

MIC

VOL. 49, Nº 4 | OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • DECEMBER 2022

# MISSION NEWS



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

*100 Years  
of an Undaunted Mission*



MAKING  
DO WITH...

PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



## OCTOBER 2022

**For a Church open to everyone:**

We pray for the Church, ever faithful to and courageous in preaching the Gospel: may the Church be a community of solidarity, fraternity and welcome, forever growing in synodality.

## NOVEMBER 2022

**For children who suffer:** We pray for children who are suffering, especially those who are homeless, orphans, and victims of war; may they be guaranteed access to education and the opportunity to experience family affection.

## DECEMBER 2022

**For volunteer not-for-profit organizations:** We pray for volunteer nonprofit organizations committed to human development; may they find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.

**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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Mission magazine published by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

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**Royalty-free photos**  
 P. 3, 11, 12, 15, 18,  
 21 and 22: Adobe Stock  
 P. 16: Shutterstock

**Member of the**  
 Catholic & Ecumenical  
 Media Association

**Tax Receipt**  
 Registration Number:  
 NE 89346 9585 RR0001  
 MIC Missionary Press

**Legal Deposits**  
 Bibliothèque nationale du Québec  
 National Library of Canada  
 ISSN 0315-9655

**Canada**

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.



# Making Do With...



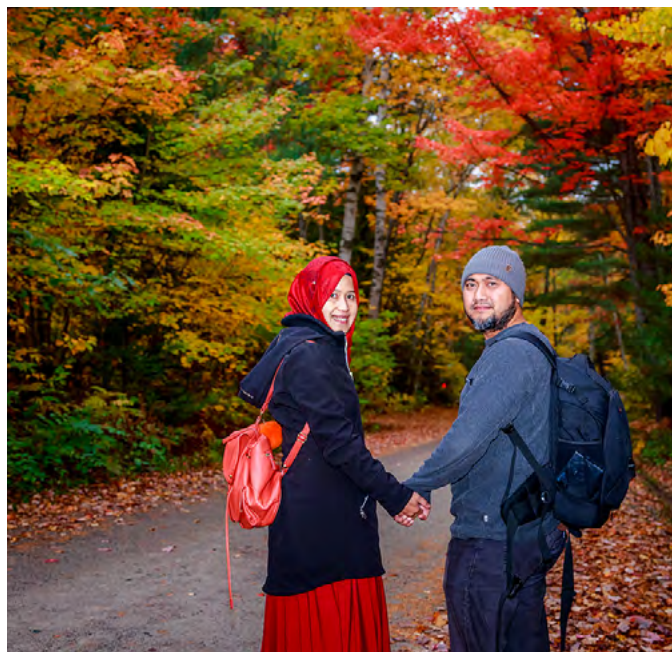
By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Scientists have recently said that the earth is spinning a little faster so that our days no longer have exactly 24 hours. Had you noticed? I hadn't! The earth spins, events follow one another, some leave their mark, others fly away without us having the time to pay attention.

The COVID-19 virus continues to make its mark on the hearts of many people. Today we realize that we have to deal with it. It is the same with the wars that threaten on all sides, making so many victims and turning our hearts upside down. And how many natural disasters, like floods, forest fires, droughts, earthquakes and, most recently landslides, making people lose their home! Even if we sympathize, life leads us forward, we have to go with it.

The visit of Pope Francis brought us an important message about historical events that have deeply affected native Canadians, our indigenous brothers and sisters. Today, all these facts are presented to our reflection. Are we inclined to wash our hands of them? The Pope's message has awakened our sympathy and concern for all these innocent victims and their grieving families.

Today, each one of us is given a chance to develop a new way of looking at things, a feeling that expresses goodness, that knows how to discern the wheat from the chaff.



Pope Francis leaves us with an eloquent message: *You are the key figures and builders of a different Church: humble, meek, merciful, which accompanies processes, labors decisively and serenely for inculturation, and shows respect for each individual and for every cultural and religious difference. Let us offer this witness! To build the dream that God has for humanity<sup>1</sup>.*

In our country we are increasingly experiencing cultural and religious diversity, it is with respect that our great country welcomes immigrants of all races, religions and cultures. We are a welcoming land, which requires openness of heart and mind; it is not always easy to open up to others and respect them, to give them a hand in their acculturation. Are they welcome—especially in these times when workforce is increasingly scarce? As God's people, let us remember that *Jesus is the Shepherd of our lives, who takes care of us because he loves us*. We are asked the same generosity, in order to show concern for all and compassion for each person's wounds. God is near and He accompanies us every day.

Enjoy your reading and reflection. ☺

*Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, m.i.c.*

<sup>1</sup> Homily of Pope Francis during Vespers on July 28, 2022, in Québec City.



In the foreground: Razafindahy Ravaka  
Andréa – Photo: M.I.C.

# WALKING with the People of God



By Maurice Demers

The social action of the Catholic Church and its missionaries has always been directed toward the poor and society's most underprivileged. Nevertheless, it must be noted that this helping relationship was very unequal, reflecting the hierarchical structure of the Church, where priests and the faithful were not considered equals. The situation changed in the 1960s. Many missionaries became familiar with a more egalitarian vision of the Church in Latin America.

The lack of priests and religious sisters in this region led to a greater participation of the laity in the Church's work. Quebecers who received training in Cuernavaca

probably heard Bishop Ivan Illich remind them that the Spanish language itself revealed the particularity of a typically Latin American understanding of faith and its relationship to the clergy. At the opening conference of his training center in Cuernavaca, he explained to the North American religious men and women that *iglesia and church, have simply not the same meaning: in Spanish you can say somos iglesia to Indians and seminarians alike, but it is difficult to understand the phrase: We are church, in English*<sup>1</sup>.

