

# MIC MISSION NEWS

VOL. 50, Nº 2 | APRIL • MAY • JUNE 2023



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

*100 Years  
of an Undaunted Mission*



The Joy of  
the Gospel:  
*LIVING*

## MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

### APRIL 2023

**For a culture of peace and non violence:** We pray for the spread of peace and non violence, by decreasing the use of weapons by states and citizens.

### MAY 2023

**For Church movements and groups:** We pray that Church movements and groups may rediscover their mission of evangelization each day, placing their own charisms at the service of needs in the world.

### JUNE 2023

**For the abolition of torture:** We pray that the international community may commit in a concrete way to ensuring the abolition of torture and guarantee support to victims and their families.

#### 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**

VOL. 50, N° 2 | APRIL • MAY • JUNE 2023

## *The Joy of the Gospel: LIVING*

- 3 | **Victory of Life** – Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.
- 4 | **Joy, Little Music of the Day**  
– Évangeline Plamondon, M.I.C.
- 6 | **Restoring Hope to Families  
of Loved Ones** – Maurice Demers
- 8 | **Between Neighbors** – Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.
- 9 | **Living Differently in Joy** – Nicole Rochon
- 10 | **The MIC Legacy in Vancouver**  
– Éric Desautels
- 12 | **Resurrection of Christ and Creation**  
– Anne-Marie Forest, painter
- 14 | **Faith, Source of Joy**  
– Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.
- 16 | **The Joy of Inspiring and Giving Light  
to Those Who Approach Us**  
– Raeliarisoa Voanginirina Séraphine, M.I.C.
- 17 | **Chinese Pastoral Centre Opens  
in Ottawa** – Cécilia Hong, M.I.C.
- 19 | **My Experience with the Tea Ceremony  
in Japan** – Suzanne Morneau, M.I.C.
- 21 | **My Vocation, the Joy of the Gospel**  
– Raeliarisoa Voanginirina Séraphine, M.I.C.
- 22 | **How Beautiful you are** – Godefroy Midy, SJ
- 23 | **With You, O Lord** – Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.

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## EDITORIAL

# Victory of Life



Vietnam martyrs – Photo M.I.C.



**By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.**

After the long months of winter, a ray of spring sunshine is most welcome. The accumulated snow melts, the grass starts to emerge and, what joy, a snowdrop offers a glimpse of a little flower.

Oh wonder, spring has arrived, the triumph of life... the maple sap is flowing, people are busy, the sugar shacks are welcoming guests who happily enjoy their maple sweets.

Joy is also present in the parishes; children, well prepared, are taking their first steps in the spiritual life, making their first contact with Jesus in their hearts. The older children have chosen to continue learning and are preparing to receive the sacrament of confirmation. The Holy Spirit's gifts will affirm them in the development of

their faith life. This spiritual support will prepare them to live the joys and sorrows inherent in life.

In every life there are difficult moments that come to pass when the Lord acting within us gives us the inner strength to overcome them. We must never despair. The example of this boy during the earthquake in Turkey, after 7 or 8 days trapped beneath the rubble, who strikes the wall with his free hand, hoping it will be heard. Did he pray? We don't know... but his patience was recognized and he was set free. In all times, the Lord hears the prayer and gives the strength to remain faithful to the point of martyrdom. Let us think of the hundreds of Christians canonized in Vietnam by Pope John Paul II in 1988. In many countries throughout the centuries and still today, Christians remain faithful to their faith in spite of death threats. The journey of Rosa Roisinblit in Argentina gives us a striking example of courage in overcoming the forces of evil.

We have just celebrated the Passover of Jesus Christ, the victory of life over death; is it not a joyful time, when, daily, joy becomes music to our ears? The painting of the risen Christ by Anne Marie Forest and all the testimonies of faith expressed in this issue of the magazine invite us to nourish our faith which becomes joy in contact with the Lord.

Enjoy your reading. ☺

*Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, m.i.c.*



# Joy, Little Music of the Day

Pierre Talec has written a little book with a poetic title: “La JOIE, Petite musique du jour”. From the very first line, he states *Joy will save the world. It plays within us, a little muted music, a melody at the very bottom of our sorrows. Every man can experience it. And if the Christian has no superiority over others, he at least has this distinction: to believe that God is the source of our joy*<sup>1</sup>.

Do we not agree with Pope Francis when he states in his apostolic exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel: The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus*<sup>2</sup>.

Photo: É. Plamondon, M.I.C.



By Évangéline Plamondon, M.I.C.

## Little Joys

Joy, that sweet and tenacious music that lies dormant within us, that sings in the middle of the day or accompanies tears... We must notice it and welcome it every day; it offers us many scores with white or black notes! The melody of little pleasures is an introduction to a deeper joy.

Have you ever contemplated fine drops of rain deposited on fragile leaves? Or watched the bold flight of ducks in the blue sky? Have you ever marveled at the first steps of a little one? These last few days, sparrows have been chirping happily, with complete disregard for the cold thicket on which they played. These little pleasures gather as the days go by, how sweet and nourishing they are for those who know how to catch them!

## Happiness and Joy

You may tell me that happiness and joy are similar. Yes and no! Happiness is a sort of complete equation between our desires and reality, it can easily crumble, it is ephemeral. Joy that dwells in the heart, endures and may face every dark cloud. It colours our deepest desires, as life unfolds.

Personally, I think that joy is a pursuit and this pursuit, as funny as it may sound, is already a joy! It is a quest for bliss! Happy are the people who are in pursuit of the perfect joy! They are alive! Their thirst is quenched only when they drink from the source of a love with eternal horizons.



