# MIC VOL. 48, N° 4 | OCTOBER · NOVEMBER · DECEMBER 2021 | \$5.00 NISSION NEWS

To sow seeds of joy and hope! — Since 1923





#### **MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS - 2021**

Let us keep in our prayer all the victims of the pandemic and confidently entrust our concerns in the heart of the Lord.

#### **OCTOBER**

#### Intention for evangelization

- Missionary disciples: We pray that every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization and available to the mission by being witnesses of a life that has a Gospel flavour.

#### **NOVEMBER**

Universal intention – People who suffer from depression: We pray that people who suffer from depression or burnout will find support and a light that opens them up to life.

#### **DECEMBER**

#### Intention for evangelization

- Catechists: Let us pray for the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God: may they be its witnesses with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### 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

### Daring to be Reborn

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#### **EDITORIAL**

### A New Beginning



By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

With the rhythm of the seasons, the leaves on the trees amaze us with their shimmering colors, going from yellow and red to

renewing themselves in spring with a tender, promise-filled green. In the same way, MIC Mission News magazine is having to reinvent itself in order to move forward. It is, in fact, necessary to know how to turn the page to be born again.

Indeed, for a hundred years, MIC Mission News has been able to adapt to society's many transformations. Always on the alert, listening, to reach its readership efficiently and maintain its course to deliver a message of joy and hope.

As we learned in our enquiry letter, many of our faithful subscribers regret the end of the paper magazine and will no longer be able to follow us because of their advanced age and lack of Internet. Our hearts are saddened and we would like to thank them for their loyalty and their loving testimony. Nowadays, digital technology is becoming an imperative, a must in our everchanging world.

How many times in her life our Foundress, Venerable Délia Tétreault, had to make difficult choices. But after praying and gathering information, she would courageously move forward, not only for herself but for her foundation and for the entire Church. Her leitmotif: courage and trust. Daring to take modern roads that seem beyond us, with the certainty that it is the right path. To go forward and dare to be born again.



Photo: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

In the Gospel of John 3:1-21, the evangelist presents Nicodemus, a teacher of the law, who went to consult Jesus at night: *What must I do to have eternal life?* Jesus answered, *You must be born again from above.* Wow, what an answer! Despite his naivety, Nicodemus understood, because we find him at the end of the Gospel braving the soldiers to give Jesus a decent burial.

Even today, in order to be reborn, we must be bold, have solid convictions and move forward. At present, we are in a state of birth. We want a website where Internet users will find themselves at the heart of the mission in different countries, will taste the joy of an international life where interculturality, steeped in respect, becomes a source of richness. A click will transport you to the heart of the cultures where we work.

May our message reach the hearts of those who remain with us. As for those who are leaving us, be assured that our grateful prayer accompanies you. Thanks to all of you!

Marie Taulo Sunfacon, m.i.c.

## With Gratitude and Boldness: Bravely Facing the Future!

In 2002, during the hundred-year anniversary of our Institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, a poet, Fr. Éloy Roy, P.M.É., offered us a beautiful tribute: Cent ans de soleil (One Hundred Years of Sunshine), a luminous text that comes to mind when I think of another recent centenary: that of our magazine, Le Précurseur (MIC Mission News), in May 2020. The planned celebrations have been all but cancelled, due to the pandemic, making it a rather discreet jubilee! One hundred years of sunshine to you as well, celebrated magazine!



By Micheline Marcoux, M.I.C.

As MIC Mission News prepares to take on new challenges, gratitude wells up in my heart. There are so many reasons to give thanks for all

that has been achieved by our thousands of subscribers, women and men, over the past century! And isn't gratitude one of the characteristics dear to Venerable Délia Tétreault, our Foundress, who gave birth to this magazine, which was an innovative project at the time? Now, here we are at the dawn of a renewal, daring to bravely face the future well beyond the age of one hundred!

#### A Prophetic Name

Today is a perfect day to be writing this article. It's June 24, feast of Saint John the Baptist, nicknamed the Precursor! It is this symbolic name that Délia

Tétreault was inspired to choose for this modest magazine; at the time, it was called an *annal*. The name was not taken at random. It was meant to illustrate the mission that would characterize this missionary periodical, following the example of its patron saint!

At that time, our first missionaries were in China. Our Foundress was responding to a desire expressed by the benefactors and friends of the Institute for news from the distant missions. She was also encouraged by the Archbishop of Montreal, Msgr. Paul Bruchési, and the Bishop of Canton in China, Msgr. Jean de Guébriant, as mentioned in the editorial of the first issue. It goes on to say: There is an even more powerful reason for this: in his audiences and in his private and public correspondence, the Supreme Pontiff insists more than ever on the need to promote the work of the missions by all possible means. This is still true today!



#### Délia and the Means of Communication

Our Foundress knew how to leverage the means of communication proper to her time to foster evangelization, to stimulate and support missionary activities. The magazine was a primary tool. Mother Délia used creativity to provide missionary educators with suitable pedagogical means. Who remembers the magic lantern with its glass plates, ancestor of the slide projector? Our Archives and the Délia-Tétreault Museum keep its memory alive. So many technological instruments, more and more modern, have been used to illustrate the testimonies and missionary stories, during tours of parishes and schools across the country!

