

# MIC MISSION NEWS

VOL. 50, Nº 4 | OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • DECEMBER 2023



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

*100 Years  
of an Undaunted Mission*

A photograph of a man and a woman smiling and looking at each other. They are wearing matching white shirts with a blue and black tropical leaf pattern. The background is a brick wall.

**The Joy  
of the Gospel:  
*WITNESS***

PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

## MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

### OCTOBER 2023

**For the Synod:** We pray for the Church, that she may adopt listening and dialogue as a lifestyle at every level, and allow herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit towards the peripheries of the world.

### NOVEMBER 2023

**For the Pope:** We pray for the Holy Father; as he fulfills his mission, may he continue to accompany the flock entrusted to him, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

### DECEMBER 2023

**For persons with disabilities:** We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society and that institutions may offer inclusive programs that value their active participation.

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

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

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## MIC Mission News

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# Celebrate, Bear Witness, Give Thanks



**By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.**

There are important moments in life that deserve to be celebrated. It is often a wonderful opportunity to gather grandparents, parents, cousins and friends around the same table. The whole family comes together to celebrate, rejoice, reconcile and share news. What a joy it is to prepare for these festivities, especially the joy of seeing each other again after so many years. Our founder, Delia Tétreault, loved to remember and celebrate, hence our Thanksgiving spirituality.

Today, the magazine presents the golden jubilee of the M.I.C. Africa Province, the fiftieth anniversary of its founding. It's an opportunity to reread its history, to give thanks for it, and to see how one inspiration can change the course of a life, of an institution.

## Shared Joy

In a spirit of faith and mutual love, Karine and Maurice overcame a great trial to give their children a joyful family life, the result of a living commitment shared at the heart of everyday life. Sister Lise Tremblay, a missionary nurse in Haiti, has had a similar experience, seeking to heal sickness and hearts. As for Sister Adrienne, she shares joy and sorrow with a small group of Associates, always in a spirit of gratitude. Together, they experience precious moments that mitigate life's difficulties. The spirituality of Thanksgiving becomes a real Visitation in their lives, giving them courage and peace in times of trial.



## A Welcome Visitation

Soon we'll be celebrating the beautiful feast of Jesus' birth and Christmas will be upon us, with its joy and family gatherings. A true visit, as Anne-Marie Forest suggests. Yes, the Holy Spirit, always at work, gives impetus to this Visitation, which takes on a special colour between Mary and Elizabeth, these two women who tenderly welcome each other and the new lives that inhabit them.

With all these people, we want to sing the Magnificat to bid farewell to 2023 and welcome 2024. Saying goodbye to a year is a precious opportunity to thank all the collaborators who have contributed to the advancement of the work of M.I.C. Missionary Press. It is with deep gratitude that the management team would like to convey its best wishes for health, joy and happiness in the coming year. What does the future hold? That's the Lord's secret. But one thing is certain: we'll lose nothing if we welcome it with serenity and gratitude for everything we've achieved together.

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2024!**

*Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.*

# Delia's Inspirations

Before the end of the 19th century, there was nothing to foreshadow the fabled story of French-Canadian missionaries outside North America, particularly that of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. How did Delia Tétreault come to dream of setting off for Africa, even before she wanted to found her own community?

By **Éric Desautels**



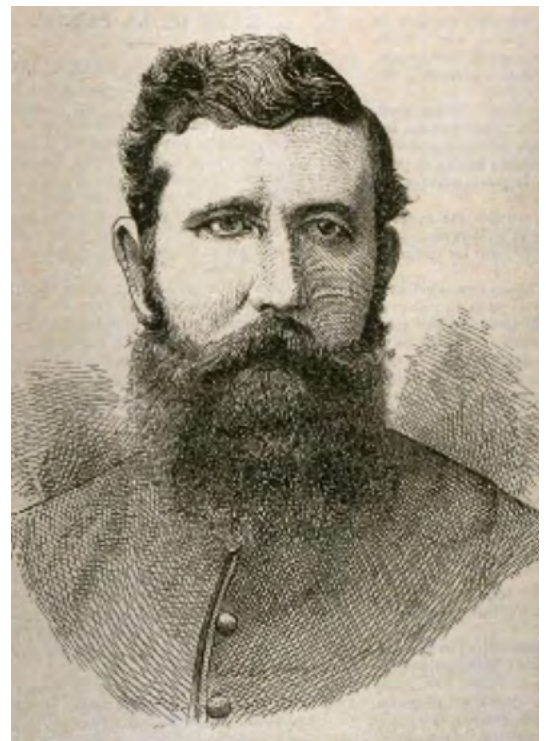
## The First Missionaries in Africa

The very first Quebec missionary arrived in Africa in 1860, thus marking there the beginning of French-Canadian missionary activity. However, it was Father Arthur Bouchard who became the first missionary to achieve notoriety in Canada. Active mainly in Sudan and Egypt between 1879 and 1885, he was one of the first to publish Canadian missionary writings on Africa. He returned to Quebec from time to time, as he did in 1882 and 1883, touring the province to tell the story of his journey and bear witness to the Gospel.

Some Oblates also visited Africa during this period, especially Basutoland (now Lesotho). Among the Jesuits, Father Alphonse-Marie Daignault was active in Rhodesia from 1883. From 1887 to 1891, he was Father Superior in that region.

