

MIC MISSION News

VOL. 47, N° 3 | JULY • AUGUST • SEPTEMBER 2020 | \$5.00



To sow seeds of joy and hope! — Since 1923

*100 Years
of an Undaunted Mission*

Haiti

**PAOLA'S
STORY**

Hong Kong

**IN THE
SERVICE
OF GOD**

Pérou

**THE SECRET
OF THE
MISSION**



MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS - 2020

JULY

Our Families

We pray that today's families may be accompanied with love, respect and guidance.

AUGUST

The Maritime World

We pray for all those who work and live from the sea, among them sailors, fishermen and their families.

SEPTEMBER

Respect for the Planet's Resources

We pray that the planet's resources will not be plundered, but shared in a just and respectful manner.

Masses for readers' intentions offered in the following countries:

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



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Offices

Missionary Press MIC
120 Place Juge-Desnoyers
Laval (QC) Canada H7G 1A4

Phone: (450) 663-6460

Fax: (450) 972-1512

micmissionnews@pressemic.org

www.pressemic.org

www.sœurs-mic.qc.ca

Directress of Publication

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Assistant Directress

Marie-Nadia Noël, M.I.C.

Administrative Secretary

Gaétane Claude

Editors

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.

André Gadbois

Editorial Team

Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.

André Gadbois

Maurice Demers

Éric Desautels

In Collaboration

Linda Anderson, PhD

Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

Yvonne Ayotte, M.I.C.

Circulation

Yolaine Lavoie, M.I.C.

Michelle Paquette, M.I.C.

Lucette Gilbert, M.I.C.

Marcelle Paquet

Accounting

Elmire Allary, M.I.C.

Layout & Design

Caron Communications graphiques

Printing

Solisco

Cover

Sr. Marie-Colette, Peru

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DARE TO DREAM

Who among us have never had some bold dreams? Knowing how to dream, making choices, ensuring continuity and, above all, being bold. How many young and not so young dare to dream, but often quit after a while. Why do they quit? Lack of support, lack of perseverance... Making a dream come true requires going deep inside ourselves to discover the motivations that boldly guide us towards what best meets our longings.

Great people have had some crazy dreams and they believed in them. Becoming President of the United States, incredible for a black man. Barack Obama succeeded. Greta Thunberg, despite her young age, mobilizes crowds for the climate and with her the world population commits itself to save the planet. In sports, Laurent Duvernay-Tardif, in addition to being a doctor, is a winner at the 2019 Super Bowl, not to mention Bianca Andreescu, a young tennis star. These characters of different ages and from such diverse backgrounds have conceived dreams, impossible at first glance, but with perseverance they overcame the obstacles to claim victory.

They won the sympathy of the community, their dream became the dream of the entire population, hence their success. In the Church, great saints have surrounded themselves with people who were in solidarity with their dream. St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius of Loyola, Delia Tétreault have aroused the support of a community. Even Jesus surrounded himself with his apostles and with disciples who believed in his plans. They understood and committed themselves to following him. Even today, young people still leave their country to spread the Word of God. Sr. Marie-Colette in Pucallpa, Sr. Eden among the Filipinos in Hong Kong, Sr. Beverly in the Philippines and Sr. Monique in Latin America, all these missionaries have



Photo: Daniele COSSU / Shutterstock.com

realized their dream to follow Christ. Bold dreams that found the necessary support from their families and communities.

Our world needs these heroes who see big and dare to conquer their dream. The centennial year of the magazine allows us to reflect on the need to dare to dream even in times of pandemic. As Éric Desautels mentions, Mother Delia did not sit idly by during the time of the Spanish flu or influenza. During the summer season, what answer will we give to our dreams? Will we dare to commit ourselves to supporting a young person, to fulfill his or her dream? We all need encouragement...

Happy reading!

Marie-Paulo San Juan, m.i.c.

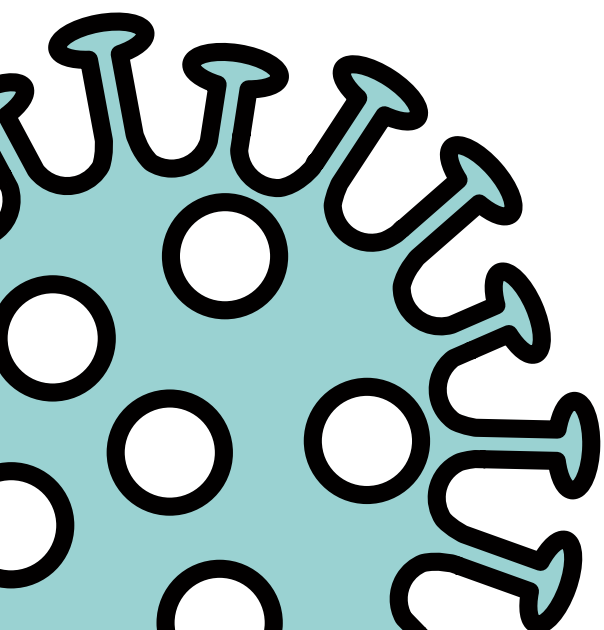


Madagascar, first day of school after deconfinement — Photo Credit: MIC

God and *Coronavirus*

Reflection of Fr. Godefroy Midy, S.J.

I was coming out of Puerto Rico to return home to Haiti, via the Dominican Republic. I was anxious to arrive because I had three retreats to preach: one for young Sisters preparing for perpetual vows, and a second one, a Paschal Triduum for lay people. The third was to be at the *Foyer de Charité* at St. Mary's. A retreat at the *Foyer de Charité* is very dear to me because it has its originality. There are two of us animating it, Doctor Linda Métayer and myself. Woman, wife, mother of two daughters, committed lay person, psychologist, Mrs Métayer approaches the themes of the retreats with a feminine touch, in complementarity with my contribution. She has the gift of bringing the subject to life. I give thanks to God because I am not jealous.





Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Fr. Midy among Jesuit priests and seminarians — Source: Web

If we cannot and should not say that Coronavirus is wanted or permitted by God who would like to punish us or make us think, should we not take advantage of the cursed appearance of this evil to ask ourselves some pertinent questions? Questions that would help us to become better and grow? Ah, yes. Now we are on a good track, a track that will lead us to God. If you will, I would like to ask each of you the following four questions:

But now I'm stuck in Santo Domingo. God's will? No. Will of coronavirus? Yes. If it's not God's will, is it still God's will to allow it? No, it's not God's will, good Lord. But, isn't it all God's will? No, it isn't. The existence of coronaviruses on our planet Earth, today, is not the will of God. Coronavirus is the enemy of God, the enemy of us all. It hates us. It hates God.

With God's grace, we must take every means to eliminate it. That, yes, is God's will. May researchers of all races and countries find a vaccine to fight the pandemic, a vaccine that will serve the rich and the poor. That, yes, is God's will. May the State and governments find their joy in the effective accompaniment of their people. That, yes, is God's will.

The Good Lord expresses all his gratitude and sends his paternal blessing to all those who IN HIS NAME sing the funeral of coronavirus. He says THANKYOU to the doctors, the nurses, the health workers, all those among the little people who in one way or another are in contact with our infected sisters and brothers and are at their service. God's special attention will be given to the prayers of the children and the sick. THE PASSAGE OF CORONAVIRUS WILL BE A TIME OF GRACE.

1. ***Is the coronavirus changing you in your relationship with yourself? How is it changing you?***
2. ***Is the coronavirus changing you in your relationship with others? How is it changing you?***
3. ***Is the coronavirus changing you in your relationship with the environment, ecology? How is it changing you?***
4. ***Is the coronavirus changing you in your relationship with God? How is it changing you?***

God is LOVE AND FRIEND OF LIFE. May He give us as a gift to love as much as we are able to and to sow life as much as we can. It will no longer be: God and coronavirus. But GOD AND US. ☺

The Missionary 5G

I'm a missionary... retired but still a missionary. I am always looking for the means that will allow me to share the joy of the Gospel as quickly and effectively as possible with as many people as possible. I am therefore very interested in the 5G.



Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

There is the 5G network at the cutting edge of technology that will optimize, we are told, the future of telecommunications.

It is extraordinary, it seems. It will increase tenfold the connection speed of our laptops and other connected devices. Sound familiar? But it's not my place to brag about its possibilities, because I would get lost in it pretty quickly. Moreover, it would, it seems, have certain drawbacks and some people have wondered whether its waves, powerful but short and requiring thousands of small antennas, would not disturb our health, our very tranquility. Anyway, let's move on, since we must always be in a hurry.

I would like to speak to you about missionary 5G. What does it consist of? You don't know it? It consists of Grace, Graciousness, Generosity, Gratitude and Gratitude. How does it work, you ask me?

Grace assures the very life of this "network" whose waves, rest assured, are beneficial. We used to speak – should I say in the old days (?) – of the state of grace, this state of friendship with God, source of inner peace and joy. It still exists! It leads us to seek in all things the will of the One whom we recognize as our Creator and Father, who knows better than we do what suits us, what can make us happy. Grace is offered to all. It must be desired, welcomed, and kept in a heart open to God's action.

From this grace flows **Graciousness** in our being and in our action. It is not a question for us to move like robots, to be content with avoiding evil and fulfilling a law. We want to behave in all things graciously, with good grace, with joy and with love. Love towards God who gave us life and whom we wish to see known and loved by all. Love towards our fellow men with whom we wish to share our Faith and Joy.

To achieve this sharing, we will find the **Generosity** we need. *It is not to be generous that is difficult, it is to be half generous!* I learned in my younger years. Generosity will therefore lead us to give ourselves entirely, to think of others first before seeking our own well-being, to make ourselves useful, to take a special interest in the poorest and to find with them ways to help them out of their distress.

With all of them, poor and rich, we will discover **Gratitude**. That of God first of all in his creation. Not only will we admire His work in nature, we will take good care of it, we will respect it, we will participate in the great ecological movement which is concerned about the misdeeds of humans and which seeks to protect our planet, to keep it a good dwelling place for the generations to come. Moreover, aspiring to imitate God's gratuity, we ourselves will come to practice this gratuity in our daily relationships, giving of our time, using our talents, bearing fruits in order to make ourselves useful, sometimes forgetting to claim what we are entitled to. – When it comes to