For decades, the Sisters have travelled the roads to present MIC Mission News, Holy Childhood and Propagation of the Faith. Meeting people and visiting families and children were part of this outreach, which continued until recently. The visit of the missionaries opened our minds and hearts to those faraway countries. At the time of our first missions in China, in 1909, only the telegraph and the post office connected us. Can we even imagine that in the digital age?

And once again, we are facing new realities. After following changes in every era, we are now making another difficult choice: to go from a paper magazine to a digital magazine, as of the next issue. Quite a challenge for our subscribers—and for us!

#### The Future Unfolds

Any change on the horizon will bring about mixed feelings. The pandemic has certainly taught us to find new approaches. However the future of our magazine has been on the drawing board for a few years now. We are at a point of no return. One thing is certain: we must reinvent ourselves to move forward in a world of continuous change, where digital technology has become a must.

While remaining faithful to our primary mission, we see this change as an opportunity to create something new with the younger generations and

to meet the challenges of today. You can't imagine reading your magazine digitally? Why not ask your grandson to help you get started or to take over?

With a hopeful heart, I quote a phrase from John Paul II (Vita Consecrata, no. 110), echoed in 2014 by Pope Francis, to people of consecrated life:

You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished! Look at the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things. ...

## One Hundred Years of Sunshine

I am not old, I am only one hundred years old. One hundred years of sunshine In one spring!

My home is the world All lands, my friends. My true language is love And the Gospel, my life!

I am not old, I am only one hundred years old. Barely a sunrise On a spring morning!

Here, today, There is no past. There is only now Filled with one hundred years of life. One hundred years gathered in one great cry: Thank you, God. Thank you, God!

Éloy Roy, P.M.É.

# The Benefits of Interculturality



By France Royer-Martel, M.I.C.

As I write this, an African proverb pops into my mind: *Alone we go faster, together we go further.* It surprises me and makes me wonder about how it

connects to my topic. After a long period of reflection, I realize that its deepest link with the title of the article resides in the courage to dare to reawaken to the dream of Foundress Délia Tétreault, which was both unique and identical to God's and to Pope Francis': *To become brothers and sisters of all, without exception!* The space allotted to me is limited and the subject broad. I will therefore highlight some of the benefits of interculturality, those that keep alive the Hope rooted deep within humans.

#### Together, Building Relationships

Far from impoverishing us, interculturality is a gift from God to humanity, to enrich us and to broaden our potential. This gift calls us to develop quality connections within us and between us. Quality relationships, created and nurtured with patience, humility and serenity—be they at a fraternal, professional or other level—bring people much further than they might have imagined. Behind these human relationships lies an incredible potential for creativity and innovation. Alone, we go faster; together, we go further! This saying is true. It has brought great success to those who involved in intercultural relations. I do not claim that the path is easy and that everything happens magically. No, I am talking about experience. As the Little Prince says, It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important.

Unknown people are scary. Unknown people often appear as a threat. Differences frighten us, drive us apart. Our language changes. We use: we/they, my culture/their culture, ours/their, for example.

This aspect of difference deserves to be considered and questioned. Differences are intentional. They exist; they cannot be denied nor erased. We would do well to view them as positive and enriching. Each culture, each country offers authentic and unique cultural values, full of riches that only ask to be shared with those willing to receive them. These riches cover many areas, such as communication, arts, religious values, music, food, literature, habits and customs, ways of thinking, being and acting, and more.

For us M.I.C., living, together in our difference implies accepting our personal limits and adopting positive attitudes such as openness, welcoming the other unconditionally, loving kindness, dialogue, patience, interest, listening and mutual support. Together, getting involved and participating in provincial or international community events requires members of the Institute to be open-minded and openhearted. In interculturality, time is a determining factor. And this is where the African proverb catches up with us. It's easy to agree with oneself when alone and to move forward. It's quick and there are no obstacles. But together, it takes much longer. We make plans, we undo them, we start again from a new standpoint, we lose a lot of time, but we always end up finding unsuspected outcomes that take us further than expected. A slow transformation takes place. Interculturality makes us capable of



Interculturality in Pont-Viau, Laval - Photo: M.-P. Sanfaçon, m.i.c.

dealing with differences, without opposition, without agressiveness. This connection is vital and creates positive attitudes in the heart and a space of joy and satisfaction.

### ... the other becomes a brother or sister to be loved..

#### **Universal Communion**

The purpose of interculturality is communion. Then, a deep and lasting communion is born between people. This unique bond allows people to experience a new joy that leaves traces of happiness and peace. Thus, interculturality moves from the head to the heart. It is no longer simply a concept but a positive slow process that opens new paths and provides concrete answers to particular situations that are waiting for dynamic creative elements. The other person no longer appears a threat; the other person becomes a brother or sister to be loved, protected and defended if necessary, a brother or sister with whom it is good to live. Life becomes more beautiful, more harmonious! And in some cultures, we add, for life!

