MOVE  
FORWARD

PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

## MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS - 2021

*Let us keep in our prayer all the victims of the pandemic and deposit with confidence our concerns in the heart of the Lord.*

### APRIL

**Fundamental Rights** – We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis.

### MAY

**The World of Finance** – Let us pray that those in charge of finance will work with governments to regulate financial markets and protect citizens from their dangers.

### JUNE

**The Beauty of Marriage** – Let us pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of a Christian community: may they grow in love, with generosity, faithfulness and patience.

**Masses for readers' intentions offered in the following countries:**

January: **Canada** • February: **Cuba**  
March: **Philippines** • April: **Haiti**  
May: **Canada** • June: **Bolivia**  
July: **Malawi & Zambia**  
August: **Hong Kong & Taiwan**  
September: **Madagascar**  
October: **Peru** • November: **Japan**  
December: **Canada**

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## MIC Mission News

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# TO GO FROM / TO WE



Photo: Shutterstock.com



**Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.**

In my younger days, my father often sang Quebec folklore to us, among others: *Envoyons d'avant, nos gens* ("Let's go ahead, folks"). Work was difficult and this song rekindled the ardour of the raftsmen. The magazines of 2020 encouraged us to revive hope in order to live better through the pandemic; the winter magazine offered a star named hope to stand firm. Today, we are together to move forward. Pope Francis encourages us to move from *I* to *we*, because we are in the same boat and we are all called to row together, a dream of fraternity and social friendship<sup>1</sup>.

There is an African proverb that says: Alone we go faster, together we go further. In canoeing and kayaking, synchronization is a key element to win the race, isn't it? The more teammates are sensitive to each other, the greater the strength. Synergy makes it possible to row, to go further. In other words, the greater the strength, the greater the chances of succeeding in synchronization. Let's create this synergy between us to overcome the obstacles that stand in our way and give strength to this universal desire for humanity.

At the beginning of the last century, Venerable Delia Tétreault understood the importance of this synergy to work with one heart in the service of the Gospel. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she supported the Bishops of the Canadian

Church in the possibility of founding a seminary for foreign missions. Today we are happy to mark the centenary of this foundation by sharing some testimonies of a mission shared together.

In any journey, the important thing is to believe in the goal we want to reach, whether there is a pandemic or difficulties to face, we must move forward, join hands and walk together beyond divisions, racial or political conflicts. God is always at work! To walk according to our convictions, to cling to our dreams despite the social pressures that we may be subjected to from all sides. Say like Carole Guévin: I am here for you! Sowing joy and hope on the path of life. This is what the Priests of the Foreign Missions and the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception try to live every day in the mission that God has in store for them.

Together, we are in solidarity with one another to make our today the work of God.

*Happy reading in the breeze of this new spring!*

*Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, m.i.c.*

<sup>1</sup> Homily of Pope Francis, March 27, 2020

# A Canoeer's Recipe



**Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.**

I had to write an article for our missionary magazine, but the inspiration didn't come... Then, at random — providentially — during a vacation I met an old friend whom I consider a master of thought. A fairly old layman who has read a lot, thought a lot and prayed a lot and who, I think, has a message to share. The idea suddenly came to me to make of this meeting the subject of my sharing.

But before coming to the message of this friend, who does not view himself as a wise man, I would like to briefly introduce him to you. He was a master in the rather old sense of the word, having been a high school teacher for many years. The students called him *Rodg*, from his name Roger, and recognized him by his head, which at the time was well furnished with an abundance of blond hair. He was also a master and remained so in the art of canoeing. He knew all the navigable

ivers in Quebec, had travelled many of them and knew how to paddle down the Moisie River, from Labrador City to Sept-Iles, avoiding all its pitfalls. Along the way, he admired the beauties of nature and came back full of enthusiasm to his mission as a trainer of teenagers who were not always as receptive as he would have liked. As a master, he was already and has become ever more so, in his knowledge of the Word of God, which he frequented assiduously and which he still feeds on every day, without ever tiring of it.

Having found him again on my way, the idea came to me to ask him to collaborate in this article-to-be. I asked him: If you had to write to those who will read my lines, to people who are missionaries at heart, interested in transmitting the faith but not really knowing how to do it today, what would you tell them?

On a certain day, he told me, life raises questions to each and every one of us. Does it have meaning? If not, we might as well leave it at that! If it does, it is good to consider it as a great and beautiful adventure, a canoe trip maybe! Where will it take us? How can we find out?

Wouldn't it be a good idea to try to arouse a new interest in these questions among the non-believers around us? During meetings with friends or relatives, when there is a pause in the middle of more or less serious or frivolous conversations, what if we dared to ask these questions? Where do we come from? Where will we go after life? We should listen to the answers first, then make a few suggestions...

If life is a great adventure, better not get lost in it, having in mind from the start where we would like it to lead us. Some will say: It must be to nothingness. Or maybe: I don't know. Others: To an afterlife from which no one has returned... Or others, alas fewer nowadays: To God... perhaps... or better: To God, I am convinced.

Together let us accept, for a moment, that life can lead us somewhere other than into nothingness. Wouldn't it be worthwhile to think about it seriously, to try to pierce the mystery of this life and its outcome? In order to do so, let me propose a canoer's recipe.

### THE RECIPE

**1.** Just as we don't set out in a canoe without knowing how far we want to go, let's take for granted that life would be meaningless and even unfair to us if it ended with this short time we spend in this world.