Another key figure in the French-Canadian missionary movement of the late 1880s was Father John Forbes. Captivated by the stories of missionary martyrs in Africa and by the visits of French White Fathers to Canada in the 1870s and 1880s, he went to Algeria in 1886. Two years later, he became the first Canadian to join the congregation. In 1896 and 1897, he returned to Canada with four Canadian Sisters, including Marie Bourque.

Other nuns also paved the way for Delia Tétreault's dream of leaving for Africa. Caroline De Sève joined the White Sisters in 1883 and headed for Algeria two years later. After working in Algeria and Tunisia until 1894, she left the community to join a contemplative order. Sister Adélaïde Morin arrived in Algeria in 1885 and



P. Arthur Bouchard – Source: BAnQ (Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec), *L'Opinion publique*, vol. 13, n° 34, August 24, 1882, p. 398.

continued her apostolate until her death in Algiers in 1934. Thus, the idea was born for young Canadian women to go to Africa on mission.



P. John Forbes. – Source: *Le Précurseur*, May – June 1926, p. 490.

## Organizing French-Canadian Missions

This period, during which a number of individuals left for Africa, shows that, without proper organization, the progress of the French-Canadian missionary movement in Africa remained minimal. The desire for an apostolic movement emanated first and foremost from the Vatican, which was inspired by the Gospel in its desire to convert faraway lands. This movement was also part of the colonization movement.

In this increasingly favorable context, Father John Forbes began promoting the benefits of the African missions to French-Canadian clerical authorities in 1897. He sought authorization to found a postulate of his Society that would be independent of the European missions. The superior of the major seminary of Montreal supported his project, which was then submitted to Monsignor Louis-Nazaire Bégin in 1901. The Archbishop of Quebec was reluctant

however, concerned about the high number of religious congregations in Canada. Eventually, he agreed and the White Fathers settled in Quebec City in 1901.

For her part, Reverend Mother Marie-Salomé, co-founder with Cardinal Lavigerie of the White Sisters congregation, wrote to Father John Forbes in 1903 about the urgent need to found a house to train Canadian Sisters. The priest's insistence and the reverend mother's arguments once again convinced Monseigneur Bégin: three French Sisters and a Canadian, Marie Bourque, returned from Africa and settled in Quebec City that same year.

From 16 novices and 16 professed Sisters in 1911, the Mother House of the White Sisters in Algiers welcomed a total of 54 Canadian novices and professed Sisters in 1914. Between 1901 and 1914, 66 candidates were accepted at the White Fathers' house in Quebec City. Some of them became important players in the African Catholic Church, including Monsignors Joseph Georges Édouard Michaud, Joseph Oscar Julien, Oscar Morin and François-Xavier Lacoursière.

## Delia Tétreault's Inspiration

Delia Tétreault was inspired to connect with the men and women who had left for Africa before her. *Before the designs of Providence became clear to her, Africa had caught her eye. But on the eve of the day she was to embark in the company of R. P. John Forbes, p.b., illness had thwarted her plans*<sup>1</sup>.

Apart from the planned departure with Forbes, the parallels between Delia Tétreault's account and Forbes' are striking, as much in the approaches made to the high clergy, who were initially reticent about their religious community project, as in the rapid organization and dazzling recruitment of members. By the end of the First World War, there were already 70 M.I.C. Sisters. This first truly Canadian women's congregation dedicated to foreign missions was both the fruit of inspiring gestures by precursors of missionary work in Africa and of the visions and intuitions of Delia Tétreault.

The particular context in which she got the inspiration and strength, based on her experiences and revelations to found her community is a reminder of the importance of the witness of those who precede us and help fuel the flame of our dreams. 🌿

<sup>1</sup> *The Precursor*, vol. 24, n° 12, November 1961, p. 562.

## AT THE ROOTS OF M.I.C. HISTORY

# Africa: Malawi, Zambia, from May 19, 1948 to present day

Excerpts from the DVD *M.I.C. in Africa*, 2018  
by Louise Denis, M.I.C.

First, a bit of history. The African continent is considered by scientists to be the cradle of humanity. Powerful kingdoms and rich empires were born there. Over the course of time, many disappeared in ethnic, commercial and religious wars.

The 15<sup>th</sup> century saw the arrival of the Portuguese. This was followed by a massive invasion of almost the entire continent by several colonial powers. Under their regimes, local populations were put under tutelage and the invaders ruled the countries.

David Livingstone, British physician and explorer, missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, reached the shores of Lake Malawi in 1859. In 1891, Malawi and Zambia became protectorates of the British Crown, and from 1953 to 1963, together with Zimbabwe, they formed the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Malawi officially gained independence on July 6, 1964, and Zambia on October 24, 1964.

### Call to Mission

In July 1947, Monsignor Marcel Saint-Denis<sup>1</sup>, priest of the Society of Missionaries of Africa, asks our Superior General to provide personnel for his missionary project. Four Sisters, appointed to the new mission, land in Katete, a rural area in the north. Their home is modest and located among a population of small villages. The challenges ahead are many. The Sisters visit families and get to know the people, but they soon have to learn the language. And so it is that Delia Tétreault's dream comes true on African soil.