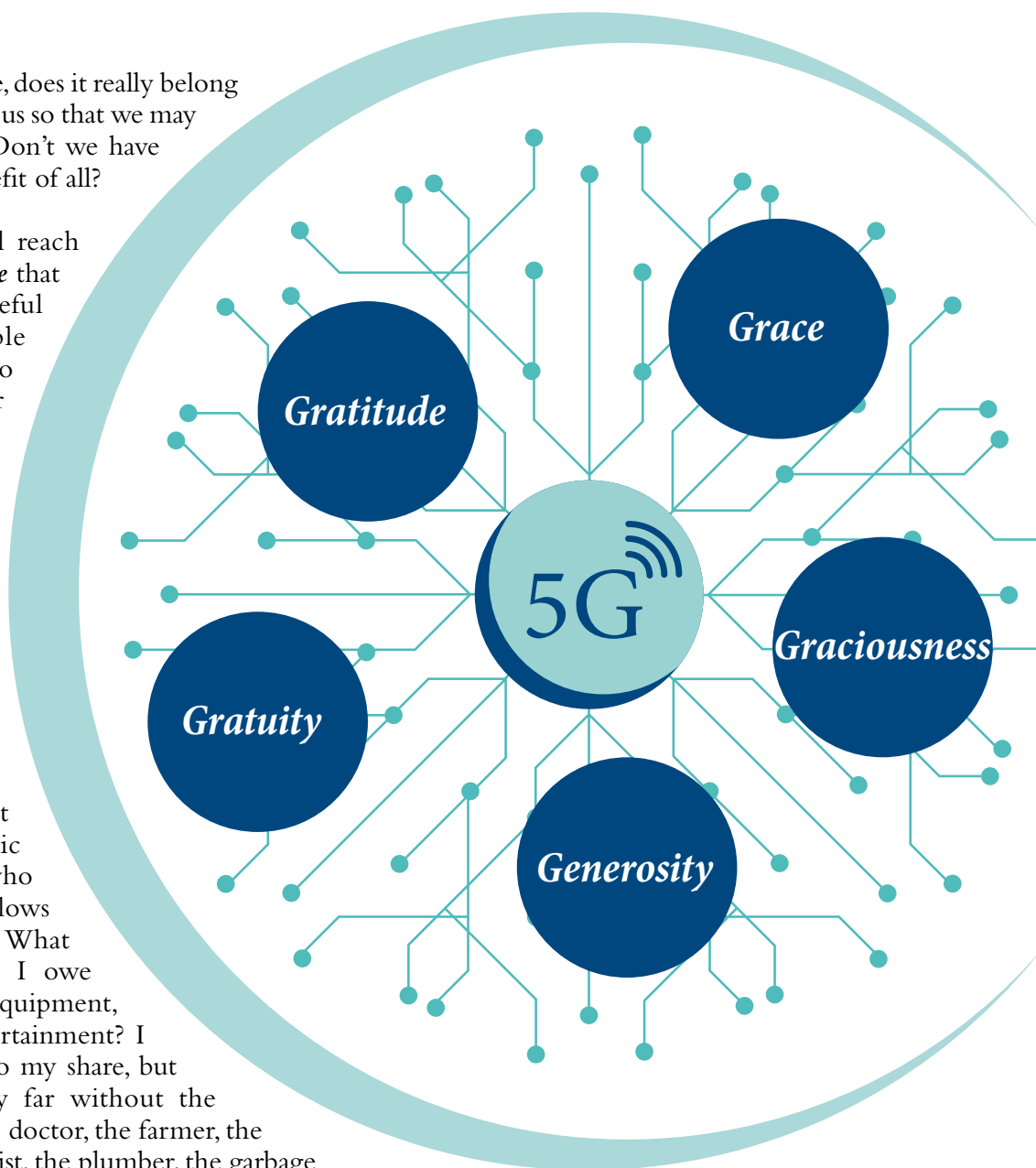
our time, for example, does it really belong to us? Is it not lent to us so that we may make it bear fruit? Don't we have to use it for the benefit of all?

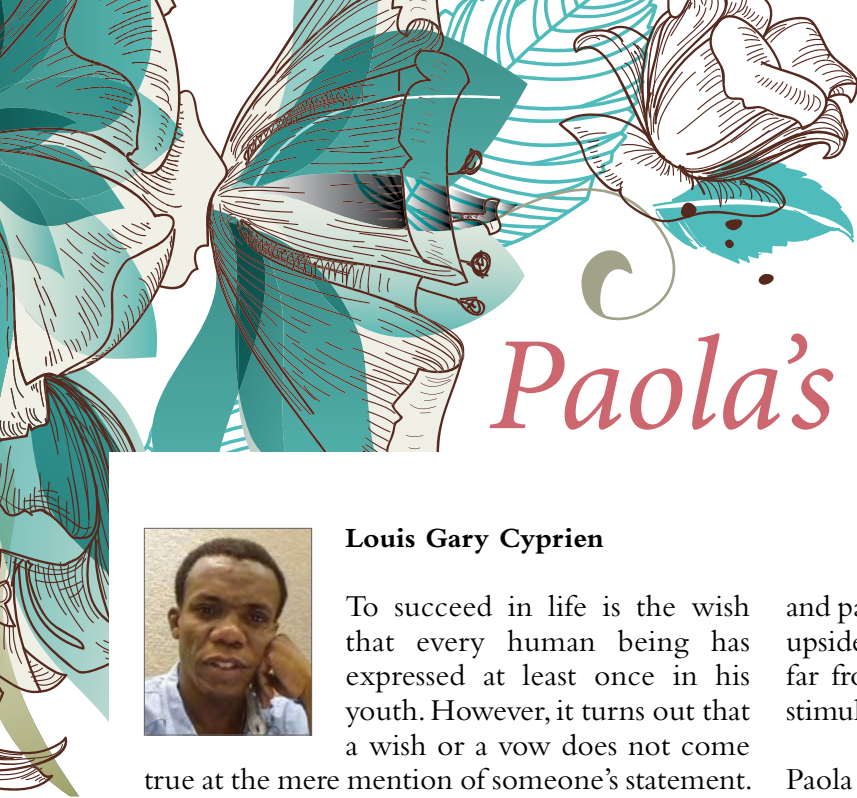
From there, we will reach the state of **Gratitude** that will make us grateful to so many people who contribute to our survival, to our well-being. Let us think of our parents, educators, friends, all those who have supported us or even carried us on occasion, to allow us to continue on our way. Whose daily bread do I get? The reading that captivates me, who wrote it and made it reach me? The music that enchants me, who composed it and allows me to listen to it? What else? To whom do I owe my clothes, sports equipment, other means of entertainment? I work, of course, I do my share, but I wouldn't get very far without the work of others... The doctor, the farmer, the salesman, the journalist, the plumber, the garbage man... to name but a few. Doesn't everyone have the right to a simple thank you from me or even more than a thank you?

And if I consider what I owe to God! Am I thinking of giving thanks to Him or am I taking for granted His sun shining on the just and the unjust? His rain that makes my vegetables grow? His wind that makes my hair stand on end or refreshes me? His gentle breeze on a summer evening? Do I think of the Author of the sunsets that move me and of the panoramas so magnificent that they make me wish I were a poet? Do I think of saying thank you to the one who gave

me eyes and made the wildflower, the dragonfly and the snowflake? To whom do I say thank you for the song of the birds, the taste of a strawberry, the softness of a kitten's coat, the scent of a rose? How can I not give thanks to God at all times and in all places!