Indeed, before *Lumen Gentium*, this vision of equality among Christians had to be made explicit to European, Canadian and American clerics.



Dominique Le Tourneau explains the consequences of the redefinition of the notion of the People of God: *Following Vatican II Council, canon law starts from the principle that there is a fundamental equality between all the faithful through the reception of baptism*<sup>2</sup>. Thus, clergy and missionaries should not consider themselves superior to the ordinary faithful. This has influenced the actions of many.

Many of the missionaries with whom I have spoken have confided that they have been fascinated by and enthusiastic about this way of being the Church. For example, Oblate missionary Guy Boulanger told me that, while working in Chile, he always tried to find out *how to work together, how to discover the means, how to give everybody the means to walk in the same direction*<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the helping relationship between missionaries and the local population is now designed to be egalitarian, not a relationship of assistance between people coming from developed countries in the North and the impoverished inhabitants of the South.

## WALKING WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD INVOLVES DEFENDING THE HUMAN DIGNITY OF ALL.

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Charlemagne Ouellet, a foreign mission priest, told me that in order to help, one must associate with others and walk in their shoes. He told me about his missionary work: *Often people think that we want to do charity, but it's not that, we want to work together! [...] We join forces and we come back with better awareness and understanding of the situation and see that it is linked to the commitment in our own environment. [Thus], we really work as equals*<sup>4</sup>. It is a sobering proposal in the context of reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

Walking with the people of God involves defending the human dignity of all. Obviously, this leads us to have concern for people who are very different from us and who live in a social reality that contrasts with our own.



Constance Vaudrin – Photo: Web

Constance Vaudrin explained to me that her long stay in Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s made her aware of this. She confided to me: *It awakened me to the importance of the human person, of the dignity of the person, and that still follows me. Even now, that is my priority. It is the dignity of the person, that a person may feel useful, that he may be so. And that... Brazil brought me that*<sup>5</sup>. Constance Vaudrin is still fighting for the dignity of the person. She is currently opposing the eviction of 200 residents living at the *Résidence Mont-Carmel*, a private seniors' residence in Montreal. The new manager of the building wants to change the status of the residence so that it will cease to be a PSR, which would have very important consequences for the seniors living there. Walking with the people requires a long-term commitment. 🌿

<sup>1</sup> *Latin America and a Better Religious Life*: Conference given by Ivan Illich to representatives of religious conferences of the United States and Canada, Cuernavaca. April 4, 1963, Meetings CRC-CIF-CELAM-CLAR, Archivos CIDOC, Biblioteca Daniel Cosío Villegas du Colegio de Mexico, p. I/1.

<sup>2</sup> Le Tourneau, Dominique. « Le peuple de Dieu », Dominique Le Tourneau éd., *Le droit canonique*. Presses Universitaires de France, 2002, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Demers, interview with Guy Boulanger (December 5, 2017) as part of a project financed by the SSHRC: *La militance pour les droits humains en Amérique latine durant la guerre froide racontée par les missionnaires catholiques du Canada*.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Demers, interview with Charlemagne Ouellet (March 28, 2016) as part of the same project financed by the SSHRC.

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Demers, interview with Constance Vaudrin (March 31, 2016) as part of the same project financed by the SSHRC.



# A Beneficial Stop

By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Faithful to its motto, *To sow joy and hope*, M.I.C. Mission News offers the opportunity to reflect on events that affect our daily lives: a free moment, an invitation to take stock of our often too busy life, a beneficial stop. We M.I.C.s go on a retreat every year, i.e., a few days of reflection and prayer to evaluate our commitment as religious missionaries. One year, the retreat preacher told us to stop playing *should've*! What does that mean? You *should've* done this or that... You *should've*... or you *shouldn't have*... How often in life do we play this little game? We reflect on our behavior, the deeds we have done and, happy or not, we have to live with it.

## LET'S THINK ABOUT IT

This little game of *should've* can be beneficial, in fact, if I have hurt someone psychologically, be it inadvertently or with malice, I regret it and I blame myself. You *shouldn't have* said such a hurtful thing. Why

didn't you say hello? Why wasn't I more careful? All these questions swirl around, and I can't stop playing *should've*... too late, the damage is done. However, lucky for me, I still have more strings to my bow. I can fix it with a kind phone call, an invitation or a kind word. I can take time out, reflect and commit to do better next time.

Pope Francis' visit to the indigenous people on the road to reconciliation gives us a wonderful example; it made us think deeply. He is certainly not playing *should've*, but making the necessary commitments to repair the past. Despite his frail health, he did not hesitate to make the trip from the Vatican to Canada to listen attentively to the past, to the historical events that have unfortunately marked an entire nation, east to west of Canada. Humbly, Pope Francis addressed repentant and soothing words, in the name of the Church, and a request for forgiveness. This restorative gesture, made in truth in the presence of indigenous elders, Church and government officials,

will surely bring about forgiveness, leading to mutual understanding and cooperation that will bear fruits of respect, trust and solidarity.

## LIVING IN THE MOMENT

Pope Francis' visit gave us time to stop and reflect on our often too busy lives. Time is pressing on us from all sides and, unfortunately, we rush through this too hectic life. Really, I'm not savoring the precious moments that pass, the years. I am waiting for something else. What am I running after? I don't take the time to appreciate the beautiful sunny day, the nice flowers, the joyful company at a party.

Life becomes a crazy race and, always anxious for the future, I forget the present moment that flies away and passes without my seeing it. Living in the moment becomes the rule, to seize the important moments and be happy. Let's sing with Alain Morisod, *Prends le temps, écoute le vent...* (Take the time, listen to the wind...)