Photo M.I.C.





Sr. Louise Denis, M.I.C., in charge of the Katete Health Care Centre. – Photo M.I.C.

The following year, five Sisters join the pioneers. The project is enormous: to work in collaboration with the White Fathers to establish a local Church and develop a set of works to meet local needs. An elementary school, a boarding school, a dispensary and a house-keeping school are built. The bricks for these new buildings are molded from the red earth of the soil.

At the time, the population has little faith in advanced education for girls; they account for only 15 of the 114 pupils. Over the years, their number increases, as they become more and more eager to learn. In 1950, five of our pupils begin a two-year course at the Katete teacher training college. There is a great need in the country, and the call to go further afield is irresistible...

In Canada, vocations are numerous and missionary departures follow one another. Other houses are opened in Malawi: Katete (1948), Mzambazi (1949), Rumphu (1950), Kaseye (1951), Vua (1952), Nkhata Bay (1953), Mzuzu (1956) and finally Mzimba (1956).

In 1954, Monsignor Firmin Courtemanche, a priest of the Society of Missionaries of Africa, asks for missionaries for his diocese: the Chipata mission is opened in 1954, followed by those of Kanyanga (1957), Nyimba (1958) and Chikungu (1962).

Enthusiasm and zeal for the mission are always present. In less than 20 years, the Institute is well established in Malawi and Zambia in a wide variety of ministries: education, health services, women's promotion and catechetical teaching.

## First M.I.C. Vocation on African Soil



Sr. Victoria Chirwa, M.I.C.  
– Photo M.I.C.

In 1957, among the pupils at Kanyanga, a young Zambian girl, Victoria Chirwa, aged 15, is impressed by the joy and lifestyle of her teachers.

Belonging to the Presbyterian Church, she enrolls in the catechism course and is baptized. She asks to join our Institute. In 1964, she travels to the Philippines

for her religious formation and takes her first vows in Chipata Cathedral, Zambia.

During the first 20 years of our African mission, the dioceses continue to expand their territories. Our houses are generally located on parish land. They have their own vegetable gardens, producing an abundance of fruit and vegetables. In 1970, our African group is granted MIC provincial status.

## Rosarian Sisters

In 1951, our Institute responds to a request from Monsignor Saint-Denis to help found a diocesan religious congregation and train its members: The Rosarians Sisters.

For 15 years, an M.I.C. accompanies the new community. The two religious families maintain close ties of collaboration and solidarity in the service of the Church in Malawi. In 2002, the congregation grows to 70 members and changes its name to Sisters of the Holy Rosary.

In the mid-1980s, the time has come to welcome into the M.I.C. Province young African women who feel called to religious missionary life in a spirit of thanksgiving.

## A Fine Harvest

The Institute has been present in Africa for 75 years (1948-2023). One hundred and forty Sisters from Canada have given their all to this great missionary project. At present, we have 43 Sisters of African origin, including 15 in formation.

Sister Victoria Chirwa, first Zambian M.I.C. and first African provincial superior, dies at the age of 68, after 40 years of religious life.



Sr. Cecilia Mzumara, M.I.C.  
– Photo M.I.C.

Sister Cecilia Mzumara, originally from Malawi, is elected General Superior of the community on January 15, 2022.

Today, the African mission celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our congratulations to all the Sisters who have generously participated in bringing Delia Tétreault's dream to life on this continent: *God has given*

*us everything, even his own Son; what better way to pay him back than to give him children, chosen ones, who will also sing his praises for ever and ever*<sup>2</sup>.

We join our voices to celebrate these 75 years of love with a vibrant Magnificat. 🌸

<sup>1</sup> MIC Mission News, September - October 1948, pp. 42-43.

<sup>2</sup> Letter dated September 4, 1916.





Élias, Karine, Émilien, Maurice and Léo. – Photo: Karine Boutin

# ***Family Solidarity, Our Greatest Asset!***

**By Maurice Demers**

A Laval University document, written to welcome foreign students and introduce them to Quebec society and values, states: *Quebecers, like most North Americans, are considered to be individualistic. They leave home at a relatively early age, and it takes time to build relationships with them*<sup>1</sup>. Quebec society has changed considerably over the past fifty years, becoming more individualistic. Of course, these changes

have brought forth many advantages, but there are also inconveniences. On the one hand, individuals have become more emancipated in recent decades, enabling women to acquire more rights, ethnic and sexual minorities to gain more respect, victims of violence to be better protected, and so on. On the other hand, the loosening of the fabric of families has weakened traditional bonds of mutual support.

My personal story clearly demonstrates the great value of family solidarity. This text is intended to honor my loved ones who support me greatly as I contend with a degenerative disease. In 2018, I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. The Public Health Agency of Canada defines it as follows: *Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a disease of the central nervous system. The immune system attacks myelin (protective covering of the nerves) in the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves, which disrupts communication between the central nervous system and the rest of the body*<sup>2</sup>.

My physical condition has greatly deteriorated in the years since my diagnosis, to the point where I now have to teach at university in a wheelchair. Fortunately, my cognitive and communicative faculties are unaffected, allowing me to continue working.