Like the 5G that we talk so much about in communication, my missionary 5G brings a significant gain of energy to my days. Give it a try. You will see. Interested? Here it is, it's yours. In all gratitude and gratitude for taking the time to read me. ∞





Paola's story



Louis Gary Cyprien

To succeed in life is the wish that every human being has expressed at least once in his youth. However, it turns out that a wish or a vow does not come true at the mere mention of someone's statement. Fairy tales are less and less in tune with human reality and are nowadays only found in books intended to fascinate children.

Despite the astounding progress of modern technology, science still cannot yet prescribe a panacea for success and happiness. For the majority of people who have experienced it, success is rooted in the dreams they have nurtured since childhood, which have begun to germinate through specific goals and which have been realized through hard and continuous work. Dreams are not always synonymous with chimeras. They can become real through the goals we set and the determination we put into them.

The path of facility rarely leads to the summits of success. Only dreamers, planners and hard workers have access to it. To them, God opens the doors to success. Even if the road to prosperity is often winding, in the end it offers us the double pleasure of having realized a dream that is dear to us and also of seeing our self-confidence grow.

One of the most edifying images of someone who is living her dreams to the fullest was brought to me by Marie Paola Paul, a 21-year-old Haitian girl. Now a business management technician and founder of Maria Créations, a craft workshop, Paola has developed a fighting mentality since the death of her mother in an accident. A beloved

and pampered child, Paola's whole life was turned upside down when her mother passed away. But far from despair, she has used this tragedy as a stimulus to move forward.

Paola told us: Two years ago, I wouldn't have imagined that I would be presenting myself like I just did. Since then, I have learned that my success or failure depends on the choices I would make. Orphan of the woman who was the pillar of my family, from the moment she left, I made the choice to live my life in such a way that my mother would be happy and proud of me wherever she was.

While forging an iron armour to protect herself from the harmful effects of this sudden separation, Paola recognizes the depth of this wound that nature has suddenly inflicted on her. *It was very difficult for me: The disappearance of the one person who loved me more than anything else, who cared and worried about me more than anyone else, left a void in me that no one could fill.*

She tried to fill this emptiness with her childhood dreams and her unshakeable faith in God. With flashes of light in her eyes, she reveals to us her passion for art since her early childhood. *As a child, I loved everything that was art. I remember in my second year at the Mother Delia Institution, run by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, it was Mother Delia's week, we organized a drawing contest around the theme "Mwen fe yon rèv"¹. I was the winner for my class. I also knew how to draw flowers for the class for the birthday of each Sister of the community. At that time, I imagined myself in the future as Frankétienne² and his paintings.*




Marie Paola Paul

Next to her love for art, which she later materialized through the creation of her craft workshop, Paola has developed over the years a penchant for the culinary arts. A passion that she believes she inherited from her mother who ran a restaurant. Speaking of this culinary art, she says: *I'd like to deepen my skills and reopen my mother's restaurant. It's a dream that I cherish with a lot of love and patience. I have many dreams. For example, I would like my workshop to produce enough items for export, so that our creations would be internationally recognized.*

Paola sees these two dreams as two plants that she has to water daily through her work in order to continually move forward. Looking back on her life since the death of her mother, she says she is satisfied. It could have been different. *Today, I am on the right path, the path of prayer, the path of hard work that will surely lead me to success,* says Paola. She describes herself as a tenacious girl who never backs down in the face of adversity, who doesn't want to give up until the goal is achieved.

You'd have to find another adjective to describe the joy I feel, because being happy is not enough, says Paola, proud of her journey and thanking the Holy Spirit for holding her hand as she crossed the desert. Her thanks then extend to the tireless nuns Marie Mona Henry and Margareth Dossous, M.I.C., who helped her to be this accomplished young girl. *I will be forever grateful to the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. They have helped me grow and become the Paola I am today.*

Isn't she a model of perseverance, love of work and positive passion? Paola's example teaches us that having dreams is essential to success. Because our dreams push us to be bold and to go the extra mile in spite of the obstacles. 

¹ I had a dream

² Haitien painter



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When you enter the **Délia-Tétreault Museum**, you find yourself surrounded by about a hundred objects and images that have crossed time and oceans. In this issue of the magazine *MIC Mission News*, the Museum introduces you to the history of this small "gridap" lamp and its key role in the missionary adventure in Quebec from the 19th century to today.



The Secret Life of Objects



Alexandre Payer
Exhibitions Commissioner
Délia-Tétreault Museum

When the sun sets over the Haitian countryside, you don't have to believe in magic to see will-o'-the-wisps. Used in market stalls, voodoo ceremonies, theatres or simply to light one's way, the *gridap* lamp (also known as a *tèt gridap* lamp or *bobèche lamp*) illuminates with its small flickering flame the villages that the Haitian electricity network struggles to supply.

Made from recycled tin cans or soft drink cans, these small, improvised lamps consist of a tank with handle for kerosene (or white gas) topped by a chimney made up of two sections of metal tube of different diameters into which a cotton wick is inserted. While they are not masterpieces of ingenuity, *gridap* lamps are masterpieces in their own right, real little cylindrical paintings, with all kinds of motifs, slogans and sayings in eye-catching colors.

Today, while the nationalization of electricity across the country still faces many obstacles, the often vital importance of this small kerosene lamp highlights the more complex problem of economic inequality. While a small amount of kerosene, burned in the evening air along a country road, is of little environmental concern, the consequences of using this fossil fuel in poorly

ventilated spaces can be disastrous for the health of people living in areas without electricity.