## A MOMENT OF PAUSE WITH MARY

The Virgin Mary is a beautiful example of a life committed to what is happening in one's environment, with how she pays attention to her surroundings. She responds to the urgent needs of life in her time. Mary repeatedly takes urgent situations into her own hands. As soon as she learns of her cousin Elizabeth's condition, she goes to help her. As a teenager, Jesus stays in Nazareth, unbeknownst to his parents. I can imagine that Mary, like all mothers, must have reproached herself for not having taken better care of her son, for having trusted Joseph too much. At the wedding in Cana, it is Mary who notices that there is no more wine for the guests and who says to her son, Jesus, *They have no more wine*. Mary is the attentive woman, present at the events, and making the necessary decisions.



The Virgin of Waiting – Photo: Web

## MANTARA SHRINE, OUR LADY OF WAITING

When I was in Lebanon, in front of the Mediterranean Sea, there was a large rock where the Lebanese erected a statue of the Virgin of Waiting. According to Christian belief, when Jesus came to Sidon, the Virgin Mary, who had accompanied him, waited for him at the top of the hill where Maghdouche is today. Mary spent the night there in a cave known as Mantara. Since then, the cave has been transformed into a place of pilgrimage for all Lebanese confessions. This place impressed me a lot, because it is said that Mary accompanied her son's mission with her prayer. Yes, following the example of Mary, let us keep the events of life to entrust them to the Lord.

Today, after the visit of Pope Francis, let us entrust to Mary the repercussions of this visit of reconciliation and let us take the time to reflect on the three challenges he suggested to us: to make Jesus known in the spiritual deserts of our time; to never allow ourselves to be contaminated by the idea that one culture is superior to another; to be welcoming communities that know how to listen, to dialogue, to promote quality relationships. A school of humanity ready to work together for the common good. 🌸



# LIKE A NEW WIND

By Gloria Pérez Pupo, M.I.C.

Traditionally, Cuba was recognized as a predominantly Catholic country, but with the coming to power of a Marxist-Leninist government, radical measures were taken against the Church. The announcement of the nationalization of private schools and colleges by Prime Minister Fidel Castro, followed by reprisals and persecutions throughout the island, provoked a massive exodus of religious men and women as well as of Christian families. Thus, on May 16, 1961, 27 M.I.C. Sisters were repatriated to Canada. Only 10 volunteers remained in the country where they devoted themselves to pastoral service within the walls of the temples, the only thing the government allowed. But at the same time, they took advantage of all doors open to them to find ways to be close to the people and to live the Gospel.

## A REALISTIC TODAY

Five M.I.C. Sisters remain on site and work actively among the people. They visit the sick, give catechism classes to children and adults, are present in the liturgical teams, and participate in the life and activities of CONCUR (Cuban Conference of Religious Men and Women). A handicraft workshop facilitated by one Sister allows the women to earn a little money to support their families. The Sisters also collaborate in the parish service of meals to the lonely, elderly and needy, as well as in the care of disabled children. Special attention is given to families in difficult situations. Most people's daily lives are spent anxiously



Cuba, visit of the Superior General, Cecilia Mzumara, in the center, and Gloria Pérez, second from the left – Photo: M.I.C.

searching for food, medicine and items necessary for personal hygiene. Although the government emphasizes that this is a moment of conjuncture, the crisis continues and there are no possible solutions on the horizon. The people are waiting for a remedy to the situation, and this generates an atmosphere of uncertainty, of fear for the future, of despair. Hence, large numbers of young people emigrate, seeking better horizons to ensure their future.

## A MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

On Sunday after Easter, CONCUR leadership shared a message: **Let us rise to life.** The message invites us to reflect on our commitment starting from the experience of the Risen One that springs from the dark night of Jesus' passion and that of his people at the hands of those in power. A theme that concretely meets our concerns.





Sewing workshop, Sr Marta Romero, last on the right – Photo: M.I.C.

After a time of personal reflection, we listen to each other in serene exchange. We experience peace in order to welcome the inspiration of the Spirit for our small group.

## THE SPIRIT IS AT WORK DESPITE THE SIGNS OF DEATH THAT WE SEE EVERYWHERE.

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Indeed, taking into account the current age of the Sisters, the time has come to be closer to each other in order to help us better. A realistic decision was made to close our retreat and session house in Colón, where we have lived since 1950, in order to join forces and set in motion projects at the service of the Church and the people. Like a new wind, it is our duty to keep alive the heritage received from our venerable foundress, Delia Tétrault. This is what the Sisters who have preceded us have done with courage and fidelity throughout these 74 years of M.I.C. presence in Cuba. Our responsibility today is to enrich the spiritual heritage that we have received in order to transmit it to present and future generations.

## A PROMISE OF INNER JOY

The message of CONCUR ends with this: **To be the presence of the Risen One by rising from the dead.** With an invitation to continue sharing, clear signs of hope are present even if evil survives there. This sharing of our reflection brings us great inner joy. The Spirit is at work despite the signs of death that we see everywhere. We share in the aging and fragility of the Cuban population. Our life, lived in thanksgiving, can become a prophetic sign in the midst of this reality. This continues to be our personal and community challenge at this time in our history.

Initiatives and creativity have arisen during the pandemic. We have discovered that our lives have taken on the color of a serene and grateful offering from the difficult events that have touched us on a personal and fraternal level.