## BEING AROUND SOMEONE WITH A DISABILITY MAKES THEM AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED.

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### Between Us


My situation makes it very difficult for me to get around and limits my physical activities. My wife Karine often has to help me get to medical appointments, go to work or attend family, recreational and professional outings. This puts a greater burden on her to carry out domestic and family tasks. In spite of everything, our love has not waned. Unlike many people who go through such an ordeal, my wife has chosen to support me, for better or for worse, enabling me to live as normal a life as possible. We are facing my illness together and are both looking for solutions to adapt to our situation.

My children also live with the consequences of my illness but they understand my limitations. We do various activities to strengthen our family bonds. Being around someone with a disability makes them aware of the importance of helping people in need. What's more, they are always prepared to be of service. Having three young boys brings a lot of vitality to the household, as does the occasional impetuosity of the children!

### With the Others

My father, mother and sister support me in their own ways. For example, my parents have adapted their home on Quebec's South Shore so that I can visit them, and my sister has renovated her cottage so that I can get around in my wheelchair. They also contribute financially to fundraising activities for multiple sclerosis.

In this respect, family solidarity also includes the extended family. My wife and I have over a dozen aunts and uncles, as well as a hundred cousins. We still maintain ties with the vast majority of them. We gather with them during the holiday season, most notably at the famous Demers family New Year's Day celebrations, bringing together around one hundred and fifty people: my father's ten brothers and sisters, their children, grandchildren and now even great-grandchildren.

The first time I took part in a fundraising campaign, dozens of family members supported me and I was able to raise thousands of dollars, thanks in part to the raffle of a painting by my sister-in-law, who is an artist. Family solidarity is a great asset! 

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<sup>1</sup> [www.bve.ulaval.ca/etudiants-international/vivre-a-quebec/communication-et-valeurs-quebecoises/](http://www.bve.ulaval.ca/etudiants-international/vivre-a-quebec/communication-et-valeurs-quebecoises/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/chronic-diseases/multiple-sclerosis.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/chronic-diseases/multiple-sclerosis.html)

# CARE Inspired by the GOSPEL

**By Lise Tremblay, M.I.C.**

In the parable of the Good Samaritan helping a wounded man<sup>1</sup>, Jesus says that the man *took care of him*.

Why not take a closer look at this little phrase, which has so many implications? Care for whom, for what?

When I was very young, I remember the call I received from a missionary who described the suffering of a little boy who wanted to be healed in time for his First Communion. In my mind, as a seven or eight-year-old girl, I said to myself: *When I grow up, I will go on a mission to heal children too*. This was my first calling that grew alongside my desire to be a nurse one day. Twenty-five years later, this dream came true: I went to Haiti to work in a dispensary where I was given the opportunity to *take care* not only of children, but also of anyone in need.

## Servant of God Among the People

One day, a patient came into my office; he was diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis during a medical consultation at a hospital several kilometers from our health center. According to the established protocol, the patient had been given the necessary medication for the first two weeks and was told to go to the nearest dispensary for further treatment. After less than a week, he simply admitted to me that



Student Nurses with Sister Lise Tremblay, M.I.C. – Photo M.I.C.

he had run out of tablets; it was clear that he had not understood how to take them. I kindly gave my explanation of his illness, with an emphasis on how he should take his medication. It took a while but he finally understood. I made another appointment for him in 15 days. He then asked for my name, to know who to contact on his next visit. *Don't worry*, I told him,





Photo M.I.C.

*just go to reception with your appointment card and I will be given your file.* It was at this point that he christened me *Servant of God*, a nickname he used during the six months required for his treatment. Isn't that a great joy for a missionary who wanted to witness God's love among the people? This nickname followed me throughout my missionary life and in my nursing practice. I knew I had taken good care of him.

A few years after this event, I was invited to live my mission in a different way. Helping to train future nurses, I had the opportunity to share not only knowledge but also values with my students. I wanted to bequeath to them this notion of caring with kindness and impartiality, caring that goes beyond the execution of techniques learned from day to day, caring that reaches out to the person in all his or her dimensions: human, spiritual and social. Caring with love.

Louis Pasteur was right when he said: *One does not ask of one who suffers: What is your country and what is your religion? One merely says: You suffer, that is enough for*

*me...*<sup>2</sup> The caregiver is not in contact with a diagnosis or a number, but with a person who has unique needs and expectations.

## Daughters and Sons of this Blue Planet

As Pope Francis says, we have a *common home*: the Earth. Why not take care of it with generosity, kindness and loving care? Every day, we experience events, sometimes full of light and sunshine, sometimes grim, that call for universal solidarity. Let's think of the fire devouring our forests, a fire that seems strong and indomitable, and which calls us to clear-sightedness and vigilance in our relationship with nature.

## THE INVITATION TO TAKE CARE IS MORE THAN JUST A JOB; IT'S A DAILY MISSION.

Observing the world around us, we see a multitude of beings in all shapes, colours and scents. Life just wants to blossom, and deserves our respect, admiration and gratitude. Let's love our *Mother Earth*, who supports and nourishes us. As daughters and sons of this blue planet, let's take the time to say THANK YOU, and praise our Creator for the breath of life that sustains the universe. The invitation to *take care* is more than just a job; it's a daily mission.