**2.** So let's find the time it takes to decide where we want the canoe and life to take us. For the canoe, whether we deviate from the initial route and find ourselves far from where we wanted to go, it will always be possible to find the right road again. But at the end of life, it would have been better to have taken the proper means so as to arrive where we aimed. Which means? In God's home, we hope, for how could we wish to find ourselves at nothingness?

**3.** Before leaving, let us try to foresee the dangers that await us and prepare ourselves accordingly. For the canoe: the difficulties of the trip, the stopovers to be made, the unexpected changes in temperature. For life: encounters of all kinds, possible illusions, moments of weariness, and perhaps the desire to stop before the expected time.

**4.** Let's check our luggage. For travelling by canoe, we need: appropriate clothes, food, tent in good condition, life jackets. Don't forget matches and a flashlight! There will be no convenience store along the way. Preparation is, of course, of prime importance.

**5.** As for life, the advice of the teacher-canoer-Bible reader is twofold. For those who never had faith or who have abandoned it along the way, let's suggest that they ask themselves: If God exists, isn't it worth taking him into account in the conduct of our lives? Much more than the risk to be taken in the face of an unlikely nothingness! As for the one who already has faith, it's quite simple, the Bible would suffice. It reminds us of our origins and our destiny and indicates to each one the best path to follow. Still, it is necessary to read it, to consider it as real food to be taken, to be digested and to be shared. What more can we say, if not: Let's go! The Word of God is worth much more than mine, much more than a canoer's recipe!

So, a word to the wise! Or to finish in a more evangelical way: *he who has ears to hear, let him hear!* ☞

Photos: François Audet



# The One Who Amazes

*God who makes all things new,  
come again to accomplish your  
wonders today<sup>1</sup>.*

**Marie Nadia Noël, M.I.C. in collaboration  
with Ghislaine Parent, M.I.C.**

Comparing Japanese culture and Christianity is not easy. You have to grope your way to find it. Yet in the very heart of a pandemic that destabilizes and questions everything, our God continues to come closer, to reveal that he is the one who amazes us. Yes, the Spirit of God continues to work everywhere in the world. He arrived in the land of the Rising Sun long before we did.

Religions are an integral part of Japan's culture. The many temples and shrines in the streets of its cities, however, mask a reality that we find difficult to grasp. For there are not two but several religions which cohabit, divide into different currents and influence each other.

## **A BIT OF HISTORY...**

In 1549 the first Jesuit missionaries landed in the Archipelago. It is only since the post-war period, with the Constitution of 1947, that freedom of worship is really guaranteed in Japan. Seen from this angle, the link between the Japanese religions and Christianity is only about 150 years old.

Christian culture enjoys a positive image in Japan. Children hear about Jesus Christ in schools. Young people study literature or history related to Christianity and its representatives. Travelling, adults visit places of worship. They celebrate Christmas. Many couples get married according to Christian rites. But the Japanese have difficulty



in adhering to the Christian faith. However, one cannot say that they hate Christianity. On the contrary, Christian culture is even part of their daily life<sup>2</sup>.

## **MIC PRESENCE IN JAPAN**

Although partly subsidized by the government, private schools in Japan are free to teach the religion of their choice as long as they follow the curriculum and guidelines of the National Bureau of Education<sup>3</sup>. It is mainly through the school apostolate that the MIC group in Japan has participated in the common mission of the Institute: to make Jesus Christ known. Through





Today's Christians in Japan are more interested in giving good examples than in being numerous. Their presence in the country is alive. They are committed to proclaiming Christ's message in order to build a Japanese Christianity, rooted in Christ and the culture of Japan<sup>4</sup>. What a joy for the hearts that seek God! ☺

the educational system, the Sisters have met with teachers, parents and students. In this way Christian values were conveyed and lived in the families.

### SUMIKO AND THE CHRISTIAN CULTURE

Sumiko was from a Buddhist family. Her encounter with the Franciscans and the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception led her to a long journey. In the 1990s, as a student in a rural school, she met Father Georges-Henri, a Franciscan. In 2014, happy with this memory of the past and attracted by the Christian faith, now the mother of little Clara, she chose to enroll her child in a Catholic nursery school run by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Tokyo. During that period, Sumiko was accompanied in her journey towards the Christian faith by Sr. Imelda Takahashi, MIC. It must be said that in the schools of these missionaries, values, gestures and thoughts form and develop openness to Christian life and missionary spirit.

In a Japan confronted with a disturbing second wave of Covid-19 contamination, Sumiko and her daughter were baptized on August 15, 2020, Assumption Day. Accompanied by Sr. Imelda Takahashi, they were welcomed by Father Joseph Hiroshi Konishi, OFM, at the Seta Church in Tokyo. With them, let us praise God who continues to reveal himself to the humble and the little ones by calling Sumiko and Clara.



Photos: MIC – Japan

<sup>1</sup> Cf Liturgy

<sup>2</sup> Ishikanna Akito, *The Japanese and Christianity*, December 2019

<sup>3</sup> Monique Cloutier, M.I.C., *The paradox of school and mission*, Mic Mission News, May-June, 1990, p. 18

<sup>4</sup> Father Olivier Chegaray, *The Church in Japan is in Search of a New Breath*, November 2019

*Housing, land, work, bread, health, education, independence, democracy, freedom: these were our demands during the long night of 500 years; these are our demands today.*

FOURTH DECLARATION OF THE LACANDON JUNGLE (1996), ZAPATISTA ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

# Surviving the Long Night of the 500 Years



**Maurice Demers**

It was in the 1990s that Quebecers really woke up to the issue of indigenous rights, first with the Oka crisis and then with the international echoes of the Zapatista struggle in Mexico. A greater respect for indigenous peoples was then shown, leading, among other things, to the historic *Peace of the Braves* agreement reached in 2002 between Quebec and the Cree. But one does not emerge unscathed from the colonialism suffered by the indigenous people during the last five centuries... The trauma of the residential schools is still fully perceptible in many First Nations communities.