The *Musée de la civilisation* in Quebec City chose the *gridap* lamp as the featured item in the exhibition *With Hopefilled Luggage*, commissioned for the centennial of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception community in 2002. In the eyes of the museologists, the humble construction, the portable aspect and the shimmering colors of this small lamp from elsewhere made it an ideal metaphor for both the inner light, with which the missionaries illuminated their own path in an unknown land, and the outer light, offered in return by the communities that welcomed them. In fact, the *gridap* lamp by its use is synonymous with sharing. More fire? One crosses one's wick with that of one's neighbour. No more gas? You can always borrow some from your cousin. Colored links in a chain of mutual aid, we can well imagine these little lamps multiplying their light from house to house to grow, as if by magic, into little strings of flames that illuminate whole villages, then the world.



Photos : Artisanal gridap lamps
Photo Credits: Alexandre Payer

Délia-Tétreault Museum
100 Place Juge-Desnoyers, Pont-Viau, Laval, Qc
(450) 663-6460, ext. 5127 | www.museedeliatetreault.ca

Being BOLD during Pandemics



Mandchourie, China, MIC Sisters with their Chinese helpers – Photo Credit: MIC Archives

The attainment and realization of dreams has often been fraught with pitfalls in the history of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. These pitfalls have sometimes been psychological, geographical or material. Sometimes they have been fatal illnesses that have been more of an obstacle. The recent COVID-19 pandemic reminds us how much these diseases can disrupt the activities and habits of each one. In the face of these situations, we must be bold, persevering and hopeful. If any congregation has experienced such situations, it is certainly the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception!



Montreal, MIC Sisters with patients at the Chinese Hospital – Photo Credit: MIC Archives



Éric Desautels

The commitment of the Sisters during the Spanish flu episode

When “Le Précurseur” came into being in 1920, the world was suffering not only from the effects of the First World War, but also from the Spanish flu pandemic. The Sisters were on the front lines fighting this epidemic, both in Quebec and in China. Let us think of course of the initiative launched on October 18, 1918, by Délia Tétreault, to set up a temporary emergency shelter for Montreal’s Chinese population struck by influenza. The operation of this very modest hospital depended on several actors in the community: the city assumed the maintenance costs, the municipal

administration provided beds and blankets, the Montreal Chinese Association assumed the rent and heating costs, while the Institute *Clercs de Saint-Viateur* provided mattresses and offered four brothers for maintenance. In the first month of activity, the hospital had thirteen deaths due to the Spanish flu.

Having only temporary facilities, the Montreal Chinese Association acquired a nearby synagogue in January 1920. A group of Protestants came forward to take charge of the new facility, which led to heated discussions within the Association. However, having taken the lead in caring for Chinese patients suffering from the Spanish flu in previous years, the Sisters’ candidacy prevailed for the management of the new hospital, which opened its doors on March 8, 1920, on La Gauchetière Street. Four sisters were sent there to play a central role in its operation. To help the Sisters, Delia Tétreault obtained permission from the authorities to bring in seven Chinese catechists.

Of course, the hospital was used to heal the sick, but also to transmit the faith and convert the Chinese community established in Montreal. In short, in the context of a worldwide plague, the Sisters were innovative in offering care adapted to the Chinese community. This gesture has had an important impact, the effects of which can be felt to this day.

Sisters who have been able to adapt

Over the years, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception have been confronted with other diseases that were spreading in the host communities abroad. Only a few years after the Spanish flu, the Sisters on mission in China were worried about an outbreak of measles and influenza



MIC Sisters with young Chinese girls who came to Montreal – Photo Credit: MIC Archives

in an orphanage in Tsung Ming. *The children fell sick one after the other, their dormitories became real hospital wards. These diseases are cruel in China because of the many complications they bring: croup, bronchopneumonia, haemorrhages, scurvy*, said Sister Marie-de-l'Épiphanie in April 1932.

Sisters working in a dispensary in Tung Leao in Manchuria were confronted with an even more devastating disease. In their neighbourhood in December 1933, eight people died of the illness in a very short time. The Sisters mentioned that the Japanese authorities had confined the population in order to limit the spread of the epidemic, without much success. During 1933, the Sisters' clinic reported 21,853 patients admitted, 382 smallpox vaccines and 269 cholera vaccines given to the local population.

Over the years, the Sisters have faced several epidemics, whether these had a community, regional or national impact: yellow fever, smallpox, plague, cholera and typhoid, among others, have crossed the Sisters' path. More recently, since the 1990s, the AIDS pandemic has particularly worried Sisters working in Africa. This disease has led sisters to adapt and participate in new initiatives.

From yesterday to today: adapting to local and international contexts

This brief historical overview reminds us of the commitment of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception to fight against diseases that affect not only our community but also the whole planet. In adapting to both local and international contexts, the Sisters have shown courage, perseverance and boldness. ☺

In the service of God

**Eden B. Tabudlong, M.I.C.,
and Mrs. Grezch Paderes**

About 10 percent of the Philippines' population works overseas or resides abroad. Among the five most popular destinations, Hong Kong ranks third because of its geographical proximity and its laws favorable to foreign workers. Economic instability in the Philippines, difficult working conditions and low wages are all reasons for workers to leave.

Once abroad, Filipino nationals often feel homesick. They tend to gather with people who speak the same dialect, come from the same part of the country, or have common interests or faith, in order to compensate for the absence of their families. The Philippines have the third largest number of Catholics in the world. It is not surprising, therefore, that Filipinos far from home seek comfort from the Church whenever they have the opportunity to do so.

One of the growing Catholic communities in Hong Kong is the *Association for Evangelization*. Established some 30 years ago, its aim was to invite participants to take part, according to each one's gifts and abilities, in the proclamation of God's plan of love for all. In the early years, the association welcomed and invited Filipinos to participate in seminars to deepen their spirituality and their connection with God.

When they returned home, they passed on what they had learned to their family members, and everyone benefited from these teachings. During these meetings, they made friends who encouraged and helped them to face adversity. They now knew what God wished for humanity and this led them to be of service to others. Even if they had difficulties inside or outside the community,



Eden Tabudlong and the management team – Photo Credit: MIC

they still had a strong desire to serve God as best they could. With time, some emigrated elsewhere, others retired, but none of them ever forgot this wonderful experience of fraternity with the association.