#### **Creation of a New Humanity**

But interculturality is threatened in a world where people kill each other for a yes or a no, and where some power-hungry leaders advocate violence. This dream of the heart—to create a new humanity—clashes with reality, surprises and raises questions. It is not uncommon for people to ask us questions. Disconcerted, they ask us: How do you do it? How do you manage to live together when you are so different from each other?

Nothing is easy. It is enough to develop a lucid outlook on cultural differences (positive and negative) in our daily lives, including our own culture, and to practice the language of Love. In his book, Jonathan Livingston Seagull, Richard Bach writes, It was by practicing kindness that I discovered the true nature of love.

If Mother Délia were alive, she would surely write to us, *Have courage and trust! Educate your gaze and practice the language of Love!* These are two evangelical attitudes to prioritize for those wanting to make the most of interculturality and to experience some of its benefits, including that *of becoming brothers and sisters to all, without exception!* Together, let's dare to reawaken and choose Life!

## First Recipient of the **PROMIS Award: Lucille La Salle**



Photos: Aïda Berberovic

Before joining PROMIS as a volunteer, Sr. Lucille La Salle, M.I.C., was a missionary in Africa, notably in Malawi and Zambia, for 20 years. Upon her return to Canada, she chose to get involved with PROMIS in order to pursue her mission of helping people.

Lucille La Salle was involved in the francization service, offering discussion groups to newcomers in order to improve their knowledge of the language. She was then paired with several families in the family support services. At the same time, she participated in many activities such as workshops, cafés-rencontres, visits to certain Quebec cities, annual general meetings, public conferences and more.

As of June 22, 2021, we award Lucille La Salle, M.I.C., the first PROMIS award in recognition of her exceptional contribution as a volunteer to our organization over the past 20 years, particularly in the family support services.

Over the years, we have been honoured by her presence and greatly helped by her precious support to our immigrant families. Her volunteer work, both in terms of duration and quality, makes her stand out as an exemplary figure for both the PROMIS of today and tomorrow.

For all this, we thank her deeply. **PROMIS Management** 

## Following Christ TO THE VERY END

Reflecting on the beatitudes as the foundation of understanding the commitment to religious life and the evangelical counsels, the novices from the Inter-Provincial/Regional Englishspeaking Noviciate in the province of St. Joseph, Philippines, have this to share:

The invitation to live the beatitudes challenges me to abandon my will and to embrace God's Holy Will, which includes his essential call to happiness. My embracing religious life invites me

to participate in making the Church and my community alive with God's goodness and a call to love Him and others. Thus, this call challenges me to consecrate myself in freedom in order to fully surrender to His Most Holy Will. *By Maria Bentry Msiska* 

St. Paul would say, Both in life and in death, we are the Lord's. I do not live for myself; I live for Him, who chose me to live true happiness. This makes me realize that vocation is not what I choose to do in life, it is a free gift that God offers me each day. Thus St. Paul continues by saying, When we die, we do not die for ourselves, we die as his servants, and thus, in moments of challenges, of death to oneself, I am reminded to embrace humility, and to say, like Mary, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let your will be done unto me." By Teresa Tran Thi Hoai Nhi

The word *follow* had always appeared to me as a command, but now I see it as a gift received at baptism from God. No matter which life God is calling me to, I know I am first called to be holy and to be in union with him and to connect with others. In this call to holiness, God is opening a path for me toward happiness. Thus, the life of vows is transformed



M.I.C. Novices from Baguio, Philippines - Photo: MIC

from being a burden to be observed, to being a living conscience and a call to freedom. It is to be loved by God and to search for his Holy will in everything. **By Maria Bao Yanjie** 

The psalmist exclaims, How can I repay the Lord for all the goodness he has done to me? I realize I have been seduced by the gratuitous love of God, whose gaze penetrates my being through the beatitudes. It is God Himself purifying me and entering deeply into my life. In my moments of doubt and questioning, God is inviting me to encounter Him face to face, to let go and learn to be compassionate, merciful and kind. Thus, the beatitudes allow me to enter deeply into my human realities and to accept that I am nothing without his graces. I do not live for myself and so I have the courage to say, Here I am Lord; I come to do your will. By Fe Batoy Golveo

Compiled by Sr. Ruth Christine Nyalazi, M.I.C., with permission from the MIC Novices, Baguio





By Marie Nadia Noël, M.I.C.

We often hear from parents and teachers, and even sometimes from our loved ones, You have to know when to turn the page.

Turning the page is like sweeping everything away with a wave of the hand? As if nothing had ever existed, nothing had ever been, as if everything could be erased in one go, as if it was necessary to move on quickly?

How do we help a learner turn the page and move on with her life as a student, without rushing her? Because sometimes, others want to turn the page for us at their pace, rather than ours. We want to share Anna Laura's story with you.

Dear Teacher,

I am writing to you today to tell you that I think of you often. Indeed, you live in my dreams and thoughts. But most of all I want to thank you. You have perhaps forgotten me. But I have not forgotten you, because you are one of the people I met who helped me turn the page and move on.