To better identify what we are living in Cuba, I refer to the image of the Visitation. Sometimes we are Elizabeth. Sometimes we need the visit of Mary to bring life to us. Sometimes we are Mary. In these moments, we make life dance within the people we meet. May Mother Delia teach us to become women of thanksgiving, amazed at all that God is doing in our lives and in the lives of the Cuban people. 🌿

# Online Mission

*The COVID-19 pandemic that broke out in 2020 was both a surprise and an uncertainty and it left humanity fragile and vulnerable. On the other hand, we saw how people were able to gradually recover from the situation. We witnessed the heroism and bravery of frontline doctors and other essential workers who made tremendous sacrifices for all of us. In Manila, Philippines, community canteens initiated by individuals have multiplied to help the poorest members of the metropolis with daily food. Local governments and NGOs also helped the needy in their communities.*



**By Katherine B. Broso, M.I.C.**

## DIVING INTO THE UNKNOWN

A few months later, schools began to open for the school year. In the Philippines, most if not all private schools adopted online distance learning, while the majority of students in public schools took weekly or biweekly modules. The three M.I.C. schools adapted to online learning via Zoom, Google Meet and other search engines. This school year was my first year at the Immaculate Conception Academy (ICA) as a guidance counselor and actually my first year of practice with my new license acquired the year before.

Honestly, I wasn't ready to be an online counselor, to work virtually. But the school helped the guidance team prepare for this process, which was new to everyone. The training courses, coupled with ingenuity and openness to navigate technology, helped us meet the needs of our clients, the high school student population.

## WITH THE EYES OF FAITH

I was assigned the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. I liken the experience to a roller coaster ride with its ups and downs. Having experienced missions in other parts of the country, I know that the God of our journey and mission never abandons those who call for help. And as Mother Delia often reminds us, *God's messengers* are given to us freely. It is up to each of us to learn to see them with the eyes of faith and to meet them. My first year was an initiation beyond anything I could have imagined. I was able to recognize the help of *God's messengers*.

My teammates were there to support me and guide me through my school duties and responsibilities. I also learned how to work with the school staff. I believe that what also helped me survive and grow was my openness and humble acceptance of my limitations.





## YES, GRATITUDE SPEAKS EVEN AT A DISTANCE, ONLINE!

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I was fortunate to have fellow teachers encourage me and remind me that teaching young people has great value. It is the preparation of their future, and I feel appreciated and loved.

My second year also offered me a unique journey with its own twists and turns. A sister reminded me that prayer should never be neglected, and I heeded that. So, I did my best to be faithful to the time reserved for Jesus. I firmly believe that this is the reason why I was able to manage well in my second year as a counselor. The students in my care surely brought out the best in me, so the Magnificat remains my favorite song.

I will never forget that my life was made richer through meaningful encounters with two people, Aetrix and Zephia, during my time at ICA. Even though all of our activities were in front of the screen, these young

women taught me to be more loving, generous and grateful no matter what the circumstances. The two years spent with the M.I.C.s of ICA were a wonderful opportunity to learn about the culture of these young people and to see how the spirituality of thanksgiving bequeathed by Venerable Delia Tétreault is instilled and lived out by the key players and lay collaborators. Yes, gratitude speaks even at a distance, online! It is in accordance with Saint Paul who says: Thank God at all times.

It is said that there is no *goodbye* in mission, just *see you soon*. I let the Spirit lead me and I had my share of small triumphs and challenges. Now I move forward with great hope and gratitude to the next mission God has in store for His beloved daughter. Thank you, Lord! 🌿

A photograph of a family of five sitting on the concrete steps of a weathered wooden building. From left to right: a young girl in a bright pink shirt, a boy in a plaid shirt, a man in a grey button-down shirt, a woman in a green and blue striped shirt, and a young child in a blue hoodie. They are all looking towards the camera with neutral to slightly smiling expressions. The background shows the wooden structure of the building and a window with a metal grate.

# HAITI A Profound and Hopeful Look

By Josette Augustin, M.I.C.

*For the past few years, we have been at our wits' end. Our country has become more and more fragile. It is with sorrow that we look at the situation of families, the degradation of the Haitian economy, the exodus of young graduates, the brain drain, the deterioration of the environment, the lack of will of political leaders to bring lasting solutions to end the suffering of an entire people.*

Insecurity and misery are raging in the country. Many are asking, myself included, where is the God of Haitian Christians? For some, this God who was there from the foundation of the world seems inoperative, non-existent in the face of the crimes of all kinds that are committed every day in the country.

## MANY SAY THAT HAITI IS A CURSED COUNTRY

Nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ asked a similar question to his disciples. His answer is useful to us today as we search for answers in these difficult times. The Gospel tells us, *At that time, some people who were there told Jesus what had happened to the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with that of their sacrifices. He said to them, do you think that these Galileans were greater sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? Or those eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were more guilty than all the other inhabitants of Jerusalem? No, I tell you<sup>1</sup>.*

Jesus Christ made it clear that great suffering is not necessarily caused by greater sins. Sometimes



accidents are the result of the time, the circumstances and also the irresponsibility of some people. God is not like us, he cannot lie, he loves all his children. He is the God of the impossible. *For I, the Lord, know very well what plans I have for you; and I tell you: they are not plans of misfortune but plans of happiness. I want to give you a future to hope for*<sup>2</sup>. God is the God of LIFE and FREEDOM. Let us trust him.

Faced with the imbalance between the disasters, the repeated trials that Haiti is going through, and the luminous parts of joy, hope, faith, valor and fervor, in a word of human resilience so spiritually marked by the Haitian population, I can say that, **yes, there is hope in Haiti**. John Lennon reinforces my belief with his quote, *Evolution and all hopes for a better world rest in the fearlessness and open-hearted vision of people who embrace life*<sup>3</sup>.

Worldwide media coverage does not give a positive view of Haiti. Today, I want to say that we can be happy in this country thanks to realities that some people ignore. I believe that sharing these good things will fuel the hope of many. The courage of the Haitian people to stand up in spite of everything, their faith and their trust in God show that Haitians are a people who hopes against hope.