## Joy and Faith

For us believers, joy is embodied by the humble carpenter from Nazareth, the beloved Son of the Father. *Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.* (Lk 2:10-11) We know the rest of the story: a worker's life in a small village, the Son's yes, the meeting of the disciples, the preparation and joining of the apostles, the proclamation of the Good News, the unprecedented miracles, the cries, the sarcasm, the failure, the two arms stretched out on the cross and the luminous joy of Easter. Always love, compassion, forgiveness... *Remain in my love,... I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.* (Jn 15,11) It has all been said! It is all there! Everything starts! It is precisely in this act of faith that the joyful little music of the day takes root. Remain in my love.

## The joy of the Gospel

The story of the Church has followed the calendar of *Joy, little music of the day*. Still today, we can recognize this gospel-flavored joy. I have the pleasure, or rather the grace, to be part of a group of associates of our community, the AsMIC. We have joined the diocesan initiative *Les Maisonnées*. Since the pandemic, the meetings are mostly done through Zoom. These are small groups that meet in homes to share the Word of God, to exchange experiences, joys, sorrows, numerous questions, and to meet in prayer. In our AsMIC Household, the commitments are diverse and discreet: visits to the sick, to the elderly, presence and support for the homeless, soup kitchen, accompaniment, catechumenate of adults, concerts, various activities in the parish, Sunday liturgy, churchwarden, even ringing of the bells for baptisms! I remember our response to John's invitation to join a recitation of the rosary near a grotto located in a residential area with people we enjoyed getting to know. We came back energized. There are always new calls!

In the chapter of my personal memories, I cannot forget some situations that are engraved in me, like a fabric of deep joy.

**Lima.** Sunday morning. A poor, dignified mother came to the church door carrying her 14-year-old disabled son on her back. *He is my son. God gave him to me, I cannot abandon him and I come to pray.*

**Montreal.** December 1997. News from Rome announcing the venerability of our Foundress, Delia Tétreault. I receive it in communion with all the Sisters of the Institute as one more confirmation of the charism of Mother Delia. Community joy, ecclesial joy that remains, it comes from the heart of God.

**Quebec City.** June 2008. The diocese participates in the celebrations of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the city by welcoming participants from all over the world for a week for the International Eucharistic Congress. The family of God has no borders, the dream of God! Delia's dream!

To these memories, many pages would be added; small and great pleasures, sometimes shaken by storms but always a great love in the background. *How I love you... love one another.* You have surely experienced these moments of grace, they spring from the graciousness of God, provide the impetus for the exodus, for forgiveness and giving. For the joy of God is missionary. Delia Tétreault understood this well: *Taste the joy of being with God... keep your joy and communicate it to those around you... Being dedicated to gratitude, it is our duty to give joy in order to lead our neighbor to thank God... Resolve to give a little bit of joy as alms every day*<sup>3</sup>.

JOY, the music of the day! 

<sup>1</sup> Translated from Pierre Talec, *La JOIE, Petite musique de nuit*, Bayard, 2001, p. 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, Novalis, 2013, n° 1.

<sup>3</sup> Translated from Gisèle Villemeure, M.I.C., *À l'écoute de Délia*, Collection Braises et Encens, 1997, p. 101-105.

# RESTORING HOPE TO FAMILIES OF LOVED ONES



## *Rosa Roisinblit's Journey and the Cause of the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina*



**By Maurice Demers**

The laudable efforts of the mothers and grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo to find those who disappeared during the last military dictatorship in Argentina (1976-1983) not only led to the recovery of some of the abducted individuals, but also contributed to discrediting the military government<sup>1</sup>. Hundreds of thousands of people were arrested between 1976 and 1983 to be interrogated and most of the time tortured by the

police. Some of them even died (about 30,000). These crimes were recognized and tried in court. However, for a long time, the military refused to recognize the abduction of children as another crime committed. Hundreds of women detainees were pregnant and gave birth while in detention. The children were taken from them and given up for adoption to supporters of the regime so that they would not know their real parents. The grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo have

publicized this story, which has had repercussions as far away as Canada. I spoke a few years ago with the vice-president of the grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo Association, Rosa Roisinblit. I share with you the inspiring aspects of her testimony.

At the beginning of our conversation, Mrs. Roisinblit shared with me the good memories she had of Canada<sup>2</sup>. She told me: *The president of the Catholic Women's League of Canada came to visit us [in 1978-79]. She wanted to live in our offices to understand the situation. So, we set up a dormitory in our offices: we put a bed, a bedside table, a lamp and she stayed in our house.* This first meeting led to a second one, this time in Canada. Mrs. Roisinblit told me that she received a very warm welcome from the Catholic Women's League of Canada near Toronto. She was even made an honorary member, *despite the fact that I am Jewish*, as she told me. The Canadian women subsequently funded the work of the grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

For the last few decades, grandmothers have obviously helped to find missing persons. Over the years, the search has changed from finding babies to finding adults who probably have children of their own. It is estimated that there are still about 400 individuals to be identified to this day. But the contribution of this association goes far beyond reuniting families. Because the realization that one was an adoptee can be traumatic, the association has a team of psychologists, as well as a legal department with a group of lawyers. But their greatest legacy probably dates back to over thirty years ago, when the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child was ratified.

Ms. Roisinblit personally assisted and collaborated in the composition of articles 7, 8 and 11 of the Convention. Article 8 is similar to the grandmothers' mission and states that: *Participating States undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations*



Rosa Roisinblit

*as recognized by law without unlawful interference*<sup>3</sup>. This article is known as the Argentine article because of the role played by the grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo in its drafting. Thus, this association has sown the hope for a better world in order to protect all the children of the planet. 🌱

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abuelas.org.ar/>

<sup>2</sup> The interview with Rosa Roisinblit was conducted by Maurice Demers at the offices of the Association of Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, Argentina on July 18, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/fr/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>





# Between Neighbors



By Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

On a street in a residential neighborhood, in three adjacent houses, live an elderly couple, a widow and her retired son who has come to share her solitude, and a slightly younger couple.