On a regular basis, stories of conflictual relations between Natives and the police forces are published in the media. Thousands of missing Aboriginal women report unsolved crimes that still taint the relationship between mainstream society and First Nations. To paraphrase Subcomandante Marcos, there is still a long way to go in order to obtain *housing, work, bread, health, education, independence, democracy, freedom* for the Native people. These are demands for a respectful cohabitation within the Quebec society.

The announcement of the death of Joyce Echaquan, a 37-year-old Atikamekw woman, on September 28, 2020, as well as the unveiling of the inhumane treatment she received at the Joliette hospital, exploded like a bomb in Quebec and sparked a wave of indignation. A very large portion of Quebecers saw it as an illustration of the racism that afflicts Aboriginal people in their dealings with state institutions, a systemic racism that is not recognized by the government in office. Much has been written about this tragedy, with columnist after columnist outraged by this repugnant injustice.

But one story stands out: that of Carol Dubé, husband of Joyce Echaquan, interviewed by Isabelle Racicot on her program *Les dix de 2020*<sup>1</sup>. In this interview, Mrs. Echaquan is spoken of as a mother (of 7 children), a spouse (for 21 years), a woman who had plans and a lot of love for her children. In short, this report stands out because we don't talk about her simply as a victim, but about valuing her humanity. *She wanted 15 children, she was a good mother, taking good care of the children [...] and she told them stories about her grandfather*, says Carol Dubé. He wants his





Photo: Meandering Images / Shutterstock.com

{ (...) she could bring a lot  
to her family, her community,  
but also to Quebec  
as a whole (...) }

children to keep the memory of their mother, the Christmas holidays spent with the family and the Atikamekw she taught them.

She called the children little beings of light and helped other families. He tells his children that God loved her very much. A glimmer of hope, he explains that he finds the strength to continue to play his role as a father (now a single parent) of children from all over Quebec who write letters and drawings to me [...] often I have tears when I read the elementary school children who write to me... I

believe that we have a bright future with them. He adds that he would like everyone to know that Joyce went to school, got her certificate, worked in the hotel business and wanted to get married. So, to remember that she had a future ahead of her and that she could bring a lot to her family, her community, but also to Quebec as a whole (as long as we were willing to accept and integrate her).

Fortunately, many people in Quebec are now ready to accompany the natives so that they can get out of this long 500 year old night. Artists, poets and singers such as Maïtée Labrecque-Saganash, Joséphine Bacon, Natasha Kanapé Fontaine and Elisapie Isaac, to name but a few, are admired by hundreds of thousands of people. It was high time that the paths of reconciliation were opened; all that remains is to embrace change. 🌸

<sup>1</sup> <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/premiere/balados/8112/les-dix>



# Like a Mustard Seed

*In the Gospels, the parable of the mustard seed has always fascinated me. What potential in what seems weak, poor, even insignificant! Let us take a similar look at some key elements of the life and work of venerable Delia Tétreault during the last century. Who could have foreseen such fruitfulness in her missionary adventure?*



**Micheline Marcoux, M.I.C.**

## A HEARTFELT INTUITION

Of fragile health, but strong in her faith and hope in God, young Delia humbly carries in her heart an intuition that will lead her on new paths. From a childhood dream in which wheat was transformed into heads of children from all walks of life, from her reading of missionary magazines in the family attic, or from the visits of missionaries to her home town, the seed of her religious and missionary vocation took root and bore fruit in its time.

Her search for God's will in her life was not without hesitation and suffering. In 1883, she had a decisive spiritual experience:

*One evening... it seemed to me that Our Lord was telling me that I should later found a Congregation of women for foreign missions, and work to found a similar Society for men, a Foreign Mission Seminary on the model of the one in Paris...*

## THE AUDACITY OF BEGINNINGS

*Hope is this ability to believe beyond human reasoning, beyond worldly wisdom and prudence; to believe in the impossible.* (Pope Francis, 2016)

For Delia Tétreault, a long and patient process of discernment begins. *If your faith is the size of a mustard seed, [...] nothing will be impossible for you* (Mt 17:20). Nearly 20 years later, the first aspect of

this daring project is taking shape. On June 3, 1902, an apostolic school for the missionary formation of young girls is established in Montreal, the first fruits of what will become the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. This foundation is the first missionary institute not only in Quebec and Canada, but on the entire American continent, confirms John Gorski, M.M., an American missiologist.

In a spirit of gratitude for the gift of faith received through missionaries who came to Canada, Delia is inhabited by a single desire: that the Church of Canada take its part in the mission of the universal Church. While she is multiplying foundations at home and abroad, the second object of her initial inspiration continues to torment her. Discreetly, but with conviction, her repeated approaches to the Bishops of Quebec encourage them to found a seminary of the Foreign Missions. This dream comes true on February 2, 1921. A century this year!