I am in Haiti, my native land, for a short stay. At first glance, what desolation I have encountered throughout my journey after three years of absence! I don't feel the need to dwell on the reasons that create this desolation in my country, today I simply want to talk about the hope that is alive in the people I have met. As I walk through the streets of Port-au-Prince, from Tabarre to Pétiön-Ville, from Cap-Haïtien to Les Cayes, from Trou-du-Nord to Chantal and Port-Salut, in spite of the worries caused by the chaotic situation Haiti is going through, I see rays of hope.

Jean Price-Mars, in his book *Ainsi parla l'Oncle* presents the Haitian soul as follows: *Haitians: a people who sings and suffers, who struggles and laughs, a people who laughs, dances and resigns itself [...]. It sings of muscular effort and of rest after the task, of ineradicable optimism and of the obscure intuition that neither injustice nor suffering are eternal and that nothing is hopeless*<sup>4</sup>.

I saw hope in the Church which is present and alive among the poorest and accompanies them.

I saw hope in the commitment of religious communities to education, to the care of the sick, to the accompaniment of the wounded. I am particularly touched by the commitment of the M.I.C. Sisters who, despite the situation, continue their mission among the people of God. I admire their courage and determination.

## I SAW HOPE IN THE FACES OF THESE FOREIGN MISSIONARIES WHO CHOSE TO RISK THEIR LIVES TO STAY IN HAITI.

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I saw hope in the faces of the nuns that I met at the airport in Port-au-Prince who came to show solidarity with the members of their community in mission on Haitian soil.

I saw hope in the heart of this 81-year-old French nun, a victim of kidnapping, who decided to stay in Haiti to continue her mission despite the climate of insecurity. A beautiful example of self-sacrifice. The good shepherd does not abandon his sheep along the way.

I saw hope in the faces of these foreign missionaries who chose to risk their lives to stay in Haiti. These people have heard the cry of the peripheries and share the suffering and hope of the Haitian people.

I have seen the hope in the hearts and faces of these nuns from South America who are coming to settle in Haiti in the midst of a crisis. I am edified by their courage and their solidarity. These women bring to my mind the thought of our foundress Mother Delia, which we find in the outline of our present Constitutions: *At the slightest sign the Society should be*



Schoolgirls, Port-Salut – Photo: M.I.C.

*ready to send its subjects to the most deadly climates, in the most difficult and perilous conditions.*

I saw hope in the face of this shopkeeper who offered me her product with a contagious smile.

I saw hope in the eyes of those men and women who work in the factories, walking dozens of kilometers for a pitiful salary. They are proud because they reap the fruits of their labor by the sweat of their brow. In spite of a miserable salary, these people prefer to work instead of begging.

I saw hope in the commitment of the young people of the university pastoral care of the archdiocese of Port-au-Prince who are launching an awareness campaign against violence in the red-light districts.

I saw hope in the eyes of schoolchildren and students who continue their studies despite an uncertain future.

I saw hope in the commitment of some national and international organizations that are concerned with the well-being of the Haitian people and that are fighting to improve the living conditions of many of my fellow citizens.

## I SAW HOPE IN THE EYES OF SCHOOLCHILDREN AND STUDENTS WHO CONTINUE THEIR STUDIES DESPITE AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE.

I have seen hope in the generosity of the Haitian Diaspora who are trying to make up for the absence of the State in the social life of the people. I end my sharing with these words of Aimé Césaire that have been with me during my visit to Haiti, *What is a human life? It is a struggle between hope and despair, between lucidity and fervor... I am on the side of hope, but a hope that is conquered, lucid, and free of all naivety*<sup>5</sup>.

## MY WISHES FOR HAITI

Shortly before his death, Monsignor Guire Poulard sent a message of hope to Haitians: *People of God, take courage, put your hope in God and in yourselves, other promises offer no guarantee and show no real hope. Let us keep our faith in God*<sup>6</sup>. Let us live according to the true values that make us a family. Let us put our intelligence and creativity at the service of the common good, of our country. Let us be proud of our identity.

May Our Lady of Perpetual Help, patroness of Haiti, help us to keep hope and to take our future in hand as a people! 🙏

<sup>1</sup> Luke 13, 1-5. — <sup>2</sup> Jeremiah 29, 11.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/823195> – John Lennon.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, 1928.p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> Web: Entretien de Présence africaine d'Aimé Césaire.

<sup>6</sup> <https://eglise.catholique.fr/actualites/360443-message-de-mgr-poulard-archeveque-de-port-au-prince/>





# MAKE WAY WITH...



**By Nicole Rochon**

I question myself, I ask of myself a good moment of silence, of reflection. Taking the time to think leads me to understand where I am today on my path of life. Punctuated by detours, this life has inspired me, enchanted me certainly, caused me to lose hope, hurt me, no doubt. To make a long story short, I have seen and experienced all kinds of things. This was very good. However, thanks to my family, my educators, the Christian teaching I received, my friends in the workplace and elsewhere, these experiences have left their mark, helped me to become who I am and led me to find myself where I now stand.

Following a painful situation, a job loss, a precarious state of health, a chance encounter, who hasn't been inspired to live differently? Who hasn't heard

someone say that, by virtue of a beneficial experience, an unexpected kind gesture, a spontaneous recognition, he or she was shaken enough to dare to change, to strive for a joyful life, for moments of deserved happiness?