This is not fiction. It happened recently and these people really exist, even though I don't know their names, except for the youngest one who told me his story. His name is Lawrence.

So, here it is. Lawrence noticed that the son who came to live with his mother took very good care of her. He helped her in many ways and, of course, when winter came, he was the one who cleared the snow from the driveway and the walkway that leads to the front door. He had a good snowblower that certainly made the job easier, as Lawrence noticed when he was clearing his own driveway, shovel in hand.


But this lady, who seemed so happy to have her son by her side, died a short time later. The son, a widower, has children and grandchildren in another state. He decided to sell his mother's house and move closer to his family. He went to Lawrence's house to offer him his snowblower. They agreed on a good price that suited the buyer.

After some time, he who was about to leave returned to close the deal, but had increased the asking price because, according to him, his machine was worth much more. *If that's the case, says Lawrence, I won't*

*buy it. I can get a less powerful snowblower at a lower price and it will be enough for my yard.* The neighbor understood and the two men parted on good terms.

A few days later still, the salesman came back, not to insist, but with a completely unexpected proposal.

He explained to Lawrence that, since moving in with his mother, when winter came he not only cleared the snow from the entrance of their own house, but also from that of the elderly couple next door. The man, hearing of the neighbor's upcoming departure, told him that he and his wife would also have to move soon. The reason? They would no longer have anyone to help them maintain their property. They really appreciated the help they received, especially the snow removal in front of their house. They could no longer do it themselves nor could they afford to pay for these services. So, the owner of the snowblower explained to Lawrence: *I cannot bear the thought of this elderly couple, who wish to live the rest of their lives here, where they have lived for so many years, having to leave because of my own departure! So I came to make you a new proposal. I will give you my snowblower on one condition, that you promise to use it for yourself and for our neighbor. May he count on your help, just as he appreciated mine.*

Lawrence was happy to accept such an offer. And that's it! A beautiful story, isn't it? Even if it isn't worthy of being on the front page of our newspapers! 



# LIVING DIFFERENTLY IN JOY

Life brings its share of difficulties. Our responsibility is to create joy. ***Give happiness in handfuls***, and ***sow joy*** are expressions that Delia Tétreault held dear to her heart.

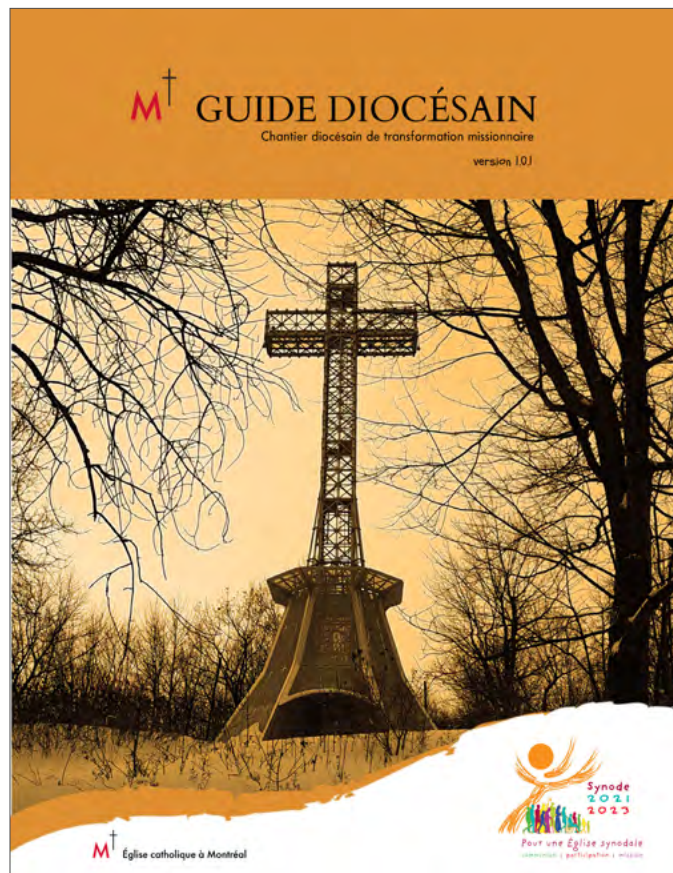


By Nicole Rochon

Disruptive advice that awakens us and makes us react. How can we succeed in this conflicted world, much like a spider's web from which we must learn to extricate ourselves to find a certain freedom and live differently? One must have faith, confidence, a love of life in order to hope for the best, not expect the worst. This is not easy for everyone, as we are influenced by our own stories. Admittedly, happiness does not come easily to some who have been tested more or less harshly in life. Let's call a truce with pessimism and let's rejoice in this statement: *As long as there is life, there is hope*. So, let's be confident that the best is yet to come.

Which brings me to the synod of bishops assembly decreed in Rome by Pope Francis in the fall of 2021. The synod will end in October 2023. The theme of a synodal Church of communion, participation and mission invites us to do Church differently, distinctly, openly. A clericalized Church where the clergy is not at the center but at the service of Christians. Religious communities, lay movements, associations of the faithful were encouraged to participate in the process from their dioceses, local churches and parishes.

It is important to remember that everyone, ***whether or not they are practicing Christians***, are part of the Church with their leaders. Therefore, in order to do Church differently, we must all walk together, in



solidarity, open to others. We must get off the beaten track and adapt to change with joy and serenity.