Like a mustard seed that has become a large tree where the birds of the sky shelter (Mt 13:31-32), these two seeds of hope planted in Canadian soil now spread their branches across the planet! The prophetic vision of the now venerable Delia Tétreault has not finished to amaze us through the recognition of the flowers and fruits of her dream in the garden of our humanity! 🌿

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Micheline Marcoux, M.I.C., is vice-postulator of the Cause of beatification of venerable Delia Tétreault.



1929 – Mother Delia at the benediction of the Foreign Mission Seminary – Photo: MIC Archives

# 100 Years in the Service of the Gospel

A hundred years ago in Quebec society, many young men and women dreamed of dedicating their lives to the service of the Gospel and the Mission. With joy, we celebrate the centenary of the foundation of the Society of the Priests of Foreign Missions. The following texts bear witness to the bond of communion and mission linking our two foundations.





# The Centennial of the Society of Foreign Missions



Éric Desautels

The centennial of the Priests of the Foreign Missions of Quebec certainly deserves to be underlined and remembered. They played a fundamental role in the growth of the apostolic flame in Canada. However, setting up a Foreign Mission Seminary was a difficult and long term task. In 1889, Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, who was responsible for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, met with the Archbishop of Montreal, Monsignor Édouard-Charles Fabre, to discuss the project. He did the same with the Archbishop of Quebec, Cardinal Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau, the following year. At the same time, the Apostolic Delegate in Canada, Cardinal Diomedede Falconio, also reflected on the possibility of setting up such a seminary and extending the Canadian contribution in the world. The bishops of the time, however, had some misgivings. In 1914, Delia Tétreault obtained the authorization of Bishop Paul Bruchési to promote the founding of a Foreign Mission Seminary. The idea gradually gained ground.

During a visit to Canada in 1920, the Apostolic Vicar of Canton, Monsignor Jean de Guébriant, declared that French Canadians should receive their training in Paris because they lacked experience in the missions. The French-Canadian bishops were *stung to the core*<sup>1</sup>. Yet the Canadian Church has been considered a missionary Church since its foundation and already has several missions for the native peoples of northern and western Canada. Let us not forget the dozens

of religious men and women of Canada already active in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The reply was immediately given by Cardinal Louis-Nazaire Bégin. He wrote: *For some time now French Canada has been providing men and money for works and missions. But because these contributions were always immersed in foreign enterprises, we never had the credit for them. That is why, no doubt, we pass in Rome and elsewhere as operarii otiosi who live outside the great current of evangelization into which all the others have entered*<sup>2</sup>.

From that moment on, nothing could stop the foundation of a seminary. In the spirit of Pope Benedict XV's *Maximum Illud*, the French-Canadian bishops all followed suit and appointed Bishop Paul-Eugène Roy as president of the committee responsible for establishing the Society of Foreign Missions of Canada. This committee was composed of Monsignors Paul Bruchési, Guillaume Forbes and François-Xavier Brunet. They then addressed the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda in Rome, in particular Cardinal William Marinus Van Rossum, Prefect of Propaganda. On January 21, 1921, he authorized the establishment of a Canadian headquarters for the Missionary Union of the Clergy. Monsignor Roy's committee then concretized the foundation of the Society of Foreign Missions on February 2, 1921. The French-Canadian bishops chose Canon Joseph-Avila Roch, parish priest of Joliette, as superior of the

seminary. The following year, in a pastoral letter, the bishops officially announced the foundation of a seminary. Erected in Pont-Viau, the Seminary of Saint Francis Xavier was finally inaugurated and blessed in 1924 by Bishop Pietro Di Maria, Apostolic Delegate to Canada. Seven priests and fifteen seminarians formed the first cohort: the first three priests left for Manchuria in 1925<sup>3</sup>.

In 1929, one of the founders of the Society of Foreign Missions, Father Adelmar Lapierre, was appointed Prefect of Szepinghai. The following year, there were 27 priests and 33 seminarians. The French-Canadian missionary movement was just beginning. Between 1921 and 1953, 160 priests were formed in Pont-Viau. Moreover, they were appreciated for the setting up of their missions and the training they had received before their departure. In addition to the White Fathers and the Jesuits, among others, two authentic Quebec communities, the Missionary Sisters of

the Immaculate Conception and the Priests of the Foreign Missions, symbolize the growth of the French-Canadian missionary movement in the world.

*This foundation was in the order of things, it happened in its time, and the vitality of its works proves how justified it was<sup>4</sup>.* Without the presence of the Society of Foreign Missions, the French-Canadian missionary adventure would certainly not have been the same. 🌸

<sup>1</sup> Guy Laperrière, *Histoire des communautés religieuses au Québec*, Montréal, VLB, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Lionel Groulx, *Le Canada français missionnaire... Une autre grande aventure*, Montréal, Fides, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Bertrand Roy, p.m.é., Un certain 11 septembre, Laval, Société des Missions-Étrangères, En ligne: [https://www.smelaval.org/\\_media/a-11-septembre-1925-me-oct-2017.pdf](https://www.smelaval.org/_media/a-11-septembre-1925-me-oct-2017.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Marie-Paule Rajotte LaBrèque, «Premières tentatives canadiennes d'établissement d'un séminaire des Missions-Étrangères.» *Sessions d'étude - SCHEC*, n° 38, 1971, p. 28-29.

## An Exchange that Continues...



**Paulette Gagné, M.I.C.**

Sister Delia knew that priests were needed to bring the help of the sacraments to the Sisters and to assist each other in the mission of Jesus Christ. From the very beginning, Father L.A. Lapierre was appointed chaplain at our Mother House and since then, how many PME priests have worked with the MIC during the wars in China, Cuba, Asia, Latin America, helping each other in different ways.