A journey under God's protection

Putting their fate in God's hands, many workers went abroad without knowing their destination. Some had painful work experiences in Hong Kong while others, luckier, were able to work in good conditions. Being resilient and learning to cope with hardship is always helpful in continuing to work in Hong Kong. In spite of many setbacks, these immigrants did not move away from God and did not lose their faith, thanks especially to the Eucharist. No matter how far people have come, God makes the sun shine for everybody and He always reaches out!

The *Association for Evangelization* was founded in 1987 by Father Jean-Yves Isabel, P.M.E., Sr Fenecia Dapitanon, M.I.C., and Sr Irene Ferrer, M.I.C. The Association began with a seminar that



Formation course — Photo Credit: MIC

was designed to help participants deepen their faith, regardless of race or creed. Experiencing the love of God, they were then encouraged, to make Him known to others. The seminar was aimed especially for Filipino workers far from their families. In order to help manage this ever growing association, Sisters Aida Sabandal, M.I.C., and Lucie Gagné, M.I.C., soon came to lend a hand. Indeed, the congregation kept growing and many participants were attracted to the Catholic faith.

Conscious of the love of Christ

People's hearts were filled with enthusiasm after the seminar. Listening to the word of God and talking about their spiritual experience galvanized their faith while attracting other participants. Hope enlightened their hearts. Through this seminar, Filipino workers were fulfilling a mission, not only in words, but also in deeds, both in their daily lives at work and with their family members.

The mission of simple people

God's mission becomes a reality when the passion for it is awakened. Recognizing the power of the Holy Spirit through their talents, these new missionaries did not hesitate to visit the sick and prisoners, to help institutions caring for the elderly

or those with special needs, to initiate children into spiritual life and to encourage parents to nurture their faith. These activities allowed them to grow and gave meaning to their lives. Their generosity was expressed not only in action but also in creativity, two points that characterize their missionary work.

They explained it in this way: *God is generous, he gave us work, he sent us to Hong Kong where we experience his mercy and love. He made us know his wisdom and compassion.*

We are the artisans of his mission and he made us discover the joy of serving him. There is no chance or coincidence, and everything is done according to God's will. Give thanks to God for all things: this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Th 5:18

The curiosity of some employers was even aroused by contact with the religious activities of their workers and they came to visit the community. Their curiosity helped them to meet God. Employers even allowed their children to attend Mass with their babysitter. Some even sent their children to Sunday school.

When the *Société des Missions Étrangères* left Hong Kong for Canada, the M.I.C. sisters took over and accompanied the Filipinos in Thanksgiving and joy along their way!

Whatever your work is, put your heart into it as done for the Lord and not for human beings, knowing that the Lord will repay you by making you his heirs. It is Christ the Lord that you are serving. Col 3:23-24 🌸



Missionary life holds many surprises. The greatest for me was, in 2013, when I received a nomination for Peru! I then packed my luggage and here I was on the plane for this new destination, my heart full of joy, but also of apprehension. I don't speak Spanish and it's the first time I'm going to live such an uprooting!

The secret of the mission

Marie Colette Raeliarisoa, M.I.C.

Born in Miaramasoandro, Madagascar, I was part of a family of three girls and seven boys. I came to know Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception through the youth movement, the Eucharistic Crusade. In my heart, I wanted to give myself totally to the Lord, to go all over the world to bring the Good News of Christ. But how could I announce my decision to my parents? One evening, I broached the subject and spoke to my mother about it. She said, *Do you know what it is to be a missionary? - Yes, it is to be always available.* Afterwards, my mother talked about it with my father. He looked at me with tenderness. And he gave me his blessing. With emotion, he said to me: *If you want, I will help you.*

Having joined the Sisters, I continued my studies and my spiritual formation and I pronounced my perpetual vows as M.I.C in 1994. Several experiences in my country led me to engage in various useful community services. I was responsible for the formation of the younger sisters, which allowed me to participate in a large meeting of formators in Haiti. When I returned from this meeting, a service of authority was waiting for me in my M.I.C province. Now here I am among the poor in Manantay, Pucallpa, Peru.

Adaptation to the Peruvian environment

Four months of language study is a start, but the best way to learn is to overcome one's fears and discomfort and start speaking the new language. Even if people laugh at you, you have to accept

to make a few mistakes. For example, talking about a house, I said: the white house, which in my new environment means a prostitutes' house. You have to know how to laugh at your blunders. Practicing the language requires a lot of daring and it is therefore up to you to take the first steps, humility being the right path. In the beginning, people were distant. I went to meet them, especially the children. I danced with them, shared their pain, laughed at myself and won their hearts.

My commitment today

Many children in the surrounding primary schools do not have enough to eat. With the help of a lady and a benefactor, we have created a canteen for children from 8 to 12 years old, the *Comedor*. There are about 30 of them coming. We serve them a good meal of rice, meat, salad, juice, and dessert. Parents and children are very grateful for this service. In addition, we have started a small sewing centre for the ladies. Twenty-five women attend it and two teachers are dedicated to it. We must always be vigilant to keep the models intact and offer good quality work, which requires a lot of attention and animation. Most of them are mothers and they have a lot of concerns, hence the challenge of always being present at their jobs. They gave us the idea of creating a small daycare centre to allow them more freedom. As for me, I am committed to it with all my heart, because they are very endearing.

On weekends and in my free time, I visit poor neighbourhoods, meet people and talk with them. I am attentive to their problems and visit the sick. I am also present in the liturgical team to prepare the Sunday celebrations. At home, we are



The children's canteen — Photo Credit: M. Colette Raeliarisoa, M.I.C.

three sisters of different nationalities: Ederlina, a Peruvian, Nancy, a Chilean and I from Madagascar. Harmony reigns among us and we are happy to commit ourselves to alleviate the poverty around us. Sr. Ederlina is the director of the Pontifical Works of the diocese and is especially dedicated to the Missionary Childhood Movement which gathers hundreds of children from all the parishes. Nancy works nearby on the outskirts of Pucallpa, responsible for the accompaniment of young adults and vocational pastoral care. We feel close to the people of our neighborhood and they repay us well. ☺

African seduction

Doris Twyman, M.I.C.