At a very young age, I dreamed of traveling, exploring, and living somewhere else for a while with people from a different culture. Through my work, through my career, I was granted this wish. In my mid-thirties, I accompanied a childhood friend, now a Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa, returning from vacation to her mission country, Algeria. I stayed there for two weeks. From the capital city of Algiers, I traveled to the south of the Sahara passing through the oases of Ghardaia, Ouargla and Tougourt. During the Ramadan period for Algerians of Muslim faith, I followed the rhythm of their habits and customs. At the market,

I helped sell the product of their work. Also, the fact that I was bilingual allowed me to make more cordial the relationship between the residents of Touggourt where I lived and the tourists passing through. I prayed with the Sisters and the White Fathers, visited the mosque, the hospital, the school of the region. I had the privilege, the happiness to share the meal of a Muslim family. I was struck by their openness of heart, their good humour. I was welcomed with respect and dignity. I discovered a community whose members have a lot of respect for each other.

FROM THIS  
UNFORGETTABLE  
SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE,  
I DECIDED TO JOIN THE  
CROWD FOLLOWING  
JESUS THROUGHOUT HIS  
PUBLIC LIFE, TO WALK  
WITH HIM.

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This experience in a Muslim environment enthralled and seduced me. It is in the heart of this grandiose desert that I was bewitched by the silence of its fabulous and mysterious nights. My faith was deeply shaken, emotionally stirred, and my stay in the Sahara revealed to me the nomadic life of Jesus. From this unforgettable spiritual experience, I decided to join the crowd following Jesus throughout his public life, to walk with him.

Who would be so moved, motivated by a significant awareness, and would not dare to change something in his life, for a better life, a better well-being? Dare to walk off the beaten path? Dare to face a crossroads, the unknown? Dare to make a choice for better or for worse? A difficult choice if ever there was one, I agree. However, how enriching it is when we commit ourselves with sincerity, faith, trust, in our heart and prayer.

Without embarrassment, let us dare to put the Holy Spirit to work. More joyfully surprising than disappointing, He knows how to answer the request that comes to each and every one.

We are now living on an earth that is steaming with anger. Contaminated from one end of the universe to the other by Covid, infested with other viruses. We have been confined, affected in our daily life, our spiritual life. Our personal and family relationships suffered terribly. Fortunately, since then, life has pretty much returned to normal, shall we say, with reservations, for the better. Everything passes. How do we get back on track, with serenity?

Surely it must start with oneself, at first, whatever one's state of heart, body and mind. Use the pandemic experience. Listen to your heart. To go towards Jesus, walker of the great roads, to walk with Him and his flock.

To walk with all these beautiful people with an open heart and mind. To go forward together holding hands and singing heart to heart: *How beautiful is this life.* 🌸



In a providential way, my activism has turned into a brotherly love in a religious community.

# The Roots of a Vocation



**By Hoby Herisoa Andriamialy**

My name is Hoby Herisoa ANDRIAMIALY, and people call me Hoby. Since childhood, I have always shown an interest in prayer, especially in Mass, despite the fact that my parents are not practicing.

Coming from a simple Christian family with a Protestant father and a non-practicing Catholic mother, I grew up in the faith through my education in a Catholic school. Indeed, my maternal grandmother's unwavering faith had a strong influence on my relationship with religion. Later, I had the opportunity to participate in the World Youth Days (WYD) at the national level in Tuléar and also at the international level in Madrid.

## INNER LISTENING

Thanks to these various encounters and through the values of volunteering, I felt drawn to the sense of service and the gift of self to help others. Moreover, my professional activities, my academic background in sociology and social work oriented me to reach out to others. I continued my studies and worked in

humanitarian associations in order to have a decent, independent and fulfilled life. Being financially free, I had everything I could claim materially and yet I felt that I was missing the essentials. I felt dry, dissatisfied. I was not satisfied with the *high life* and even less with the consumerism that was going on.

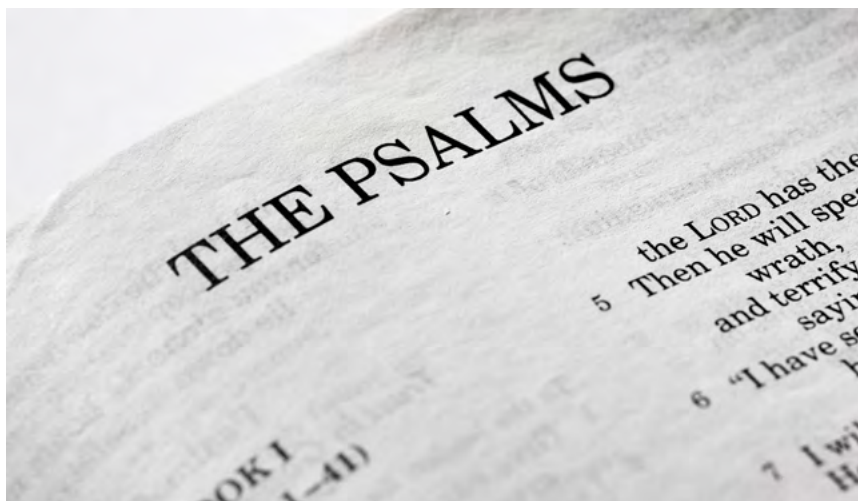
Providentially blessed by the Holy Spirit, I questioned myself. I like silence. From time to time, I would go to a spiritual center near our home to reflect and discern.

One day, while praying in a small chapel, a passage from the Gospel touched me deeply. Jesus meets the Samaritan woman: *If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water*<sup>1</sup>.

I think it was from that moment that I gave my life to the Lord through a progressive conversion because my life literally changed. I began to ask myself certain questions in relation to what Jesus expected of me in accordance with my desires. The need to collect myself was felt more and more. Then came the moment when I felt a deep, authentic call to religious life.