At the novitiate in Pont-Viau, from its beginning, many of the PME have helped in the formation of young religious, future missionaries! They came to enkindle these young people, to give them the thirst to leave and proclaim the Good News in faraway countries.

What great missionary feasts have enriched our two Institutes, praying and reflecting together! In the Philippines, a Sister trained the cooks of the Canadian priests so that they could prepare dishes for them, especially good fudge. How much encouragement on both sides has allowed many to keep on going during the wars that cut off all connections between countries!

In this jubilee year of their foundation, we want to thank these missionaries with a heart of fire for their precious and faithful collaboration. 🌸

# A Family Resemblance in Harmony with the Mission



**Lucie Gagné, M.I.C.**

The Society of Foreign Missions, in my humble opinion as a MIC, could be like a family tune harmonized with the mission, springing from a heart as big as the world vibrating to the harmonics of Marian thanksgiving.

This attractive melody, sung oftentimes by our Venerable Foundress Delia Tétreault, gradually infiltrated like an earworm into the heart of the Bishops' Conference of French-speaking Canada which decided in 1921 to found the Society of Foreign Missions.

It has been 100 years this year that its members, priests and lay people, have been at the service of the Gospel under various skies, always anxious to take the risk of meeting in the service of the Gospel.

I have had the privilege, during my missionary life lived in Asia (Philippines, Hong Kong, Continental China) to meet some of them on the mission road.

I had the opportunity to work in Hong Kong with them. When I arrived on Chinese soil, there were three of them working for the mission. One was involved in the parish, another worked in a factory and shared the life of his workers at work and in their homes. A third PME, who had previously lived his mission in the Philippines, was particularly involved with immigrant people who worked in Chinese families as domestic helpers. Sunday being a day off, these helpers liked to meet in public parks to freely exchange ideas. Little by little, at the initiative of Father Jean-Yves Isabel, PME, they became interested in participating on

Sundays in a series of twelve meetings called evangelization seminars that offered a presentation of the Plan of Salvation and invited deep reflection on the identity and mission of the disciples of Jesus. Two of our Filipino Sisters shared with the priest this commitment in missionary animation. I joined the group. What a joy it was for me to be able to find myself once again in the midst of people from the Philippines and what a joy today to realize that, after more than thirty years, the Evangelization Family is still continuing its mission at the service of the Church in Hong Kong. It is like a tree planted near a stream that gives fruit in its time (Ps 1,3).

On the occasion of special celebrations, our Sisters in Hong Kong invited our priest brothers to come and celebrate the Eucharist at our convent in Good Hope. It was a joy for all of us to have this opportunity to meet each other and to be able to exchange during a meal.

It is this same spirit of communion and sharing that I experienced as I found myself this time in the north of mainland China where the PME had decided to return to Manchuria, the place of their first mission. There were three PME there and we were also three MIC, who were living incognito in various university environments either as students or as English teachers. We formed a kind of grassroot community. What a joy, once a week, on Sunday morning, to be able to meet in each other's apartments for the celebration of the Eucharist followed by a modest meal in a restaurant.

Sometimes on a birthday, we would treat ourselves to a more elaborate menu and we would



ask for a private place where we could sing along with the guitar. Songs in all languages were on the program: French, English, Spanish, Tagalog, Mandarin etc. What wonderful memories of meetings lived under the sign of sharing and joy.

How good it is to belong to the family of the children of our beloved Father and our beloved Mother Delia. We certainly knew how to testify during our meetings that a family atmosphere harmonized with the mission united us. ∞

## Collaboration between PME and MIC

**Marie Josèphe Simard, M.I.C.**



Talking about collaboration between PME and MIC goes back a long way. In fact, we could say that it began with the founding of the PME. Later, the missionary commitment, which placed us in the same countries and dioceses,

gave rise to many pastoral and social collaborations.

Today I will speak about the MIC-PME association in the framework of what we call "Projet Avenir de la Province-Marie-Reine-du-Monde" (Project for the Future of the Province-Marie-Reine-du-Monde).

It is in the fall of 2018 that the new Council of the MIC Province of Canada became aware of the diminishing number of members as well as of the aging of the Sisters and of the administrative burden that this implies while we have no new members in the country. Canada being the place of foundation of the Institute, we remain the mother province for the Sisters coming from the different countries where we work. Of course, there is a good succession in most of these countries and if our companions come to Canada it is for the mission and not to take care of us as we grow older.

Consequently, it is with courage and determination that the Province set up a committee, made up of lay people and religious Sisters, to reflect on our future as an aging community group.

After several months of research, analysis, study and discernment, it was decided to look for a promoter who could build a new establishment, take care of its management and administration, and take charge of the care of even the last Sister.



Photo: Thérèse Lortie, M.I.C.

Since we have had a well-organized health service, for several years now, the PME have entrusted us with their colleagues in need of care. This collaboration has been going on for about 20 years and is greatly appreciated by them. For our part, we are happy to offer them the expertise we have developed over the years.

Given this collaboration, we felt it was important to inform them of our project. Since they are in the same situation as we are, in terms of the demographics of their workforce in Canada and the resulting conditions, they decided to join us in the search for ways to facilitate and even ensure good management until the end. In a great process of discernment together, we chose the Promoter-Operator that met our needs. And it is together that we continue the process of realizing this project that will allow us to finish our days without having financial and administrative concerns.