Taking care of every person out of love, taking care of nature that is so generous to each and every one of us, isn't this a beautiful legacy to bequeath to future generations? And why shouldn't we praise our Creator God for the diversity of living beings around us, singing thanksgiving for the abundance of LIFE? 🌿

<sup>1</sup> Gospel of St Luke 10, 34.

<sup>2</sup> [quote.org/quote/one-does-not-ask-of-one-who-629537](https://quote.org/quote/one-does-not-ask-of-one-who-629537).



# The Visitation

By Anne-Marie Forest

This work is part of a series created in contemplation of the childhood stories of John the Baptist and Jesus. In his Gospel, Saint Luke (1, 39-56) tells us of the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth, but we could say first of all that there was the *Visitation of the Holy Spirit*. For this, I've drawn the dove that travels from one to the other.

Mary has set off to join her cousin, who is also pregnant. She has most certainly prepared the story of her encounter with the angel, to help her cousin understand what is happening to her. She hurries on: she herself is *Good News*!

But God has beaten her to it by revealing her secret to Elizabeth and John the Baptist. If mother and child are one, Elizabeth is as filled with the Holy Spirit as her unborn son. John the Baptist, whose angel had warned Zechariah that he would prepare the way for the Lord, is already a prophet, opening the way for the Lord, even before Mary has spoken his name!

The Spirit shows us, through the eyes of the heart, what is invisible to sight. For this reason, I have illustrated the children in transparency in their mother's womb, following in the footsteps of other illustrators before me.

Elizabeth recognizes this sign of life: John the Baptist leaps for joy in her womb. Gladness and peace confirm God's presence! John the Baptist recognizes his King in his cousin and he will say that he is not worthy to untie his sandals, even though they will play together in the streets of Nazareth. And Elizabeth recognizes in her cousin a greater Presence. *Your greeting has struck my ears*, she says. Not that Mary had to cry out, but rather, one might say, it was Elizabeth's soul that was touched and struck. When she hears Mary's voice, her being begins to vibrate in unison with her child, because she has already accepted this greeting as a word from God. It is this word that strikes her, the word that does not return without having produced its fruit and done His will!

MARY, MEDITATING ON  
THE WORDS SPOKEN  
TO HER BY THE ANGEL  
ALONG THE WAY,  
CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF  
THE GREATNESS OF  
THE ANNUNCIATION  
MADE TO HER.

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And this confirmation that she offers to Mary comes back to her like a great wave through the Magnificat. It has become the Church's prayer to express the greatness of God's love. Mary, meditating on the words spoken to her by the angel along the way, caught a glimpse of the greatness of the Annunciation made to her. In the name of all generations, Mary gives thanks to God for His Incarnation, which is beyond her understanding. She quotes the psalms, which she knows by heart, not for the sake of poetry, but because it is Scripture that also reveals the mystery to her. Like Jesus with the pilgrims to Emmaus, she goes back into the great Book.

Mary, the bearer of God's word, speaks little. The Magnificat is her great word, containing Christ and the Church, whose mission she announces and sums

up, just as the text of Isaiah did when Jesus inaugurated his preaching in the temple at Nazareth. This Magnificat is God's praise and revolutionary promise. Mary will give birth to the One who will speak the words that will give birth to us in turn.

And so, with her, the promise made to Abraham and the prophets becomes a reality. She sees the miracle of God's mercy for the whole world and for us sinners. She foresees our liberation through the Savior and, through this advent, the rebirth of all men who hope in God. And she speaks of the coming of God's grace in the present tense. There is already a *before Jesus* and an *after Jesus*. Everything has changed. In Him all is fulfilled. And she says that we will call her *blessed*. Here she already recognizes her role in the community, with the Church.

Are we, in turn, to be prophets, proclaiming hope to those we visit and revealing to them the beauty that dwells within them? In return, they can also confirm and welcome us with joy, surprising us by revealing another facet of God's presence. It's more important than ever to proclaim our Magnificat!

Let our greetings strike a chord in the hearts of those who suffer. The Kingdom is already here, but its existence is dependent on our actions. *O Lord, send forth your Spirit, who renews the face of the earth!* 🌹





# A Living *Faith*



RACEF artists. – Photo: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

**By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.**

On Sunday May 21, at the Cathedral of the Diocese of Joliette, the exhibition *Mamo, Vivre le portage ensemble* brought together fourteen Quebec artists, some of whose works bear witness to their faith. Interiority and prayer emerged from these canvases.

Together, these artists formed the *Réseau d'art chrétien et d'éducation de la foi* (RACEF), an association that helps them deepen and nurture their commitment to bear witness in today's secularized context. They have built bridges of solidarity by listening to each other and respecting each other's inspiration. A network of friends that helps promote these works of great spiritual and artistic value.

However, it's important to note that art is a highly subjective form of expression that can be interpreted in different ways by different people. What is proof of faith for one person may not be for another. What's more, artists sometimes explore spiritual issues without subscribing to a particular religious faith.

Generally, art offers a powerful means of translating and exploring. From the Middle Ages onwards, painters and sculptors have been able to represent it. Just think of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, Raphael's Madonnas, Rembrandt's magnificent painting of the Return of the Prodigal Son and many others... These paintings were and still are veritable catecheses.