What will come out of this synod will undoubtedly reach us wherever we are. It will bring a newness to our saying, doing and acting, providing an opportunity to live differently. A return to our personal life, rich in experiences, could be a source of inspiration, of creativity in our family, social, cultural and parish environments. It is also good to remember that as Christians we have a mission to fulfill. Jesus compares our mission to salt and light saying: *You are salt and light*. This mission gives flavor to our lives, much as salt enhances our food, and light, to illuminate, to warm our hearts, to guide us towards what is essential. How can we achieve this? By daring to get involved alongside like-minded people, either in the parish, at work, in sports or in leisure activities.

Creating joy, bringing happiness to people in search of meaning in their lives or their faith, is the mission of every Christian. The happiness of one makes others happy. 🌸

# THE MIC LEGACY IN VANCOUVER



By Éric Desautels

One of the chapters in the history of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception, their presence in Western Canada, is a century old. In May 1921, a house of the Sisters opened on Keefer Street, in a poor and working class area of Vancouver near Chinatown. It was of strategic importance to Delia Tétreault. The city served as a transitory place on the way to China: the first Sisters to leave for Asia had been welcomed in Vancouver or Victoria by the Sisters of Saint Anne who already had hospitals, schools and boarding schools there<sup>1</sup>. It is easy to understand Delia Tétreault's enthusiasm when the Archbishop of Vancouver, Timothy Casey, approached her to open a house of the MIC Congregation in his diocese.

Vancouver was a strategic transitional location for the community. The city is home to significant Chinese and Japanese communities living in difficult conditions due to a particular context.

## A Particular Context

The first wave of Chinese and Japanese immigrants arrived in the West in the 1880s. Most of these people settled in British Columbia. Many worked on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The arrival of a growing Chinese workforce, however, gave rise to xenophobic and



Two of our good students from Vancouver:  
Mak Kwong Yan (Joseph Luc) baptized at 74.  
Hah A Shing (70) our catechumen-apostle.

M.I.C. Archives, 1923

THEY WERE BUSY EDUCATING  
NEWCOMERS, TEACHING  
THEM FRENCH OR ENGLISH  
AND IMPARTING THE WORDS  
OF THE GOSPEL TO THEM,  
REGARDLESS OF THEIR AGE.

intolerant feelings towards this community. Public discontent led the provincial government to adopt measures to limit the rights of these immigrants. The federal government followed suit with discriminatory policies and laws, including *the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885*. Despite this, the influx of cheap labor continued. Asian immigrants worked on the land or on the railroads under difficult conditions. In 1923, a draconian measure was taken: *the Chinese Immigration Act*, restricting the arrival of Chinese immigrants until the 1940s.





Vancouver, Hospital residence, 1921 – M.I.C. Archives

## The Beginnings on Keefer Street

In this historical context, the Sisters welcomed dozens of immigrants, especially of Chinese origin, in 1921. Following the example of Montreal's apostolic activities with the Chinese community, the opening of this house was primarily aimed at helping and welcoming Chinese immigrants. Their reception center, located near the Sisters' house, quickly became a shelter for the poor, sick and elderly. The Sisters opened a school in another building on Keefer Street in 1921. They were busy educating newcomers, teaching them French or English and imparting the words of the Gospel to them, regardless of their age.

With a very modest infirmary at the beginning, the sisters also played an active role in health care. The needs were so great that they were obliged to change their premises and open two dispensaries in the years following their arrival.

## An Important Legacy

One of the most important legacies of the congregation is without a doubt the hospitals that were established. In 1927, the Saint Joseph Oriental Hospital opened its doors. Until 1942, the Sisters counted 902 baptisms, 1,543 patients treated and more than 113,000 treatments given<sup>2</sup>! As for the Pender Street dispensary, between 1936 and 1942, it recorded nearly 5,000 patients treated.

In the context mentioned above, Delia Tétreault persevered and succeeded in bringing in a young Chinese woman, Teresa Fung, who played an active role in the West. Even if the population of Chinese origin was stagnating in numbers, the needs remained great. With the return of Asian immigration after the Second World War, Teresa Fung worked on a major project: a general hospital, *Mount Saint Joseph Hospital*, was built in 1946 to provide health care to the Chinese community.

Over time, the hospital modernized and expanded, becoming a key player in Vancouver's Asian community. In the 1990s, the hospital twice received a city award for its approach and programs offered to the local multi-ethnic population. In 1997, Sister Juliette Ouellette noted that *the opening prayer [of the ceremony], led by an Elder representing Canada's First Nations, brought the congregation into a time of deep reflection*<sup>3</sup>, illustrating their openness to the Aboriginal peoples of British Columbia.

The legacy of the Sisters in the Vancouver community goes beyond health and education. As Sister Monette Ouellette recalled so well in 2014: *Others, like Sr. Émilienne Vézina, had to respond to particular needs among the population of Vancouver and founded, in the 1970s, a house for the protection and support of abused women. Sr. Noëlla Brisson worked as a chaplain in prisons in the 1980s and Sr. Adeline Mead worked for many years with children in schools and parishes to open their hearts to the reality of their brothers and sisters in the world (Missionary Childhood)*<sup>4</sup>.

This story of the missionary adventure of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception is based on the visions of Delia Tétreault who, living fully the faith and the words of the Gospel in her daily life, left an indelible mark on the Vancouver area. 🌸

<sup>1</sup> *From Montreal to Canton*, Le Précurseur, May 1920, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Mother Marie du St. Esprit*, The Precursor, March-April 1944, pp. 464-465.

<sup>3</sup> Juliette Ouellette, M.I.C., *Cultural Harmony Award*, MIC Mission News, November-December 1997, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Monette Ouellette, M.I.C., *The Seeds that Made a Difference*, MIC Mission News, July-September 2014, p. 12-13.

# Resurrection of Christ and Creation



Triptych of the Trinity (St. Emile church in Montreal, 2012.  
Ancient technique of oil painting on wood)

By Anne-Marie Forest, painter

I was inspired by depictions of the Holy Trinity where we see Christ on the cross, carried by the Father. The hands of the Father support those of the Son rather than holding the Cross, in a gesture that raises him from the grave.