According to the schedule, PME, MIC and perhaps other religious communities, and certainly lay people, should move into the new Senior Residence in the summer of 2023. ∞



## Words of the MIC Superior General



**M**y heartfelt congratulations to the members of the Quebec Foreign Missions Society as you celebrate the 100th jubilee of your foundation. The theme you have chosen, **TO RUN THE RISK OF THE ENCOUNTER AT THE SERVICE OF THE GOSPEL (1921-2021)** reflects your true missionary identity. In your 100 years of missionary presence in many regions of the world, especially in the Philippines and in other mission countries where the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception have been your partners, we have witnessed your rich history of encounter with the people at the service of the Gospel. You have taken risks to travel hills and mountains to come together with people and to witness and proclaim God's love.

A fruit of your missionary endeavor is that my mother who was of another religious faith before her marriage to my father was led to the Catholic faith. My parents in turn brought up their children in a Catholic family providing us with Catholic education. My formation as a professional catechist and zeal for initial evangelization, youth/adult catechesis, preparation of catechists and pastoral leaders, etc. allowed me to meet and work with the PME Fathers in the Archdiocese of Davao. Such an experience inspired me to become an MIC. Looking back, I could rightfully say that I have been formed since my early school years, from primary through college, by the MIC Sisters and the PME Fathers. This is only a fraction of the precious legacy that you have passed on to the people you have encountered at the service of the Gospel.

On behalf of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception whose Foundress, Venerable Delia Tétreault, inspired your foundation 100 years ago, I wish to express our sincere congratulations and gratitude to all of you on the occasion of your centennial celebration. ☺

*Delia B. Regidor, M.I.C.*

**Sr. Delia Regidor, M.I.C.**

**Superior General**

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

You have certainly heard about the political crisis we experienced from November 9 to 16, 2020, in Peru. As a columnist for the house, I am sending you my description of the events.

## A DEMOCRACY IN PERIL...

# Young People Get Involved



**Monique Fortier, M.I.C.**

**November 9:** One hundred and five members of Congress, out of one hundred and thirty, vote for the removal of Mr. Martin Vizcarra, Transitional President of the Republic of Peru, because of *moral incapacity*. He replaced the president elected in 2019, Mr. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski. The latter resigned following an accusation of corruption. Mr. Vizcarra is himself under investigation for a corruption offence. Mr. Manuel Merino, Speaker of Parliament, replaced him and was sworn in on November 10.

Peru is already in economic crisis due to the pandemic. A large part of the population believes that Mr. Vizcarra was managing the pandemic under the best of circumstances. His dismissal had the effect of a bomb in the population. Several experts see this dismissal as a constitutional offence. The court will have to decide within a few days.

**November 11:** The youth of the country were mobilizing. Thanks to social networks, peaceful demonstrations were being planned in various large squares in the capital and in the regions. The New Generation group of the Conference of Religious of Peru (Confer) participated in this organization. It must be said that the political decision taken on Monday, November 9, puts democracy at risk.

**November 12:** Sr. Luisa Ruas received the invitation from the Religious Conference to participate in the national march. Sisters Rosario Zari, Nicolle Joseph and Monique Fortier decided to join the demonstrators. All sanitary precautions were taken. We went to the Place de France, a meeting place set up by young religious men and women. All participants wore the mask. The demonstration was peaceful, the participants chanted refrains like *Merino, you are not my President, Merino, we did not choose you.*

**November 14:** It is 8 p.m. A young man has been murdered by the police. At midnight, Rosario Zari and Luisa Ruas, who were still awake, joined the people again. Another young person died as a result of the injuries sustained in the massacre, as the journalists called it.

**November 15:** The country was in mourning. There were 93 wounded and around 40 missing. Until the police attacked, the demonstration was totally peaceful. President Merino resigned. The airport was closed, they wanted to make sure that he would not leave the country. The demonstrations continued.

During the holy hour of this Sunday afternoon, the fraternity prayed the rosary. Each Sister expressed what she was living and a prayer intention was chosen for each decade. We prayed for the country, for the two young people who shed their blood, for their family and democracy, for the wounded and those who disappeared, etc. But thanksgiving was also given for all the young people who participated in the demonstrations, for their political commitment to the goal of a democratic, just and corruption-free Peru.



Photo: Luisa Ruas, M.I.C.

**November 16:** A new president was elected. It was Mr. Francisco Sagasti, a member of the only political party that did not vote to remove President Vizcarra from office. He is currently 76 years old.

We also attended the funerals of the two young people murdered. At the door of the church there were policemen. But this time, no weapons, in the front row of policewomen, hands up, wearing white gloves. Our hearts were moved... The image of this silent and symbolic request for forgiveness from the police force was striking.

**November 17:** President Sagasti presented his new cabinet. Of the 19 members of the cabinet, 8 are women. The Constitutional Court pronounced its decision. The dismissal of President Vizcarra was illegitimate, but the newly elected President, Francisco Sagasti, having received the approval of Congress and the population, was maintained in office.

We now hope that the political crisis is over and that the government will fulfill its promises and serve the people by addressing the great challenges in health, education and economy in this time of pandemic. 🌿





Photo: Shutterstock.com

# *The Present of the Future*



**Natalie Gendron**

The COVID-19 pandemic has restricted much of our freedom. Yes, the daily efforts, the very schedules that it imposed on us, that it created in us! New efforts in the face of a new reality more than ever shared by the most and least fortunate, but which were nevertheless neighbors.