Living in a foreign country brings us to a new way of looking at the environment and the usual problems of life. We come to think that our way of doing things is not necessarily the best way. On other continents, people live happily in spite of the heat, the aridity of the soil, and the simplicity of the means. A philosophy of life, different from mine, animates the hearts of Africans, and seduces me.

This seduction has always stirred my heart and helped me to adapt. Each day was illuminated by a sign of simplicity or an unexpected look of solidarity. As I walked along stony paths, I discovered that drought hid an unexpected beauty and even led to the spirit of hope, as when you see a colorful flower opening on a cactus full of thorns.

Life is a gift

In Africa, life is the greatest gift of the Creator. It is marvellous, whatever the conditions in which it is expressed. Although the daily realities are far from what we see in the West, we appreciate this gift of life and joy springs from human encounters. This is how I have always been seduced by the joy of life that can be seen on the faces of the young people I met in the schools of Malawi, that South-East African country.

Hope

Hope is an obligation for a missionary. I think of the sower who sows the seeds during the days when everything is dry, and, then after the first rain, sees everything coming out of the ground. The power of life is wonderful! It brings surprises



From left to right: Anastazia Zimba, Doris Twyman, Rebecca Wiseman — Photo Credit: MIC

that greatly surpass expectations and sometimes what seems lost takes another form. Life springs forth, a fruit appears. It is the joy of having waited!

All this waiting exercises patience and brings wisdom that is expressed in proverbs. These proverbs are often inspired by the diversity of creation and the evidence we see in the nature of things. Here are a few: It takes a village to raise a child. – He who desires rain must also accept mud. – An ox does not boast of its strength in front of an elephant. – To give is to receive.

Different customs

There is also gratitude, which is expressed in a different way. Instead of an immediate *thank you*, we will later receive a basket of vegetables, sometimes eggs or a chicken. I have often been surprised to see a lady bring us the fruits of her work six months after receiving our help. Gratitude remains in the heart of the person for a long time.

The notion of time is also very different. Time is not the passing of minutes or hours, but rather it consists of a succession of events: an encounter, followed by a meeting that later ends with a meal. This perception of time requires a lot of adaptation in everyday life! So, we learn to wait in a positive way: I look at people, at the landscape, I take the time to chat with another person. Everything becomes more beautiful, even if I have to wait. And finally, from patience comes hope!

Kinship is also expressed in a different way. In the beginning, I was always surprised to see a student introduce me to her aunt: *Sister Doris, this is my mother!* Later, I told her: *Last month you introduced me to your mother and she is not the same person.* Then she said: *This one is my little mother, she is my mother's younger sister.* And so it is with the cousins: *He is my brother, the son of my father's brother.*

Another different custom is shaving one's head. The prophet Jeremiah shaves his head as a sign of pain and sorrow, the apostle Paul makes a vow and shaves his head. In Africa, shaving one's head is a custom that expresses great pain and mourning.



African sculpture – Photo Credit: T. Lortie, M.I.C.

Indeed, the social contexts in which the prophets and Jesus lived have many similarities with those of southern Africa. They think, live and solve many problems in a similar way. When we ask Jesus who heals the blind (Jn 9): *Who sinned, him or his parents?* In short, we want to say: *Who has disobeyed our customs?* For sickness has a cause, not necessarily physical. So when Jesus healed epileptics, they were seen as possessed. As for food, it does not affect a person's conscience and does not make him unclean, so Jesus must explain that what is bad comes out of a person's heart instead (Mt 15:10).

The Gift of Creation

What can we say about the biblical psalms where are well expressed gratitude and joy for the gift of Creation that exceeds all our human expectations: the trees, the fruits, the animals, the sky with its stars and moon. Often there is a prayer that expresses itself, based on a very natural fact: *As the deer yearns for running streams, so I yearn for you, my God...* (Ps 42). *Be my secure shelter and a strong fortress to protect me* (Ps 71).

I wrote these lines thinking of all my experience in Africa and the people I met there. I want to tell them my gratitude and admiration, because the Africa that has seduced me has also made me grow. During all those years, my passport remained Canadian, but my view of people and events has taken on an African hue of simplicity, patience and joy. In closing, I make my own the words of the prophet Jeremiah: *You have seduced me, Yahweh, and I have let myself be seduced* (Jer 20:7). ♡

Contribution of the Magazine for the Care of Creation



Pauline Boilard, M.I.C.

Let us apply ourselves to see the Good Lord in creatures, nature and events to praise, bless and thank Him. This is one of the invitations addressed to the

Outremont fraternity in March 1925, by Delia Tétreault, founder of our congregation in 1902 and of the magazine in May 1920.

It is interesting to go through the comments made in *Le Précurseur*, from the very first issue to the present day, with the thought expressed above as the key to reading it. Trends emerge through the testimonies of the collaborators and evolve according to the different countries and times.

The first publication shows an openness to all human needs, profusely using words related to nature: *the Lord's vineyard, the field of harvest, a rich harvest, a beautiful sheaf of little angels, everything darkened my heaven, then it became lighter.* It is in the area of justice for all that the vocabulary has become less metaphorical and that a particular formulation of the Lord's Prayer has been boldly proposed. Here is a short excerpt of the Our Father for the miner in the manner of Gualberto Vega Yapura, a Bolivian worker, and as reported by Anita Perron, M.I.C., in *The Precursor* in September 1980: *Forgive us our trespasses, if it offends you that the miner struggles for more justice, so that his wife and sons do not remain destitute.*

Inspired by an extended stay in Haiti, Sister Thérèse Gadbois, M.I.C., shares her solidarity with this people who cry out and fight in their journey towards life. Her experience was published in March 1990 under the title *Rendering Creation New: it is to share in the*

efforts of the people as well as in the project of the Father who wants a more beautiful land, happier men, women and children [...] My missionary practice allows me to see in each baptized person a missionary called to restore the world according to the original idea of God.