The face of the Father is more hieratic than that of the Son, much like the faces in the icons. The face of Jesus is tilted, in a three-quarters view and his hair is floating in the wind. It is a Syrian-Palestinian face, with dark hair and eyes.

## I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE OF HEART.

I wanted to give him some of the tenderness of a waking child. Jesus said of himself: *I am gentle and humble of heart*. The skin colour is similar to that of the icons. The body is rather athletic but bears the stigmata of the Passion. The Heart of Jesus, covered with gold, is depicted with water and blood. This is a reference to the transfixion: *But one of the soldiers pierced his side with his spear, and blood and water immediately came out*<sup>1</sup>.

It is also a reference to the devotion to *the Sacred Heart of Jesus* and the respective visions of Margaret Mary Alacoque and Sister Faustina Kovalska. This devotion is lived as a response to the love of Jesus, in reparation for that love which is not recognized. With Sr. Faustina, the



emphasis is on the mercy of Jesus. I wanted to emphasize the life given by Christ in his Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection.

The Holy Spirit, represented by the dove on Jesus' shoulder, is close to his mouth and his heart. From his mouth, because it is also a biblical reference: *Opening his mouth, he gave the spirit*. Spirit and breath of life are one.

## HE BREATHED ON THEM AND JESUS SAID TO THEM, RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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*The scene of Jesus' appearance to the disciples on Easter evening seems to us to support this interpretation. As at the time of Jesus' death, the Spirit comes out of Jesus' mouth: He breathed on them and Jesus said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. The outpouring of the Spirit is symbolized by the breath that comes out of Jesus' mouth and communicates the Holy Spirit to the disciples. But in this event, Jesus discreetly recalls the deep source from which the Spirit comes: He showed them his hands and his side. There is no Spirit without a link to Jesus' side<sup>2</sup>.*

Jesus has his feet on an apple tree in bloom, full of birds, because Jesus is the new Adam who renews and gives life to the lost world.

The birds illustrate the parable of the mustard seed<sup>3</sup>. St. John Chrysostom says: *Which indeed is the least, He says, of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. This is the sign of greatness. And such is the preaching of the gospel. Indeed the disciples were the weakest of all, and least of all; but nevertheless, because of the great power that was in them, It has been unfolded in every part of the world.*

This parable is also an image of faith that grows through the Word of God sown in the heart of the disciple, developing his personal relationship with Christ in prayer and action.

The tree is therefore planted on the ground, on a semicircle that represents the whole earth. It is the incarnation of the Son in the history of the world that is also suggested in this way. Christ is both in heaven and on earth and is given to us by God at the same time as he offers himself.

On the ground, deer come to drink from the spring: *As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God*<sup>4</sup>. They are symbols of the catechumen who aspires to baptism, to the source of salvation, as Saint Jerome says. This image of the stag is found on baptisteries.

The large birds are the heron, the pink flamingo and the pelican which is a Christian symbol. It feeds its young by disgorging fish stored in an expandable pouch which it empties by pressing its beak against its chest. In the Middle Ages it was believed that it pierced its side to feed its young with its own flesh and blood. The pelican thus became a symbol of the love of Christ who gave his life for all, so that all might have Life.

This Trinity is also a representation of all Creation, renewed and restored. *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea (...) He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And there will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain: what was first has passed away*<sup>5</sup>. ☞

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<sup>1</sup> Jn 19:34. – <sup>2</sup> André Charbonneau, S.J.

– <sup>3</sup> Mt 13:30-32. – <sup>4</sup> Ps 41. – <sup>5</sup> Rev 21:1-16.

# Faith, Source of Joy

By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

When opening the Gospels, many questions are raised within us. Among other things, the Lord speaks to us of joy, but what sort of joy? Is it a fleeting, exhilarating joy? No, he speaks to us of a profound joy rooted in faith, in a meaningful encounter with Him...

## A Faith that Challenges

At the beginning of the year, Radio Canada presented *En direct du monde* where Ms. Anne-Marie Dussault gave the floor to correspondents posted abroad. These correspondents have witnessed major upheavals across the world. In all simplicity, they shared with us what had affected them the most. Among them was Ms. Tamara Alteresco, assigned to Moscow. In giving her testimony, she raised a question. In her admiration for the resilience of the Russian population in these alarming times, she pointed out the source of their strength and said: *They believe in **that**!* Right away I thought, what does **that** imply in her eyes? At first, she admitted that she did not have the faith. However, she wondered... Indeed, this simple **that** represents the faith of these good people of the Orthodox religion. They believe in the person of Jesus Christ who accompanies us through the joys and sorrows of our lives. They have met him and they live by their faith.

I WAS INDIFFERENT TO  
RELIGION AND ALL THAT  
IT CONCERNS, BUT TODAY  
I DRAW MY STRENGTH  
AND MY JOY FROM IT.



Confirmands and young M.I.C. Sisters – Photo: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

## A Faith that Strengthens

A lady whose husband suffers from a mental illness shared how she herself suffers as she accompanies him to the hospital. *Some days I feel discouraged, but others I feel an inner strength that gives me the courage to go on. One day I was so depressed that I left the house to escape... On St. Catherine Street I saw the little chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, I entered, and the Lord was waiting for me there. The prayerful atmosphere, the Virgin of Lourdes looking at me, I felt overwhelmed, loved, I cried all the tears in my body.*

*Little by little, peace set in, I looked at the future with serenity and hope. Since that day, I have gone back often to pray, and each time, I feel a strength that gives me joy, hope for a better life, at least the courage to continue to*



*move forward in serenity, in peace. I thank the Lord and I often find myself praying even at home, in my kitchen. This is extraordinary for me because I was indifferent to religion and all that it concerns, but today I draw my strength and my joy from it.*

## A Faith that Shines


For Vocations Sunday, the members of the community of Ste-Dorothée, Laval, invited a few M.I.C. to give testimony... and strangely enough, it was they who won our admiration for their commitment. Yes, under the direction of their pastor, Mr. André Typhan, the pastoral team energizes the congregation, always a large gathering at each of the four Sunday masses. Despite the bitter cold of January, joy and enthusiasm were there. It was good to be among them.