It is the dawn of a new enlightened community which is getting active. The sea was calm, now it is awakening! The other, our neighbor, is becoming more and more important. An intention... of survival, almost as centered as selfishness, this time brings us to this new generation in need;

our own. For my own well-being, I need the well-being of others.

## **A SOLUTION... MUTUAL AID**

What spectacular mutual aid solutions hatched from this event! Examples are sprouting up every day. What before seemed inaccessible is now delivered. The men start holding the doors for ladies again, since we must avoid touching them. This is certainly only a romantic example, nevertheless observed regularly, it is so comforting. Especially since the door is also held for these gentlemen, thanking them, then we hear such words as: *It's nothing, it makes me happy...*

The unimaginable work of health professionals... I want to mention the magic that it took to create mental health teams. Having worked for 15 years in psychiatry, particularly in hospital psychiatric emergency rooms, and having seen and known that it took at least a few months to get a first appointment, I now learn that the service created for this situation, which has confused many, requires only a few days of waiting.

Restaurants are shaping up new menus and services, artistic productions are putting original masterpieces online, neighbors are rethinking their daily lives for mutual help, people are learning to smile with their eyes. People move two meters away at crossroads, with the polite demonstration of understanding. We ask if it goes well, we chat, when we perhaps didn't do it before. One goes towards an embellished curiosity. What does this person feel? Can I help them if they need it? Even, a good word of hope? Another way of seeing?

Sometimes we receive help. Unhoped-for help at a crossroad, prolonged attention, a few words exchanged, fraternal, smiling eyes.

### A NEW REALITY

There are anecdotes. In the subway, I tried to lower my mask a little to be able to blow my nose, but it was caught... in a second mask! I had forgotten that I had lowered one and had a second one. A passenger sitting in front of me started laughing when she saw me struggling. I told her:

I had forgotten that I was already wearing one! She replied: The other day, I had three!!! Then our little island of strangers began to laugh heartily.

### SHARED REALITIES

Then the interactions via the means that technology offers us delightful moments: we see parents, friends, colleagues, often a little excited to be on TV, a charming shivering insecurity. Smiles that are so real and a little disorganized, in total humility. We must remember this dear emotion while it is in its infancy, before it becomes an adult. Let's still remember what beautiful adults our children make! Let's imagine what all this easy richness of contacts will develop!


Finally, ideas, new approaches and actions towards a more local economy are already germinating. A balm for our planet! For us, better, fresher, more resistant edible products from home. It's getting organized. Another piece of good news: vaccine production here; an expertise that, without much reasoning, had been put off until later.

### THAT'S THE REALITY COMING


Of course, all these awakenings of consciousness will not enlighten the entire population, but we can dream that a glow remains in the young minds and that it be for the benefit of our beautiful planet that it will now watch over.

It is the present offering us a future in the making.





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# I AM HERE FOR YOU!

**Carole Guévin**

## CALL FOR COMMITMENT

Having followed various training courses that prepared me to accompany lonely and sick people, I decided to become involved as a worker in rural areas with a vulnerable clientele living in difficult situations. Strangely, two years earlier, while I was at the church in the municipality of Yamaska, a poster had caught my attention: it was the advertisement of a position that corresponded to my personality, my work experience and my personal aspirations. A community worker, a real wink from Mother Delia!

## ITMAV, WHAT IS IT?

I introduced myself to the ITMAV – Montérégie-East Service Group, whose program was set up by the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Seniors and Close Caregivers. Community-based initiatives working with vulnerable seniors. ITMAV stands for Community-based Initiatives Working with Vulnerable Seniors. This free and confidential service is offered to people aged 50 and over who are experiencing difficult situations such as the loss of a loved one, isolation, abuse or disconnection from the health network. The services offered consist of attentive listening, support in determining the person's needs, home visits, solutions discussed with the elder and vigilant follow-up throughout the process. The program's priority is to maintain the person at home in his living environment.

## MAJOR CHALLENGE

The main challenge is to try to reach seniors who live in rural areas where neighbors are often far apart. Covering a vast territory is a great challenge. Added to it is the fact that I am not from the area. So my first task was to make myself known to the population.

## INSPIRED STRATEGY

I started the process of the ITMVA program as soon as possible. I presented an offer of service in all the municipalities served by my mandate and placed advertisements in each of the municipal newspapers, then I sent a pamphlet to about 20 community organizations. I became a member of an association of seniors' organizations in the region. I used social created media and a Facebook page to gain visibility.

{ Many thank me  
for having called or  
listened to them. }

## FRIENDSHIP CALLS

During the pandemic and the lockdown, it was impossible for me to visit people at home. I made friendship calls. A few words of introduction are enough to introduce myself. *Hello, my name is Carole, I am a community worker in your region. The purpose of my call is to hear from you. How are you doing today?* The reception is mostly positive. Many thank me for having called or listened to them. Others hesitate before confiding in me. I ask those I call if they are well surrounded by their children or friends, what are their activities and interests? A bond of trust is established and, at that moment, the elder at the other end of the line opens up to me, shares his worries, his loneliness, his needs. I listen to him. There are people who are grieving after 60 years of living together, the loss of a loved one leaves a great void; I listen to them attentively, I show





Photo: Jean-Luc Pulinckx

them all the compassion possible. Others are being abused. Nicole expresses her dismay: *I am grateful for the listening, support and kind words you have given me during this very difficult time in my life. I was discouraged, desperate and above all, helpless in the face of my situation; I had no resources to get through this ordeal...*

There are also people of 91, 93 and even 98 years of age for whom living alone is a choice. These people are happy to live in their homes and they tell me beautiful stories of solidarity. For example, in one case, the neighbor across the street brings dinner every day, and in another case, it is the young neighbor who clears the snow-covered stairs. Some are fortunate to have their children living nearby who, by providing them with the necessary care and attention, accompany them as they grow older. These calls of friendship are true gospel testimonies that touch me deeply. It is really beautiful to hear.