It was my vocation, what an unfathomable mystery! I am still trying to understand it, even if I believe that I will never succeed.

Afterwards, with the help of a friend, I contacted the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MIC). At present, I am in training in Antsirabe as an aspirant in a small village called Mahatamana, which literally means *where one feels at home*.



## A TOUCH OF MADNESS

The Lord called me, and I answered him at a time when my career was becoming very promising for me. I left everything, my job, my friends, my family, my previous life, my freedom. My taste for beautiful things turned into a wonderfully simple, brotherly and trusting life with Jesus.

LIGHT TO KNOW  
GOD'S WILL CLEARLY  
AND STRENGTH TO  
ACCOMPLISH IT IN ALL  
GENEROSITY.

*Delia Tétreault*

Certainly, for most people who know me, whether in the professional or private world, I am a bit *crazy*. To these people, my decision is absurd. So I say to myself that obviously if I reason like most people, the choice of life with Christ seems foolish: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways*<sup>2</sup>.

However, since I have been in the community, I have found happiness and I regret nothing. What seems fundamental to me is that I discover a lot through the prayer of the psalms, the participation in the

parish liturgy and community services. Our life here in the community is punctuated by work, prayer and training. And despite the challenge of this 180-degree change in my life, I confess that I feel wonderful. I am happy and most of all graciously blessed.

Thus, from activism or rather from social commitment against inequalities, I made the move to community life with the help of the Virgin Mary. This is where my apostolic life begins and I am convinced that God wanted me so much that he stopped me in my tracks to be here, in the M.I.C. religious life was not strictly part of my life plan because I had almost everything that a young single woman could dream of. But, there is often something more important when you walk with Jesus, in order to carry the flame of hope in everything you do.

I would like to end this story with the words of our foundress Venerable Mother Delia Tétreault who asked for this: *Light to know God's will clearly and strength to accomplish it in all generosity*. So, I ask for the help of the Holy Spirit, that he may always lead me in light throughout my journey in the consecrated life which I have only just begun. 🌸

<sup>1</sup> John, 4, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 55, 8.





## A DYNAMIC PROJECT

Sr. Jacqueline, originally from Cuba, was invited to the Spanish Mission of the parish of Sainte-Thérèse-d'Avila, in the diocese of Montreal. A missionary at heart, with Mond'Ami, she awakens the solidarity of children here with children elsewhere.

**By Jacqueline Brage, M.I.C.**

I am pleased to share with you this missionary experience that I had on Saturday, April 30.

This first activity of the parish had the objective of awakening the missionary sense in the children while collaborating with the project of Mond'Ami (formerly Holy Childhood). I was invited to present the work of Mond'Ami to the families present.

### THE WORK OF MOND'AMI

*Present in more than 120 countries, Mond'Ami supports projects to help children around the world: educational assistance for disadvantaged children, construction of wells or homes for street children, access to medical care, food, safety and education for children<sup>1</sup>.*

Each year, Mond'Ami highlights one of its projects, which becomes the Sharing Project, allowing local children to learn, pray and share with their friends around the world.

The motto of the Mond'Ami movement is: *Children helping children.*

## A BEAUTIFUL SPRING CELEBRATION!

Enthusiastically, we opened the Spring Festival with song and dance, the first official activity to be held at the parish. An exhibition of drawings made by the young people of the catechesis brought pride and joy to the parents, invited for this special occasion. A joy for them to admire the masterpieces of their children. A bazaar with various interesting objects elicited the joy and interest of the guests. The purpose of the event was to collect donations for the Sharing Project 2021-2022, whose objective is to help disadvantaged children in India.

I was really excited by the joyful participation of the families with the catechists and the interest shown by all. What a joy to know that we are all together and to collaborate in this beautiful project to help and do something good together for the children of India! A beautiful initiative that calls for openness towards others.

Specifically, this year's project is to provide practical support to two orphanages so that they can have a school and a place to live decently, be fed and cared for when they are sick and most importantly, feel loved.

One of the children participating in the Festival shared with me the joy that each one of them had in having a family, a home, a school and food, while living in a country at peace.

It is very important to teach the children about respecting everyone's rights. As I said at the beginning to the families, for me Mond'Ami serves to put into practice what the children learn in catechesis. The Lord allowed me to discover that day the importance of making the children understand that their personal involvement can make a difference.


During the celebration, a Peruvian mother presented a typical dance from the jungle of her country. She shared that it is necessary and important to let the children know where they come from, to let them experience their culture and the traditions of their families, that is, their cultural heritage.

I wanted to make all those present understand the happy effects of collaboration, sharing and prayer for all the children of the world in need.

I thank God for having allowed me to live this experience and I am sure that this first meeting will not be the last. We will continue with great confidence and faith so that this project may succeed and bring well-being to all the children of these two orphanages in India.

## MOND'AMI SHARING PROJECT – A SHELTER OF LOVE

Mond'Ami's 2021-2022 SHARING PROJECT aims to support some 500 children and teenagers in the care of St. Joseph's Charity Institute, located in South India in the diocese of Tuticorin.

With your help, Mond'Ami wants to give the children the opportunity to benefit from the care offered by the Institute: nutrition, basic care and education. 

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<sup>1</sup> Mond'Ami Website.

Dear readers, if you want to participate in the Mond'Ami project you can send your donations to this address:

**Projet-Partage 2021-2022**  
175 Sherbrooke Street E  
Montreal (QC) H2X 1C7

***Thank you for your contribution!***





# The Harvesting Route



**By Marie Nadia Noel, M.I.C.**

*Going on a harvesting mission is like going fishing: you know the time of departure but not the time of return! Picking strawberries and raspberries can develop efficiency and rigor. You squat down and pick by hand. It's not rocket science, it's just a little time consuming! It is a challenge of patience!*



First, you have to break the stem to avoid damaging the fruit and keep its perfect shape. Secondly, you have to choose well because the perfect strawberry is firm, bright red and it must have all of its leaves. Thirdly, put the strawberries in a cool place to keep them well.