## The Path of Synodality

This journey of artistic faith takes us back to Pope Francis, who has set us on the path of synodality. Yes, we are called to walk together on the path of mission. It is a path that requires us to keep abreast of the latest developments and to learn to engage in respectful conversation with others, even if their choices are very different from ours. These synodal meetings invite us to sit down and establish a constructive dialogue with every human being, in order to discover his aspirations and convictions.

This is the new path for the people of God in an open Church, better adapted to today's situations. Meetings that invite us to welcome the Gospel in a living faith, so that we can walk together as a Church. It's the great testimony of men and women on the move, committed to the heart of humanity.

Sister Jeanne-Françoise Alabré, M.I.C., offers us a touching testimony of our Foundress Délia Tétreault's service to the Church: [...] *As always, we find her attentive to the needs of her community; no cry of the Church leaves her indifferent. She gets involved wherever she deems it important, and kindles the slightest missionary spark in the hearts of those around her. Her precious time is completely at the service of the Church*<sup>1</sup>.

The Church, God's people, is made up of each and every one of us, and it moves forward according to our availability and commitment. It is the land of our mission, the radiance of our faith.

## A Living Faith

The expression *living faith* refers to a religious or spiritual faith that is deeply rooted and active in a person's life. It is not merely theoretical or intellectual,

but manifests itself through actions, choices and exchanges with others.

A living faith often involves a personal and intimate experience with divinity or a spiritual force in which one believes. It can also take the form of regular religious practice (such as prayer, meditation or worship) or of the tip of a paintbrush creating magnificent paintings for the delight of those who contemplate them.

People with a living faith are generally guided by their spiritual convictions in all aspects of life. This inner flame influences their decisions, their values, the way they act or treat others, and the way they find meaning and direction in life.

It's important to note that the notion of living faith can vary according to particular traditions. For some, it means a profound mystical experience, while for others it simply means faithful practice and observance of religious teachings.

In the process of synodality, having a living faith is a personal and communal commitment to the Church, the people of God on this new missionary journey.

In short, a living faith is an expression of spirituality that is dynamic, active and influential in a person's daily life. A synod lived in faith and commitment will transform us into *Pilgrims of Hope*, the theme chosen by Pope Francis for the Holy Year 2025. 🌀

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<sup>1</sup> Translation of Jeanne-Françoise Alabré, M.I.C., *Vie d'action de grâces et mission selon Délia Tétreault*, Montréal, Sœurs missionnaires de l'Immaculée-Conception, coll. « Braises et encens », 2000, p. 103.



# Celebrating LIFE



Ruth and the uncle and aunt with whom she lived. – Photo M.I.C.

**By Ruth Nyalazi, M.I.C.**

Reflecting on my 25 years of religious life, I am grateful for all the experiences I've had, mainly for the incredible gift of faith that I've been able to share as a missionary in the various countries where we have roots. While helping to form young Sisters has been an important part of my work, I've also been fortunate to be involved in a variety of pastoral activities that have helped me greatly to love, care for and share life in its many dimensions.

Celebrating a jubilee is a call to stop and sense God's goodness all around us, as individuals and as a community. For me, it is purely and simply a gift to have the opportunity to celebrate these 25 years of religious life, and to contemplate this inner pilgrimage

**WE SHOULD BE FURNACES  
OF LOVE SINCE WE  
WANT TO IGNITE OTHERS  
WITH DIVINE LOVE.**

with its demanding quests of the heart that helped me renew my enthusiasm. It's a time to pick up the broken pieces and offer them to God, to repair them so that they become beautiful vessels, as well as an opportunity to renew my YES. I can only thank God for the many angels on my path who have dared, with love and courage, to show me His true face.



They celebrated moments of joy with me, and accompanied me in the most difficult moments.

### Thank you, Lord

In the midst of ministry and a busy life, I often found myself unable to recognize all of God's goodness toward me. I searched my heart to respond to Christ's call, to emerge from the depths to explore the best—the pure beauty of God in my soul—and to plunge once more into the furnace of His love, exclaiming like our foundress Delia Tétreault, *O will of God, be my food, be my life.*

What I can say is that my life lived solely in faith has sometimes been a great challenge. Today, I can look back and say, *The Lord has been there.* And, with a grateful heart, repeat to Him, *Thank you, Lord, I always choose life.*

Being in Canada for the formation of young sisters, I was not present at the celebration of 75 years of missionary presence of my African Province M.I.C. I still felt I was part of the celebration because my faith has grown in this reality. So, in the Province of Our Lady of Africa, which has helped me make my call blossom and supported me to go ever further, this jubilee was a beautiful moment and a call to return to the source of our M.I.C. heritage received from our pioneering Sisters.