This vision of a spirituality open to the project of the Creator has been enriched by contact with the Andean cultural heritage, in close relationship with nature. In June 2004, *MIC Mission News* published an interview with Sister Cipriana Ccahuana, M.I.C. A native of the small village of Yauri-Espinar, Peru, she reveals that: *In her Andean religious experience, God is in everything. God is mystery and cannot be reduced to a simple human expression. We have masculine and feminine names to designate him according to his many faces and his multiple manifestations. Thus, I, Cipriana, am a daughter of this Sun Father, God the creator and giver of life. I am also daughter of Pachamama, this Mother Earth who never tires of giving us life, food, everything we see and admire.*

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C., director of the magazine, clearly expresses the cry of the 21st century: *Save our planet earth! More and more, we are awakening to the care required for the health of our planet. A crucial awareness! We cannot ignore it. We must act...* And she goes on to suggest that care be offered out of love and gratitude, not just for profit.

*...Mutilated, the Planet suffers!
It needs my friendship
and my help
To become beautiful again,
Welcoming, generous...*

*In a burst of love,
I want to take care of it
So that soon she could offer us
A revitalized, lush nature!
This grand universe, Father God,
You created it for our happiness,
our joy!
Help us to recreate this paradise
Where it's good to live in peace
and harmony.*

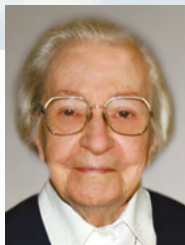
Experiences from all over the world echo this friendly alliance between humans and environment. Briefly, let us note here an experience in Mzimba, Malawi. In September 2017, Sister Huguette Ostiguy, M.I.C., signed the creation of a project entitled *Crops under the Parasol*. The ungrateful soil of the area during the long dry season does not help the villagers to grow vegetables. Building a greenhouse to protect the crop from the hot sun was becoming an interesting community project. Since then, the experience has grown and multiplied with the twofold aim of helping to solve the problem of hunger and poverty, while preserving the planet.

Readers who walk with us can see the long road travelled since this orientation left by Delia Tétreault, a woman open to the cries of our world as well as to all forms of life on earth. Through this exploration, we have observed an ever growing evolution towards a global vision of Creation and of the Common House we inhabit. Perhaps Nature will sing with us on the 100th anniversary of the magazine, an instrument of sharing and animation in a joint ecological effort?

In the footsteps of Mother Delia, we are trying to bring a common response to this environmental call that is being heard more and more. To do this, we occasionally renew this covenant taken in community. Here is an excerpt from it: *We consider as justice the gratitude to God for the gifts received throughout the whole of creation. This inspires us to care for people and the environment, in order to cooperate concretely for a better world. [...] We cultivate an ecological conscience and participate when possible in local organizations and projects linked to the vast ecological movement in order to counter the degradation and destruction of our planet.* (MIC General Code, no. 12) 🌿



With You, O Lord!



JEANNE GUINOIS, M.I.C.
Sister St-Pierre
1920-2020
City of St-Michel, Quebec

Our sister Jeanne, in poor health from the age of three, will make from day to day a 100-piece quilt, the quilt of her life that began on December 30, 1920. A promise, made by her parents to leave her free to choose religious life if she recovered, was fulfilled in 1944 when she entered the novitiate, then in 1949 when she left for Haiti. A courageous, enterprising, daring woman as well as a good organizer. She took up all the challenges of the Mission as educator, formator of teachers, supervisor of our schools, provincial secretary, librarian, and local animator. The year 1990 will mark a change of direction by her definitive return to Quebec. And she will peacefully experience the final change of course in her centennial year on February 9, 2020.



THÉRÈSE LANGEVIN, M.I.C.
Sister Marie-Raymond
1918-2020
Montreal, Quebec

"I was captivated when the MIC came to visit us!" confided Sister Thérèse. It was on August 8, 1939 that she realized her dream, to enter our convent. And it was in 1954 that Cuba became her first missionary land. Very gifted, skillful and of a joyful nature, she brilliantly assumed the community services entrusted to her, especially in the culinary field. The same will be true in Peru and Bolivia where she will be welcomed following her departure from Cuba during the Revolution. Everywhere, the social needs of the communities in which she works are met. The end of her life as a CENTENARY is marked by blindness. With courage and skill, she sees this loss filled with another vision: "If you could see how beautiful it is inside me!"



RITA OUELLETTE, M.I.C.
Sister Marie-Émile
1919-2020
Lewiston, Maine, USA

Discerning and fulfilling the Will of God daily was always the aim in life for our dear CENTENNIAL, Sister Rita. Equipped with a commercial course, she invested a few years of work in Lewiston, Maine, USA, the place of her birth, to help her parents financially before entering the novitiate on September 8, 1943. Her temperament as a leader, a great respect for people and her remarkable creativity as a craftswoman were determining factors in the success of her community and apostolic activities in Cuba, Bolivia, Peru and Quebec, where she returned for good in 1991. The last years of her life testify to her faith in God. Remaining peacefully in the chapel brought her comfort and abandonment to the Father in whom she lovingly surrendered her life on February 11, 2020.



DORIS RIENDEAU, M.I.C.
Sister St-Martin
1932-2020
St-Barnabé-Sud, Quebec

Entering the Novitiate in August 1959, Sr. Doris recognized the legacy that shaped her for missionary life. Faith in the prayers of her parents and the reality of a large family taught her the trust and abandonment to Providence and the demands of fraternal sharing. The commitments in the Young Catholic Workers, among others that of the Diocesan Presidency of this work so important for young people, led her towards missionary life. Gifted with a very beautiful voice, it was easy for her to organize parish choirs, especially in Haiti where she lived for twenty years. The page of the Gospel written by her life where peace and joy stand out remains a community heritage for which we give thanks.

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