If you remember me, in eighth grade I wanted to drop everything. I was fed up with life. I was a rebellious, scrappy teenager. That's the image I projected at that time in my life. But you, with your inscrutable gaze, saw something else. You took the time to listen to me, to look at me, to talk to me. Your kind gaze marked me for life.

In December, I had not gotten on my report card the marks required by the ministry. You took me in and, together, we drew up a chart of tasks. You called

it the self-regulation chart. Above it were thoughts from Délia Tétreault: Put energy into what you do. Everything worth doing is worth doing well. These two sentences still nourish me today. Thanks to your presence, I have come to see myself differently, to turn the page and move from nonchalance to success. This change was not easy to make, but I had help. I came to understand that the story in the book of our lives is a story of the heart. Before we turn the page, this page, maybe we just need to open our hearts. Yes, with you by my side, I opened the book of my life, a big book sometimes open and often closed. In moments of joy and happiness, I want to reread the same paragraphs and pages several times. In the difficult moments, I also want to tear out pages. Thank you for being there for me.



It is my turn to send this beautiful young girl all my gratitude for her openness and her desire to experience other things such as gentleness, beauty, love, benevolence, self-regulation...

Giving a teenager support is not an easy task. But it is a gift for the other and for oneself. It is an opportunity to open to the unexpected and to learn to adapt moment by moment as we journey together. Anna Laura and I took the time to talk about our convictions, our values and our dreams.

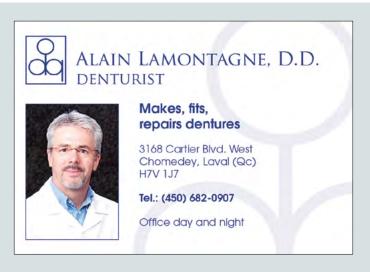
As teachers, we do not choose the ground we're given. We scatter seeds in small or large quantities. We sow everywhere. We sow in lands devastated and burned by violence, hatred or misery; we sow



Anna-Laura Lyncé, Haïti - Photo: Sephaurah Elysee

in lands ploughed by love, trial, suffering and prayer; we also sow in accessible lands with welcoming hearts. Our attitude is one of gratuity, charity and hope. It reminds us that hope does not disappoint. Through it, we start from faith and go straight to love. On the wings of love, we fly toward the future as the clouds dissipate.

The story in the book of my life, of your life, of our life is a story of the heart. Before turning the page, this page, perhaps we just need to open our hearts and dare... simply dare. To turn the page is to not forget. As the tree sheds its leaves, we can get the impression that our projects and our ideas fly away. However, for each fallen leaf, a new bud is already emerging.





### Oh! This Gaze!



By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

To write a song or paint a canvas, the artist must be moved internally and reflect for a long time before setting to work. Noël Colombier

certainly immersed himself in the gaze of Jesus before composing his song, *Oh! Ce regard je ne l'oublierai jamais* (Oh! this gaze! I will never forget it). Fourth-century painter Lucas Cranach took a long time to study the life of Jesus in order to give so much depth and intensity to his gaze on canvas. It is our turn to let ourselves be challenged and touched by this look. An appointment to talk to him in a heart-to-heart.

Oh! This gaze... how many people in the Gospel had the joy of meeting the gaze of Jesus, a gaze that disturbs, that touches our state of mind, that does not leave us indifferent.

A gaze of benevolence: Jesus meets the Samaritan woman, she is touched in her heart; the adulteress is forgiven, a ray of hope changes her life.

A gaze of joy: At the wedding in Cana, Jesus sees the newlyweds' disappointment and gives abundantly. He sees little children and joyfully invites them to come to him.

A gaze of sadness: Jesus sees the distress of Jerusalem and weeps over it; he consoles the widow of Nain; he responds to Lazarus' sisters.

A challenging gaze: To the rich young man: follow me.

A gaze of anger: Jesus drives the sellers out of the temple for misusing the house of prayer.

A gaze of compassion: Peter, do you love me? Jesus forgives. Love is stronger than betrayal.

A gaze of wonder at the simple widow's small offering at the gate of the Temple.