During homily, the young confirmands came forward into the choir to ask our young Sisters about their vocation. A lively and joyful dialogue. Also, at the beginning of mass, a young lady received a special blessing for her passage from the Orthodox religion to Catholicism. A three- or four-year-old girl also received a blessing in preparation for her baptism. All of these commitments were a true testimony of a lively, heart-warming faith. A multicultural community that engages and shares its faith in accordance with the culture of each person.

After the last mass, the Knights of Columbus welcomed the pledge of six new members. This association is specifically devoted to ensuring the well-being of all. Truly a parish that is making an impact in the hearts of its faithful parishioners.


## THE HOLY SPIRIT ALWAYS AT WORK IN THE HEARTS OF THE FAITHFUL.

I came back excited and energized. A stark contrast to everything we hear on social media. The testimony of this lively parish highlights the action of the Holy Spirit always at work in the hearts of the faithful. *Works of love directed to one's neighbor are the most perfect external manifestation of the interior grace of the Spirit<sup>1</sup>.*


*From the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement, which must necessarily find expression and develop in every work of evangelization<sup>2</sup>.* 

<sup>1</sup> *Evangelii gaudium*, n° 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Evangelii gaudium*, n° 178.



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# The Joy of Inspiring and Giving Light to Those Who Approach Us

By Raeliarisoa Voanginirina Séraphine, M.I.C.

On this Mission Sunday, we four scholastics, Naomie, Luisa, Séraphine and Linah with Sister Marie Paul Sanfaçon, were invited to give a missionary testimony in the Parish of Sainte Dorothée, Montreal. We received a wonderful welcome from the parish priest and the pastoral agents. As I shared my missionary vocation and listened to that of my companions, I became aware that, in my consecrated life, I have the grace to deepen the gift of faith of my baptism. I enjoy contemplating and receiving the Eucharist every day which unites me to Jesus and to all of God's people. Thus, wherever I am and especially in the Church, the gifts of the Holy Spirit that I received at my confirmation can bear fruit. The more we turn ourselves outwardly, the more we will see the beauty of God and the more we will taste his Love.

After sharing, I welcomed the revelation of the word of God. *You are the light of the world* (Mt 5:14). I received the gift of God, and I discovered the face of Christ in the children, the young confirmands. They were all joyful, attentive and interested in knowing how to live prayer and mission. Their questions concerned my Christian and religious life. *What does a typical day in religious life look like for you?* I was amazed and grateful to see the parents who came with their children to hear the catechesis. What a great meeting! What an exchange between us! I gave what I could in this meeting. Like encouraging the young people to receive the sacraments and to love Jesus who loves them, as well as encouraging their parents to motivate their children to pray, and to commit themselves to the Church. They are our future. This experience gives us a new look at missionary life. Because we often tend to think that only the consecrated are missionaries, but all who are



Sister Séraphine and two young confirmands

baptized are missionaries, called to participate in the mission of Jesus.

Today's mission is to learn to lead others with their own realities to the path of life with God. My joy in living this beautiful experience is to invite them to sing the glory of God by recognizing his Son Jesus Christ. A great hope for the future of the Church in Canada is to see children and young people motivated and active, especially in this time of development of new technologies. I applaud all of the sharing and the atmosphere of this mission day. I rejoice with my brothers and sisters. Mother Delia Tétrault tells us: *Joy is the best thanksgiving we can give to God.* She also says to me today: *Bring sunshine to the hearts of those who come near to you.* I wish joy, happiness and success to all of us missionaries. May Mary the first missionary walk with us. ☺





The official members of the Chinese community

# CHINESE PASTORAL CENTRE OPENS IN OTTAWA

***Greetings from a Chinese M.I.C. Sister to the leaders and parishioners of Ottawa Holy Spirit Catholic Church, on the Grand Opening of their Sheng Shen Pastoral Center. (Jan.22, 2023).***

**By Cécilia Hong, M.I.C.**

It is an important step that you have just taken with so much dedication in the midst of a disturbing pandemic. We, the M.I.C. Sisters, are delighted that our Superior General, Sister Cecilia Mzumara, had the unexpected opportunity to pay you a cordial visit and to congratulate you in person on the official opening of your Pastoral Centre. She is filled with deep admiration and appreciation for all your achievements.

Today, on behalf of our Provincial Superior, Sister Sylvia Dupuis, and of all the M.I.C. Sisters, I wish to extend to you our warmest congratulations for your remarkable success in the work of evangelization. You are indeed a group of dedicated apostles working tirelessly under the spiritual direction of

Father Stephen Liang and the dynamic leadership of Deacon Peter Fan and the members of the Parish Council. Together, you have explored all possible ways to build a strong family spirit of unity in diversity by forming different committees to catechize your children, evangelize your youth and nourish your faith through different spiritual enrichments and liturgical celebrations.