I stopped and marveled at the gift we shared and recommitted myself to lighting new fires in my heart to respond to Delia Tétreault's inspiration: *We should be furnaces of love since we want to ignite others with divine love.*

For all M.I.C. jubilarians, may God grant us peace and the fullness of joy! 🙏



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# Witnessing the Spirit of Thanksgiving

By Adrienne Guay, M.I.C.,  
Montreal AsMIC Group Sponsor

Félix Leclerc said: *Death is full of life!* Members of Montreal M.I.C. Associates have experienced this through the deaths of loved ones. These men and women are on their way to becoming Associates, on World Mission Day next October. After several months of prayer and reflection on the spirituality of Thanksgiving (the way of being and living spirituality promoted in the Institute by our founder Delia Tétreault), one father felt this prayer spring forth from his heart at the death of his long-sought daughter: *God had given her, she has returned to her Creator... Blessed be God!*



Éléonor Cajo, Théodore Kouama, Paule Ch. Ouedraogo,  
Marina Léon, Popina L. Sabeba. – Photo: Adrienne Guay, M.I.C.

Experiencing the deepening of a spirituality in a religious family day after day makes life grow. It becomes a springboard for overcoming all trials, even the death of a loved one. The desire to live the spirituality of Missionary Thanksgiving with Mary helps us get back on our feet after the loss of loved ones. Losing or letting go of a mother for Popina Laure Sabeba, a husband for Éléonor Cajo and a newborn baby, named Delia Marie Reine, for Christiane and Théodore, changed the course of their lives.

These trials, shared in a spirit of trust and authenticity, in a team open to the lives of others, provide warm moments of listening that do good and ease the pain. These moments show us that the shared experience

becomes a source of Resurrection and Pentecost! For it is the person himself, shaken by the death of a loved one, who serenely expresses acceptance of God's Will, and even more... Then thanksgiving springs up in the hearts of the bereaved and their families.

M.I.C. and AsMIC, we are one family! And, following in the footsteps of Mary and Delia, we are living and, what's more, testifying to our ACKNOWLEDGEMENT in the face of all odds! Today, what fills the hearts of mom and dad is the presence in heaven of little Delia Marie Reine, who has joined their role model, our great Delia Tétreault! 🌸





Children at Disney World. – Photo: Voyage de rêves

# Dreams Take Flight



**By Nicole Rochon**

In 1989, several Air Canada employees in Toronto organized an unforgettable trip for children aged 6 to 12. With the help of volunteers from various departments and fundraising, they managed to get 70 children aboard a DC-9 aircraft. They enjoyed a dream day at Walt Disney World in Florida, USA.

In 1997, *Dreams Take Flight* spread its wings to seven other Canadian cities: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax. Since then, the inaugural flight in 1989 has been repeated once a year in each of these cities.

Over time, *Dreams Take Flight* has grown into a colossal not-for-profit enterprise, requiring an honest, responsible and rigorous commitment from the sponsors and donors who have made this initiative possible for just over 20 years. As for Air Canada, it continues to transport the children. After a three-year hiatus due to COVID-19, *Dreams Take Flight* is back on track this year.

**WHAT A SIGHT TO SEE THEM  
GET OFF THE PLANE!**



## ONCE BACK HOME, THESE CHILDREN REALIZE THAT THIS TRIP HAS CHANGED SOMETHING IN THEIR LIVES.

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The children are selected and recommended by an agency hired by the organization's directors. They must be Canadian citizens from modest-income families. Children with mental, physical or emotional challenges are also considered. The children must be able to communicate orally or in sign language, to function in a group and to endure an extremely long day (the journey there and back) to experience an adventure in a world-renowned theme park. They must also have participated in the orientation session with their parents prior to the day of the flight.

It's worth noting that all expenses for this exciting adventure are paid by sponsors, volunteers and specialized or medical staff. Parents pay nothing. On

this occasion, the children are dressed from head to toe (they are even given a backpack), and receive pocket money, including an amount specifically meant for buying gifts.

As soon as the plane doors open on their return from the trip, these children appear, more beautiful than ever, bright and shining like stars that have fallen from the sky. What a sight to see them get off the plane! The cries of joy, the tear-filled eyes, the smiles, the hugs, the endless embraces will leave one speechless. That day will be remembered forever by the parents and the entire reception staff.

Once back home, these children realize (or will realize after a while) that this trip has changed something in their lives. For the first time, they understand that there are other possibilities open to them... possibilities without limits. It is said that travel shapes youth; these children's dream getaway has certainly opened and broadened their minds... the hope of tomorrow.

As the poet Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote: *A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.* 🌀

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# A Glimpse of Eternity

By Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.

*Tender gazes, soft features,  
Gentle voices, peaceful presence,  
Radiant smiles, vibrant faith,  
A glow of Eternal Joy,  
A taste of Divine Love.*



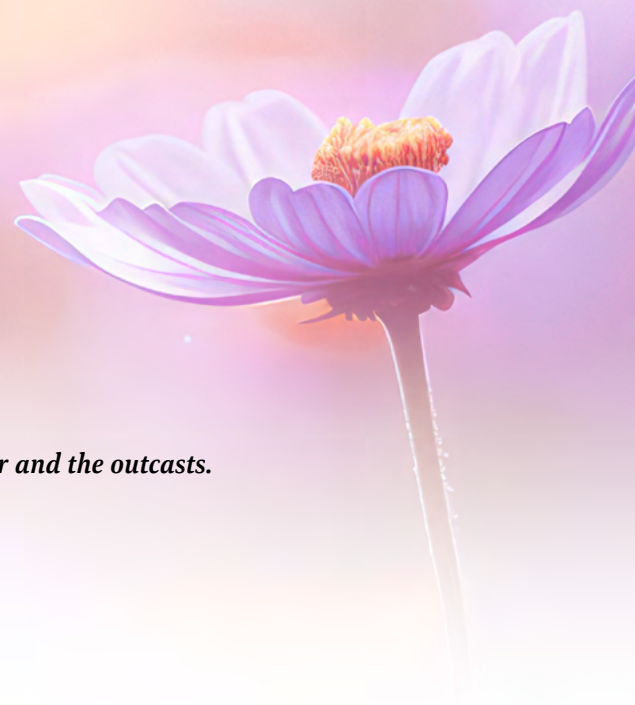
Sr. Jeannine Boily, M.I.C., and Sr. Marie-Dolores Tremblay, M.I.C. – Photo M.I.C.