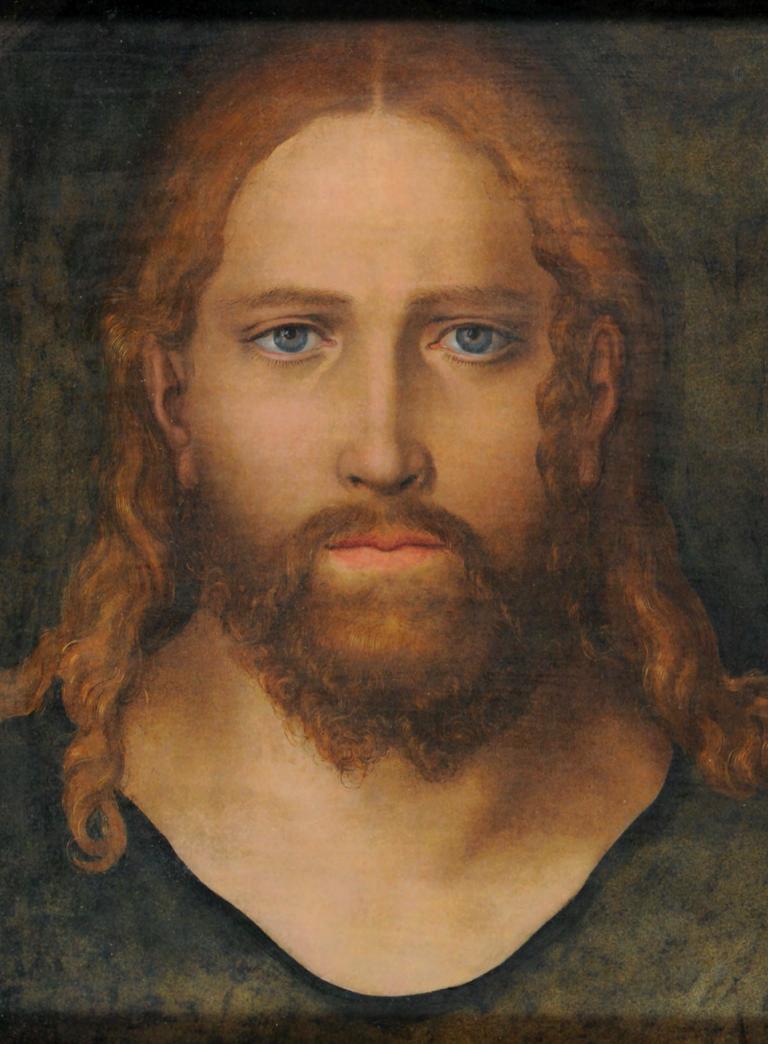
A gaze of love from the good Shepherd who knows each one of his sheep.

There are so many other examples of Jesus' gaze transforming lives. And today, Jesus is looking at us. This painting by Lucas Cranach, with its miraculous brushwork and ardent faith, invites us to let ourselves be touched by this gaze. The artist knew how to render the depth that challenges us. Look at it in a moment of intense prayer, and let his gaze inhabit you; Jesus will connect with you.

Many people will no longer be able to follow us on the Internet, so I want to leave you this figure of Christ as a pledge of our faithful prayer for all of your intentions. •

Picture: Oil on canvas by Lucas Cranach

<sup>-</sup> Germany, around 1516-1520 (www.wikiart.org)



### Daring to Be Reborn: MIC Mission News, YESTERDAY TO TODAY

The last paper issue of a magazine or newspaper often marks readers' imagination and represents a turning point in its history. Some periodicals close their doors for good; others promise to return; and still others adapt and renew themselves, often opting for a new format. This last category fits MIC Mission News, as its final paper issue is the beginning of a transition to the digital. This new challenge is perfectly in line with a kind of boldness that has been part of its hundred-year-old history. In fact, viewed from various standpoints, this history shows that the need for rebirth is continuous.



By Éric Desautels Rebirth on a Mission

First of all, there is the missionary activity itself which, from time immemorial, has implied a certain type of rebirth. Missionaries, be they religious or lay, must be reborn in their host country. Their vocation urges them to do so constantly. In the pages of this magazine, in 1992, Father Robert T. Mwaungulu emphasized the essential need for missionaries to be reborn in another people:

Integration into a new social environment for the sake of the Good News of Christ necessarily involves a culture shock. Missionaries must somehow be reborn: learning a new language, translating and communicating the faith with the signs and symbols of another culture. They leave behind family, friends and the social amenities known in their country: good transportation, television, telephone, food, running water, electricity, to get by with the much simpler means of their adopted country.1

From his experience in Malawi, he notes that it is through friendships and personal relationships that such a sense of rebirth is developed. This feeling, he says, is stimulated by core values found on the ground, including hospitality, compassion, affection and community life.

#### Rebirth in a Changing World

The need for rebirth has also been felt from within the Catholic Church itself. It is easy to think of the reflections triggered by the SecondVatican Council in the 1960s. The pages of MIC Mission News spoke a great deal about the theme of renewal: renewing one's faith, attracting young people, modernizing the Church and its institutions, redefining foreign missions, and so on. This desire to move the Church forward and to dare to be reborn in the contemporary world has not ceased since.

Such reflections on the renewal of the Church and the missions have therefore been pursued constantly over the years, in the pages of the magazine. In 2000, Father Bertrand Roy spoke of the modern mission of the Church to continue the work of Christ in a constantly changing global marketplace of exchange:

This mission requires the Church to renew itself constantly and to move forward with courage and freedom in paths to which it is lead by the Spirit. This missionary renewal means much more than a



streamline of activities or ecclesial structures. It is first and foremost the result of a holistic renewal.2

This form of rebirth is therefore not only structural or organizational, but first and foremost personal.

Throughout the ages, the missionary revival that can be seen in the pages of MIC Mission News has been closely linked to a desire to be born and reborn, to modernize, to look critically at oneself and adapt, and to question and renew one's faith. On the other hand, this desire to be reborn has not always occurred smoothly. Tensions have sometimes remained palpable between the attraction of modernity and the desire to live one's Catholicism according to tradition.3 These tensions illustrate the variety of opinions and ideas that circulate in the magazine, while also illustrating that it is modernizing and evolving.