Like the early Christian community, you work with one heart and one mind as a community of servant leaders who know exactly when to put on your teacher hats or when to serve and to be of service to one another, making your Church a welcoming HOME for all. Your service-oriented leadership style has



1981, 30 Goulburn, Ottawa, Sr Nina Ennis, M.I.C. – Photo: M.I.C. Archives

made you a community of faithful witnesses in the Archdiocese of Ottawa. You have indeed followed the dream of our pioneering Sisters in the field of evangelization, a dream so dear to the heart of our founder, Venerable Delia Tétreault! In addition, your deep awareness of environmental issues has made you an outstanding community that has received the Green Peace Award. We, the M.I.C. Sisters, sincerely thank you from the bottom of our hearts for adopting new ways of living the Beatitudes!

Your colorful monthly newsletter has been a true source of inspiration and encouragement to many, especially during this prolonged period of confinement and isolation. I feel like I am

reading about the life of an early Christian community from the time of the apostles!

Although we, the M.I.C., left Ottawa years ago, you have never stopped reaching out to us and we have never left you either! You will always be a lively part of the M.I.C., sharing the same missionary charism. We will continue to pray for you and for the success of your Pastoral Center as it requires the continuous dedication of generous workers to give life, hope and meaning to its youth and keep its organization running smoothly in the years to come. May you continue to teach your youth and children how to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

Be assured that we, the M.I.C. Sisters, will remain your faithful companions on the road and will support you with prayer and solidarity! We look forward to visiting you in the near future and walking with you in the joy of the Gospel every day! 🙏

***With joy and gratitude,***  
Sister Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.

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# *My Experience with the Tea Ceremony in Japan*



Sister Suzanne Morneau

**By Suzanne Morneau, M.I.C.**

In the 80's when I was living in Adachi Ku, a popular district of Tokyo, I traveled by train to go to work. One day, a lady asked me gently which country I was from. This lady was traveling the same route as I was and we used to cross paths frequently. During the conversation I learned that she was a tea master. I was interested in her art, which I knew a little bit about having participated in tea ceremonies once or twice. I had also read about this art and its importance in Japanese culture. After a while, the lady came to offer me lessons. I didn't see how I could find the time and the money for these rather expensive courses. I refused at first, claiming lack of time. Then, seeing the honour it would bring her to teach a foreigner, I finally agreed.

Since our apartment had a tatami room, it was easy to start the classes in the Japanese way, i.e. sitting on our heels. I didn't have to provide the expensive equipment that it requires, she brought her own. What luck! From week to week, I learned despite my slowness, my restraint and my stiffness. To help me relax my body, she would tell me to imagine that I held two eggs under my arms. This did not work because I was afraid they would fall out! But little by little the movements became more natural to me.

I learned the meaning of hospitality for the Japanese by studying the art of the tea ceremony. In this ceremony everything happens in silence. The gestures convey to the visitor how valued they are as they are offered a simple cup of tea and sweet delights. The silence punctuated with small noises made by the instruments used for the ceremony, the water singing as it starts to heat up in the kettle, the slow and calm gestures of the host and those of the visitor, everything is orchestrated in such a way that we experience time as if it had stopped.

Japanese people, when they participate in mass for the first time, even without knowing the meaning of it, feel they are on somewhat familiar ground. Perhaps they feel, depending on the celebrants, that there was not enough time for an integral mass. It is said that the first Japanese Christians felt comfortable in our liturgy.

Still, thanks to this lady, I was able to acquaint myself with the tea ceremony, even though I have not practiced it in more than twenty years. Not having the time nor the necessary equipment, I quickly forgot the many details of this magnificent art. I saw this lady like an angel who appeared one day in my landscape. I understood that her free gesture was aimed at letting people taste and appreciate the culture of her country. She had reached her goal.

One year later I received a picture of her and her newborn baby. She was carrying him during the tea lessons that she offered me with such generosity and kindness. Like her, he looked like an angel. It is one of the most beautiful memories I have of Japan. 🌸



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## TESTIMONY


# My Vocation, the Joy of the Gospel

**By Raeliarisoa Voanginirina Séraphine, M.I.C.**

I am Seraphine. I come from a Christian family. I live the joy of the Gospel in my daily experience of God. I studied at the MIC Sister's School. In 2002, they celebrated the centenary of the foundation of the congregation. Their joy in giving thanks to God struck me. I was happy to see them. I said to myself: they are happy and I would like to be like them. I kept this aspiration to myself. It motivated me to study and to become more involved in the Church as a liturgical animator. I was in the Eucharistic movement and in the group of Young M.I.C. Associates. When I finished high school, I shared my desire with an M.I.C. Sister. I asked my grandparents for their blessing and they did not agree. It was hard for me because they said, *If you go, you won't be part of our family anymore*. Even though they didn't bless me, I continued my journey and entered the Sisters.

A year later, I visited my family. My grandfather was very happy to welcome me. He also encouraged me to continue my journey with my Sisters. I thanked the Lord for the change in the family's attitude. I feel the presence of God's love in their welcome. I am convinced that it was not only my decision or my desire to become a religious, but it was the Lord who called me. In 2015, I made my first profession. I had the joy of working with my Sisters in the school and in the Delia Tetreault center, in the dispensary. I was

involved with the youth in the Church. Everything was graceful, even the challenges I faced. Jesus is always at the center of my life, through prayer, through his Word, through the Eucharist, through my brothers and sisters. Before leaving Madagascar, I was teaching catechism to the catechumens. I was touched to see 54 adults who wanted to be baptized and who were eager to receive Jesus Christ. Their joy as children of God delighted my heart in following Jesus. I rejoice to realize the dream of our Mother Delia: to joyfully announce the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ to people who do not know him. At the same time, I enjoy being a beloved daughter of God, a missionary disciple and a bearer of the joy of the Gospel.

When I arrived in Canada, the country of our foundress, I was happy to meet my Sisters who welcomed me with great tenderness. I remember the word of God when Mary met her cousin Elizabeth. I feel happy to live in an intercultural and intergenerational community. I am proud of my religious vocation, MIC. The experiences I have lived have given me the opportunity to increase my faith in God the Trinity and my missionary dynamism in the manner of Mary and Delia Tetreault. I praise the Holy Trinity, source of all good, as well as the Institute which supports me. My thanks: here I am, I offer my life to do the will of God. 