*Shaky hands, weakening muscles,  
Once so powerful and so strong, so creative and so loving,  
So ready to serve and give without reserve,  
So accepting of the challenges of missionary endeavors.  
Now, so resigned and so docile, so frail and so weak.  
Yet, still so loving and so graceful, so grateful and so serene,  
so gentle and so caring.*

*Trembling legs, feeble limbs,  
Unsteady steps, slowing paces,  
Once so strong and so steady, so active and so daring,  
So ready to cross lands and oceans, to fly over mountains and valleys,  
So eager to reach out and care for the needy, to bring Good News to the poor and the outcasts.  
Now, so confined and so solitary, so quiet.  
Yet, still so alive and so prayerful, so contemplative and so hopeful!*

*All is offered and all is surrendered in a spirit of Thanksgiving,  
Turning inwards, gazing heavenward,  
In awe and in wonder,  
In total adoration and praise.  
Lifting one's inner being and soul,  
Awaiting the final invitation to join the 'Eternal Banquet'!*

*These are my splendid Senior Sisters, the missionaries who work wonders,  
Who have left their footprints in our MISSIONS all over the world!  
Their clear simplicity and glowing joy gave me  
A taste of the fruitfulness of labour,  
A GLIMPSE OF ETERNITY!*





# With You, O Lord



**JULIENNE  
RASOARIVELO, M.I.C.**  
1950-2023  
Antananarivo, Madagascar

Sister Julienne's mother offered precious support in the realization of her dream to study and become a religious Sister. In 1969, she had her first contact with our community at our school, Ste-Thérèse de Mahazoarivo, and indirectly received an invitation from Sister Françoise de Varennes to join our novitiate, if she so desired. It was indeed her desire and her dream came true on August 15, 1972. Her compass, *the present moment and God's will*, is the foundation of her being marked by simplicity, discretion, benevolence, mercy and joy. Her apostolic and community insertions were many: catechesis, missionary animation, bursar, local superior, help at the novitiate and with the AsMIC. On February 3, 2023, God's final will: to join her dear mother and continue her Mission in a different way.



**CATHERINE-HENRIETTE  
RAVERONOMENJANAHARY,  
M.I.C.**  
1942-2023  
Masorarivo, Majunga,  
Madagascar

Sister Catherine-Henriette was born into a Christian family and baptized at the age of 9. During a trip to Morondava, she spotted our school where she became a boarder as a 15-year-old. She experienced the benefits and demands of group life and observed our community closely. *What moved me most was hearing the sisters singing the Rosary. Oh, how beautiful it was!* On August 5, 1967, she entered the novitiate and became an inspiring leader. After completing her training, she excelled as a pastoral agent and happily took on a variety of community services. She lived her mission ad extra in Cuba for 25 years, and kept a dynamic memory of it. On April 20, 2023, her Mission quite suddenly took on a dimension of eternity.



**LOUISELLE PICARD, M.I.C.**  
*Sister Louis-Chanel*  
1929-2023  
Sainte-Rose-du-Déglée,  
Témiscouata, Quebec

Louiselle entered the novitiate with her sister Marie-Paule on August 8, 1951. She adapted well but Marie-Paule left the novitiate for health reasons. Louiselle received a profoundly Christian, disciplined and serene education at home, fostered by primary and secondary studies with the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, studies completed at our Scholasticate where she obtained a Bachelor's degree in Pedagogy. She was an engaging and demanding educator for her pupils both here in Quebec and in Madagascar, which became her missionary homeland in 1964. Her students' academic results were outstanding. Bush schools also benefited from her effective presence. Returning to Quebec in 1983, she performed many community services. On June 19, 2023, she earned a well-deserved rest with God.



**FRANÇOISE ROYER, M.I.C.**  
*Sister François-de-Laval*  
1937-2023  
Sainte-Hénédine, Quebec

Very early on, Françoise showed signs of a vocation dedicated to serving the sick and needy of all kinds. Her dream of becoming a nurse was realized in our community, which welcomed her into the novitiate on August 8, 1959. In 1968, she obtained a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Ottawa. Dedication, generosity and availability underpin her various commitments to our African mission and to a number of refugee camps, notably in Palawan, Philippines, as well as those of Rwandans in Zaire and Burundi. Putting her trust in the Lord, she faced indescribable horror. On July 19, 2023, after a few weeks of illness, while in charge of the medical archives of the M.I.C. Health Service in Pont-Viau, she made her final act of obedience: she returned to the house of our Father.