#### Daring to Be Reborn... and to Be a Precursor!

Although this renewal has sometimes created tensions, it has led the magazine to find its way into thousands of homes for over a hundred years. The boldness of the magazine's creators has contributed to the spiritual, religious and cultural reflections of its readership. The varied and experienced contributors to the magazine have evolved, particularly in terms of the place given to the laity. Past writings reveal the importance granted to this idea of rebirth and renewal, even if it was sometimes timid.

Having marked more than one generation, the paper version of MIC Mission News has awakened the population to the efforts of Quebec missionaries and to their influence, challenges and difficulties. From a modest format in its first decades, the magazine moved to color paper, added high-quality images, adopted new formats, embraced glossy paper, was digitized and put online. The magazine is still being called to evolve and adapt with the times, while remaining faithful to its mission. A new era is knocking at our doors. The paper MIC Mission News is dead, long live the digital vision! •

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Robert T. Mwaungulu, J.C.D., "Chiuta... culture shock," MIC Mission News, vol. 36, no. 7, January-February 1992, p. 202.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Bertrand Roy, P.M.E., The Essence of the Mission, MIC Mission News, vol. 27, n° 4, october-november-december 2000, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For example, the missionary prayer intentions for November 1972 were: "That the neophytes may take care that their fellow citizens, too attracted by the science and technology of the modern world, may not be turned away from divine things. AG 11."



Living in this wounded world reawakens in us a growing desire to meet and to reflect together on the important issues in this challenging period for the Church and the world. To look up and to discover that the world needs us, women and men together. Does the Lord not invite us to recognize that we become sisters and brothers in humanity in this vulnerable condition?

#### By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

#### Going Forth to Meet Others

From the very beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis has called on us to be a Church that goes forth. Every Christian, every community, must discern the path that the Lord is pointing out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel. 1 It's an invitation to be attentive to the most fragile among us. God continues to transform the world and invites us to open our arms and collaborate.

We are indeed invited to go out, wearing our heart on our sleeve, to listen to others, to be poor among the poor, to walk with those who suffer in silence, to walk with the wounded on the battlefield of life —are we not all vulnerable?—and to feel touched by the wounds of the people we meet. Nowadays, family conflicts have increased unreasonably, and we are concerned. Feminicide, which is increasingly being brought to our attention by the media, is an issue that concerns us greatly. And the pandemic has exacerbated the situation. A Sister from Bolivia spoke of families confined in small homes, of lost jobs and school closures, all of which considerably increase conjugal and parental conflicts. In these new contexts, the Son of God invites us to a revolution of tenderness.2 With Ginette Reno, let us sing, De ces instants où tout bascule: Fais-moi la tendresse (In those moments when everything is turned upside down: show me some tenderness). Yes, humanity needs tenderness now more than ever.

#### The Voices of Women

We talk about our wounded world, but what about our Church? Often, when we look at the life of Christians in the Church, our hearts ache. In Quebec, a corporation called Women and Ministries is concerned with how culture, society and the Church are evolving, and especially with the progress of women in the Church, with justice and with everything that concerns discrimination and exclusion. For my part, I am convinced that if the Church listened a little more to the voices of women, there would be changes, not only in the Church but also in our world.

#### If the Church listened a little more to the voices of women, there would be changes...

I am always happy to see women involved in politics, women like Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany since 2005. She has braved many storms and has always stayed the course. And there are so many others. Let us only mention Michelle Obama, Kamala Harris and the young activist Greta Thunberg. Most recently, on July 8, I was delighted by the election of Rose Anne Archibald as Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

I appreciate Pope Francis very much, but I would like him to be a little less cautious when it comes to the role of women in the Church. Is it because of the Roman curia? He has just written the encyclical, Fraterni Tutti, which translates to All brothers. Why not have written All sisters and brothers? The whole of humanity would have felt addressed. The Church deprives itself of the richness of femininity.

It is not a question of competition or power, but of recognizing the competence and contribution of women in decision-making that concerns the whole of humanity. Didn't Christ have feminine feelings when he stopped to consider the fate of the widow on her way to bury her only son? Was



he not sensitive to the death of his friend Lazarus? A feminine contribution would imply an openness to seeking points of contact that would include everyone. In Genesis 2:27 it is written, Male and female he created them. It is a pity that this passage often goes unnoticed. Important steps have been taken, but there is still more to do to reach the whole of humanity.

In our time, we would need a Saint Catherine of Siena to enhance the feminine cause in the Church. This little woman drew her inner strength from her relationship with God.3 Following her example, let us pray for the life of our Church and our society in order to spread the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ. Let us not be afraid to sow, and one day the harvest will be good and abundant. The joy of living together in respect and understanding of the other is a project for all, a goal, a path of hope. ~

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Joy of the Gospel, 2013, Ed. Médiaspaul, p. 20 n°. 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Joy of the Gospel, n°. 88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "La cellule intérieure," J. Lison, *Prions en Église*, vol. 33, n° 7, pp. 1, 2.