# How Beautiful you are, thank you!



*I could have never been born. Thanks to God the creator, thanks to Mom and Dad, I say hello, here I am. At your service!*

*I had many people who loved me and supported me to be what I am today. Thanks to them, and with them, I have been able to give meaning to my life. The Lord has put me at the service of people I met on my way. THANK YOU MY GOD.*

*Thank you to those whom divine Providence has put on my path.*

*I might not have studied, I might not have been a Jesuit priest, because of the complexity of my story. But the Good Lord chose me without any merit on my part, and with all my limitations. This is his secret. He does not necessarily call the strongest, nor the best, that is His mystery. Thank you God of mystery. Your love is beyond me.*

*I say thank you to God for Pope Francis. His humility and humanity captivate me. For example, he likes to visit prisoners, calling them his brothers and sisters when he greets them, asking them to pray for him.*

*Thank you Pope Francis. Through your example, you remind me that there is always a little sacred corner in each one of us, even in prisoners, to which evil has no access, because God lives there.*

*The Good Lord Himself says Thank You, when He sees that we make efforts to fight evil and ugliness, in ourselves and in the world.*

*To you too our God we say: Thank you.*

*THANK YOU for your beauty, your simplicity, your humility and your patience. Give us the grace to love saying THANK YOU. These pretty little words, alas, so often forgotten.*

*Godefroy Midy, SJ*



# With You, O Lord



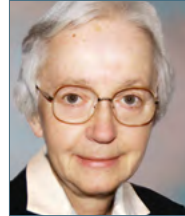
**LAURETTE GAUVIN, M.I.C.**

*Sister André-du-Cénacle*

**1933-2022**

**Ste-Catherine/Portneuf, Quebec**

Attending the village school run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis, Laurette felt a connection with the religious vocation. Accompanying our Sisters who visited schools and families, her desire to make Jesus known took shape: she would be a missionary, focusing on Africa. Welcomed to the Novitiate on August 8, 1954, she went to Africa in 1962. In 1970, in Zimba, a group of parishioners wanted to learn to pray. Having studied the subject, Sister Laurette achieved her ideal by taking responsibility for this remote parish sector and competently assumed this multidimensional project. In 2007 she returned to Quebec, available for various community services. Her last missionary call, to go home to God, took place on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022



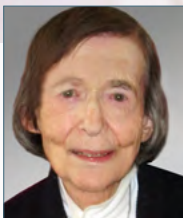
**ÉLISABETH GAGNÉ, M.I.C.**

*Sister Marguerite d'Youville*

**1931-2022**

**Framingham/Boston, U.S.A.**

Sister Elisabeth is remembered as a humble, helpful, kind and very effective person wherever she went on mission. In 1959, with the courage of faith, she answered the call to enter the Novitiate. It was not easy: having lost her mother at the age of 12, she had to leave her father. *My heart bled at the thought of leaving dad and making him suffer.* Bilingual, competent in housework, with a bachelor's degree, she was welcomed in Africa in 1969 and she provided quality education to young girls in Malawi who wanted to learn. After many years of community service, Sister Elisabeth returned to Quebec in 1991 and slowly and silently entered the Resurrection of Jesus on December 6, 2022.



**ADELINE MEAD, M.I.C.**

*Sister Marie-Anna*

**1922-2022**

**Montreal, Quebec**

Born into a Polish family that immigrated in 1911, Adeline was joyfully welcomed into a Christian home on January 5, 1922. She had a strong will and excelled in her studies at St. Patrick Academy Commercial Secretariat. The religious life of her first teachers attracted her. The reading of the Precursor revealed to her the missionary call that inhabited her. She entered the Novitiate on February 1, 1941, and it was Africa that benefited from her gifts as an educator. Bilingual, she went to Vancouver in 1977 and assumed, among other commitments, the direction of Holy Childhood Association. Her zeal for this cause earned her the *Bere Merenti* medal from Pope John Paul II. A centenarian on January 5, 2022, she received the MISSION ACCOMPLISHED medal on the eve of her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday, December 13.



**LUCIE GAGNÉ, M.I.C.**

*Sister Isabelle-Marie*

**1942-2022**

**Black-Lake, Quebec**

Missionary dynamism, joy of living, sense of celebration, availability, such is Lucie: a unique gift of God to humanity. Welcomed to the Novitiate on August 8, 1961, she proved to be a musician who knew how to help her companions live their adaptation. On October 8, 1971, it was Asia that opened up for her: first the Philippines, then Hong Kong and continental China. The challenges she faced were numerous: poverty with the aborigines, solitude as a Christian in China. Suddenly, in the year 2000, her leadership led her to assume responsibilities at the general and provincial levels. In 2022, still fascinated by Asia, the mission of the Philippines awaited her. But God had another plan: on December 13, 2022, He invited her to the celebration of the eternal Feasts.





# Letter to the Great Gardener

*This morning Lord I come to  
ask you for the impossible.  
But you did say “Ask and you  
shall receive...”?*

*I was looking at our beautiful  
garden through the window  
this morning; how I would like  
to offer you a flower, woven  
with sun, wrapped in joy. I  
am so small and I don’t know  
anything about gardening, so  
that’s that. Often, I water the  
garden to help daddy, so if you  
don’t mind, I will go water it.  
I’m sure you’ll know what  
to do, as usual.*

*And you know what,  
when I woke up the next day,  
I found on my pillow a piece  
of sunshine and a smile.  
A flower to sing his love.*

Monique Bigras, M.I.C.

Photo: É. Plamondon, M.I.C.