One day, Hélène, a caregiver, sent me an email. She was torn apart by her parents' unwanted separation. Her 91-year-old father was in a residence and her 88-year-old mother, who had Alzheimer's, had to stay in a nursing home. She expressed her gratitude as follows: *Hello Mrs. Guévin, thank you very much for everything... I feel "supported" by you and I must admit that your help is very precious to me! For some time now, I was beginning to wonder if all this was beyond my strength! I express all my gratitude to you! (...) Dad's reason for living was to take care of Mom and us children! How is he going to get through the "after" period, when Mom will no longer be with him? And from your first meeting with him, you said the right words to give him a new sense of meaning and joy in his own life. You reassured me when you said, I am always available if you need my help. And your little sentence written in red at the bottom of your email... I am there for you! 💕*

# With You, O Lord!



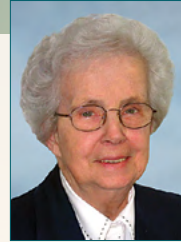
**MADELEINE ALARIE, M.I.C.**

*Sister Marie-Albert*

**1929-2020**

**St-Fidèle, Quebec**

A visit to an orphanage at the age of 4 impresses Madeleine: a nun took care of the little babies. Let's dream! Entering the novitiate at the dawn of her seventeenth year, on August 8, 1946, Sister Madeleine left for the Philippines in 1955. A woman of faith, vision, daring and devotion, she brought comfort and appropriate care to the needy of all kinds, including the orphans of the Child Jesus Home. In 1980, when she returned to Quebec, she studied nursing sciences and then went to Haiti for 15 years to help in our hospital in Limbé and in our two centers for the elderly. Once her dreams had been realized, Sister Madeleine joined those she had loved and served so well, on August 12, 2020.



**MARIE-PAULE MICHAUD, M.I.C.**

*Sister St-Jude*

**1925-2020**

**Montreal, Quebec**

Gifted with a joyful and adaptable personality, Sister Marie-Paule will have a fulfilling fraternal and professional life. Entering the Novitiate in 1944, she left for Cuba in 1951 where her education enabled her to prepare young people to meet the challenges of life. The Cuban Revolution of 1960 brought her back to her country, but Bolivia and Peru in turn benefited from her rich talents, among other things, in the direction of our *Maria-de-la-Providencia* College. Competence and warm relationships created permanent ties. When she returned to Montreal in 1989, the varied tasks of the General Secretariat were fulfilled until her declining health led her to live her Mission in a different way. Dear Marie-Paule, thank you for keeping eternally alive the bonds so tenderly created.



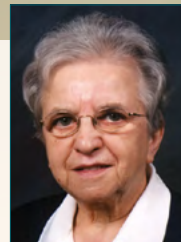
**MIREILLE MORIN, M.I.C.**

*Sister St-Jacques-de-Compostelle*

**1938-2020**

**Montreal, Quebec**

Gifted with a great sense of responsibility, Mireille took on many challenges during her life. After studies in humanities and social sciences, she was welcomed at the novitiate on August 8, 1958. In 1968, equipped with a competence in medical technology, she left for Kaseye (Malawi) where the pharmacy, clinical laboratory and technician training services were created. Back in Quebec, she supervised the writing of the volume *FEMMES SANS FRONTIÈRES* (author Chantal Gauthier) relating the 100 years of the Institute. She saw to the installation of 2 steles: in Outremont (Maplewood and Springgrove streets) and in Pont-Viau on the Berge Delia Tétreault, underlining the grandiose work of our Venerable Foundress. Then, a cognitive loss slowly developed in our dear Mireille who suddenly left us on October 29, 2020.



**LUCILLE MÉTIVIER, M.I.C.**

*Sister Marie-de-Sion*

**1926-2020**

**Buckland, Quebec**

At the age of 20, Sister Lucille received her letter of admission to the novitiate and then informed her parents who finally agreed to her project, which took place on August 8, 1946. She was passionate about reading the Precursor. In 1955, Haiti welcomed her as an educator, her mission for 25 years. As she left, she wrote: *Farewell, dear Haiti. You have given me a lot. Thank you with all my heart!* After a period of rest, she taught French at our Center for Immigrants in Quebec City and then became a Street Missionary helping Mr. Gilles Kègle, the street nurse in Quebec City. *There, I discovered the true face of the Lord in the poor; they will always have, with my students, a warm place in my heart.* Sublime Mission, dear Lucille, an eternal mission.



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# Life...

*All things are metamorphosed  
Nothing is ever quite the same...*

*This is the secret of things,  
That's what life is all about...*

*What we see  
What we hear and feel,  
A flower, a bird  
A child's laughter  
As the seasons go by...*

*There is no point in trying to understand,  
Just give or take,  
Just be there when you need to be there...*

*The important thing is what happens  
Inside us, all inside of us...  
You have to take all the time  
That life gives us,  
Time to look, to admire  
All the beauty of the world.  
That's what life is all about...*

*Marie Claude Tétreault*

Photo: Jo-Anne Guindon