## Collecting Memories to Better Envision the Future



By Maurice Demers

In a time likes this one, when the role of the Catholic Church in the 21<sup>th</sup> century is being questioned, I would like to share with you some

conversations I had with religious men and women. From 2016 to 2018, I undertook a project to collect the memories of former missionaries who went to Latin America, in order to take stock of their experiences of adapting to new territories, of solidarity with the people there, and of renewal of faith. In order to preserve these life experiences, two documentaries were made with the help of filmmaker Stephanie Lanthier: Memories of Catholic Missionaries in Latin America: Militancy and Human Rights During the Cold War (2021) and Commitment, Resistance and Faith: Quebec Missionaries in Latin America (2020). The website https://www.missionnairesquebecois.ca/ was created this year to host the two documentaries.

I bring this up in this article because there is a page on this website called *Citizen's Space*. If you know missionaries who have been to Latin America and want to share their experiences, you are invited to film a short interview using a cellphone and to upload it for inclusion on the website. This will help preserve these important memories. A procedure for conducting the interviews is provided, and I can always answer your questions to guide you through the process.

Preserving these memories is not only important, but it also helps create new relationships. For example, in the video *The friendship between Jean Ménard and Michel Chartrand*, Jean Ménard tells us how, while he was a missionary during the government of Salvador Allende,<sup>2</sup> he took the famous trade unionist on a tour of Chile. He shares with us the values of human dignity that brought him



Two Friends: Jean Ménard and Michel Chartrand – www.missionnairesquebecois.ca

Augusto Pinochet's coup of September 11, 1973.

After this video was posted on the Citizen's Space page, Claudia Fuentes, a woman who left Chile with her family after the coup and who now lives in Quebec, contacted me. She told me how important Jean Ménard, whom she considers a spiritual father, has been in her life. The videos on the website are the only audiovisual memories she has of Jean Ménard. I suggested that we do a short interview with her so she could share the impact he had on her life. This video, which will speak to the importance of Jean Ménard in the life of a Chilean refugee in Quebec, will in turn be added to the site.

Many religious men and women have had a very positive influence on the lives of immigrants from Haiti and

#### Missionaries have stories to tell that are worth passing on to future generations.

Latin America. These stories must be preserved in order to have an accurate picture of the historical impact of religious communities on society. Their international influence is the origin of most of the North-South solidarity programs we are familiar with in Quebec today. Missionaries have stories to tell that are worth passing on to future generations. •

<sup>1</sup> https://www.missionnairesquebecois.ca/espace-citoyen/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.missionnairesquebecois.ca/lamitie-entre-jean-menard-et-michel-chartrand/

### To Honor Mother Délia

Since its beginnings, the missionary magazine, *Le Précurseur*, now called *MIC Mission News* in English, has benefited from the precious support of collaborators who are also friends of Venerable Délia Tétreault and of our Institute. On more than one occasion, our magazine has spotlighted Quebecers who have been its faithful followers and who have dedicated themselves to, for instance, distributing our magazine. Today, I would like to introduce you to other friends, Cubans living in the United States, whom I have known personally.



#### A New Life in a New Land

I was first introduced to Dr. Gerardo Bustillo and Dr. Olga Ramirez, both

physicians who left their country at the beginning of Fidel Castro's reign on their island. This was in the 1960s. They arrived in Canada as refugees, stripped of everything, with their three small children. In Cuba, they had been devoted doctors to the teachers and boarders at our college in Colón. We welcomed them temporarily in Montreal, as they intended to go to the United States. Their two daughters, Maria del Carmen and Olga, stayed for a year as boarding students with the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, while the parents went to the United States with their baby boy, Gerardo.

#### Fostering the Missionary Spirit

Once in Miami, the two doctors had to take the required exams to be able to practice there. Their fears were great, as Cuban colleagues had had to make several attempts before getting their credentials recognized. But the Bustillo, who had great confidence in the Foundress of our Institute, fervently prayed for her help in their efforts. On their



Doctors Gerardo and Olga Bustillo - Photo: MIC

first attempt, despite their still-hesitant English, they were admitted as doctors and were able to start a new life in their new land. They remained very grateful to the one who had helped them and also to the American people.

In his lab coat pocket, Dr. Bustillo always carried pictures and prayers to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit, which he happily distributed to his patients and other acquaintances, and suggesting that they *Pray to this lady, she will come to your aid.* He liked to talk about her on *Radio Marti* and spoke of our magazine. He and his wife welcomed in their home the missionaries of our Institute who were passing

through Miami. And they never forgot to mark the feast of the Immaculate Conception by sending us flowers and a note saying, *With our eternal gratitude*. Until the end of their lives, husband and wife showed great interest in the missions around the world, especially those of our Institute and of the Fathers of Foreign Missions.

Another couple who became friends of Mother Délia also had to live in exile. Along with their young child, Armando Fernandez and his wife, Amada Ariz, went to New Jersey, where the father got work as an engineer. Amada had been one of the first boarders at our school in Colón and remained very attached to the nuns she had known there. When she came to Canada to visit them, she got to know our Foundress better, and the young couple prayed fervently at the tomb of Mother Délia.