So, when writing a story to help someone find his or her joy and get back on the right path, it is a form of harvesting. If “to see” in real life could rhyme with “hope”, it would be another form of gathering. Readers read us with the hope that an act of kindness or beauty has been done in some corner of this planet. In education, giving hope to learners is paramount. Hope is important to young people, they need people who believe in themselves and help them become what they were created to be. It takes kindness to give hope to others. The world doesn’t stop at one generation, that’s why we need to get involved to funnel out all ugliness, sadness, in us and around us.

## EVERY AGE BEARS ITS FRUITS, WE MUST KNOW HOW TO PICK THEM, PICK THEM WITH METICULOUSNESS.

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By looking at what is happening all over the world, we can continue to share the fire of goodness, of kindness, of tenderness, of respect that protects us from self-sufficiency, from rejection.

Which form of harvesting will we choose? Wild harvesting or respectful and sustainable harvesting? Let’s diversify our way of picking. Let’s value all plants or fruits. Let’s not forget that the land is different everywhere. That each plant or fruit is unique. That the resources for some are limited. With patience and kindness, we will see cultures adapted to each environment. Each plant has its moment of glory.



Patience! Patience! Patience! This is the quality that is needed. For Emmanuel Housset, *patience is the slow work of thought that consists in learning, in listening to things, by letting them speak for themselves, instead of forcing them to answer our questions*<sup>1</sup>. It is this patience that Jesus teaches us in the parable *The Good Seed and the Bad Seed*. Benedict XVI writes that *the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a field of wheat, to enable us to understand that something small and hidden has been sown within us, which, nevertheless, has an irrepressible vital force. In spite of all obstacles, the seed will develop and the fruit will ripen*<sup>2</sup>.

Pope Francis speaks of the patient waiting of the owner of the field, who represents God. *God, however, knows how to wait. With patience and mercy He gazes into the “field” of life of every person; he sees much better than we do the filth and evil, but he also sees the seeds of good and waits with trust for them to grow. God is patient, he knows how to wait*<sup>3</sup>. Waiting unwittingly generates attitudes, words, questions and desires. Every age bears its fruits, we must know how to pick them, to pick them carefully. Let us be beings of desire and patience. 🌿

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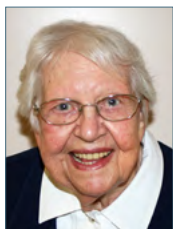
<sup>1</sup> Housset, E. (2008). *La douceur de la patience: la patience retrouvée*. Revue d’éthique, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, July 17, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, July 20, 2014.



# With You, O Lord



**ALINE QUIRION, M.I.C.**  
*Sister Ste-Anne-D'auray*  
**1923-2022**  
Sherbrooke, Quebec

Sister Aline was a gifted student: courses in Letters and Sciences and Secretarial Studies at Mont Notre-Dame, in Sherbrooke as a young adult, and MIC, Doctorate in Pedagogy at the Catholic University of Villanueva, Cuba. Wherever the obediences sent her, be it Cuba, Bolivia, Peru or Chile, she proved to be a very effective person in her diversified apostolic commitments: education, catechesis, parish ministry, college direction, adult Christian education, secretariat and bursar work at the Generalate, and the Cause of Delia Tétreault. She was a companion who was much appreciated everywhere for *her unflinching smile*, her spontaneity, her attention to others. Welcomed to the novitiate on February 1, 1945, she left us at the age of 99 on August 18, 2022 to enter into the JOY OF GOD.



**DENISE DUHAMEL, M.I.C.**  
*Sister Marie-Rodolphe*  
**1934-2022**  
Granby, Quebec

It was certainly to the sound of trumpets that our Sister Denise was welcomed into the Father's House when she left us on June 4, 2022. Having learned music: saxophone, trombone and trumpet with her father, she successfully put together a brass band at our Mary Mount School in Malawi, Central Africa, her missionary land since 1965. Never before seen in this country! It was on August 8, 1956 that Denise entered the novitiate. *I cannot resign myself to leading a banal life*, she wrote. A companion with many talents, she worked hard her entire life, cooking, gardening, doing building maintenance and being an experienced driver. These words from Robert Lebel describe her wonderfully: *Get up every day and serve out of love*.



**REIKO OHASHI, M.I.C.**  
*Sister Saint Paul Miki*  
**1928-2022**  
Tokyo, Japan

Reiko grew up in a non-Christian family. Her mother, having studied in a Protestant school, taught her to pray. Reiko was already experiencing a Presence. Attending the Catholic Church, she studied catechism and was baptized on April 16, 1949. Wanting to enter into religious life, she learned English at our convent and helped at the Kindergarten. The postulancy in Tokyo welcomed her on September 24, 1954. She made her perpetual commitment at the Mother House on February 11, 1961. Returning to Tokyo in October 1961, Reiko was a passionate catechist, directed the Novitiate and assumed several community services. In 2020, she joined a companion in Hale Hills, Takasaki. It was from there, on January 30, 2022, that she began her eternal Thanksgiving Mission.





The love that God grants us is overflowing with love... it is a love that makes the good Samaritan stop and take care of the traveler assaulted by robbers. It is a love that has no borders, that seeks the kingdom of God... and this kingdom is universal.

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Homelie of Pope Francis,  
July 28, 2022. – Photo:  
Anne-Marie Forest, AMéCO