Both had been very active in their host parish, in the Worldwide Marriage Encounter movement. Then, the engineer's work took them to another city, where this movement had no followers and where Amada looked for a new field of apostolate. At the shrine of Saint Anne de Beaupré, she asked Saint Anne for help in her search. On July 26, she received what seemed to her to be Saint Anne's answer, on the very day she is celebrated in the Church. It was a brochure recalling the life of Mother Délia Tétreault, whose cause was being presented to Rome in view of receiving recognition from the Church for the holiness of her life. It was then that Señora Amada made this cause her new apostolate.

She gave herself wholeheartedly to it, making Mother Délia and her work known, especially among the Latinos of her new milieu, distributing pictures, leaflets and booklets about this Sister who had founded the first missionary institute in America. She shared with everyone the English version of our magazine, *MIC Mission News*. She urged priests to promote the missionary spirit in their parishes as much as possible. She invited MICs to visit her in her home, receiving them with joy, and facilitating contacts and opportunities to talk about the missions and Mother Délia.



Mrs. Amada Fernandez - Photo: MIC

Thus, accompanied by a Canadian Sister who had lived in Cuba for almost 50 years, I received hospitality in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fernandez on several occasions. With a great sense of organization, Mrs. Fernandez planned meetings in schools and with various parish groups, not only in the city where she lived but in many places in the surrounding area. Today, Mrs. Fernandez is still very active in her community, speaking about our magazine and, of course, about Mother Délia Tétreault, who has become a true friend to her.

Mrs. Amada invites her friends and acquaintances to present their spiritual and other needs to Venerable Délia Tétreault so that she may intercede for them with God. Señoras Imelda Garcìa Campo, Carmen Rubio Bertot, Flavia Marqués and others came to pray at the tomb of our Foundress and to once again see the Sisters who had taught them as teenagers. Each one of them is a missionary in her own milieu.

With them, we pray to the Lord to bless these people who are dedicated to the Church so that the missionary spirit may win the heart of every baptized person and make each one a messenger of the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.

## You, OLord



GISÈLE PICARD, M.I.C. Sister Gisèle-du-Sacré-Cœur 1932-2021 St-Roch-des-Aulnaies, Quebec

Gratitude, devotion and love for her M.I.C. Sisters permeated all of Sister Gisèle's life. From childhood, she had no shortage of hardships: her family's home burned down and the children were relocated for the time it took to rebuild. Her mother remained her inspiration. At a very young age, a religious vocation was her greatest desire, and she joyfully entered the novitiate on February 1, 1952. The adaptation was difficult but her love for Jesus helped her. Once her training was finished, she blossomed in various community services: maintenance, kitchen, bursar's office, provincial secretariat and superiorate, in Quebec, Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Cuba. The years went by, and heart disease required to slowdown. On January 5, 2021, suddenly, she joined the One who had always seduced her heart.



MARCELLE ST-GELAIS, M.I.C. Sister St-Jean-Eudes 1926-2021 Mont-Joli, Quebec

Sister Marcelle entered the novitiate on August 8, 1948, with a diploma in nursing and an inner call to serve those most in need. Work in Haiti answered her deepest aspirations in 1953. She worked with skill and joy in our various health centers. She saw in each patient a child of God to be respected and loved. Upon her final return to Quebec in 1991, her missionary heart spotted the ecclesial and social needs where she lived and she got involved in the Baptism and Confirmation ministry, the Faith and Light movement, and the L'Arche residence. In 2020, her health was the messenger of another call. She went through this final step with realism and courage, until her ultimate loving YES to her Lord, on January 5, 2021.



FRANÇOISE POIRIER, M.I.C. Sister Ange-Marie 1925-2021 Montréal, Quebec

Sister Françoise, the youngest of four children, grew up in Montréal, in an atmosphere of ease and mutual understanding. Bilingual studies, followed by classes in piano, drawing, pyrography, leather embossing, crochet, and tatting kept her busy. She perceived her call to religious life from a young age, leading her to the novitiate on August 8, 1950, following an experience in Catholic Action for young girls. In 1966, Africa welcomed her. She devoted herself to the promotion of women and to community work. Upon her return home in 1986, she said, I give thanks for having met the Lord in the Africans. The community's need for someone to run purchasing errands was filled very appropriately because Montréal held no secrets for her. THANK YOU, Françoise. Up there, please remain our errand girl.



CÉCILE MILLETTE, M.I.C. Sister Eugénie-de-Rome 1923-2021 St-Nazaire, Quebec

Sister Cécile benefited from Christian family traditions that were to underlie her entire life. After her studies at the teacher training school of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary in St-Hyacinthe, she received a diploma in education. Her involvement in Catholic Action movements led her to offer the gift of herself to the religious missionary life. Our novitiate welcomed her in 1947, and Madagascar in 1960. Open to differences, her impartiality was appreciated by her students. Underprivileged families and prisoners benefited from her presence on weekends. Upon her final return to Quebec, she accepted with great dedication to serve as provincial superior. Competence, a listening heart, gentleness and even-temperedness colored her long life, which ended on February 27, 2021. THANK YOU, dear Cécile, for your life with its many reflections of the Gospel.

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