

Montreal, January-February 1954

No. 1, Vol. XX, 32nd Year



The Precursor

The Precursor

\$1.00 a year
\$20.00 for life

Bimonthly magazine published by the
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception,
with the approbation of
His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Montreal.

Subscriptions begin with either
the July or the January issue.

2900 St. Catherine Road,
Cote des Neiges, Montreal 26, P.Q.

VOL. XX, No. 1

MONTREAL

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COVER: This winsome Japanese child who as yet is a non-Christian prays fervently before the Crib at our Tokyo Convent.

Christmas Prayer

O little Jesus, condescend to dwell in my heart;
It is not so clean as the manger,
But You may find some warmth in it.

O little Jesus, if all the inns of the world
Find no room for You,
Let my poor heart be Your home.



"O little Jesus, condescend to dwell in my heart"

O little Jesus, so long as You are in me,
Even exile is sweet home to me,
And the valley of tears is full of joy.

O little Jesus, let me be another Mary to You,
Live and grow in my humble bosom,
Till I lose myself and give birth to You.

O little Jesus, bless Your priests and disciples
Who are suffering for the love of You;
Make Your Birthday theirs too.

O little Jesus, forgive my countrymen,
For they know not what they are doing.
Let me pay though I am worth nothing.

O little Jesus, Your Birth is the beginning of
Your Passion,
Let us follow Your steps to the Calvary.
Let us either die or live martyrs of Love.

O little Jesus, Your Passion is the beginning of
Your Resurrection,
May Your Church in China rise from her tribulations
As the Phoenix from the ashes !

DR. John Wu in the Benedictine Orient





Marian Year

With the whole Catholic world at the opening of this glorious Marian centenary, we humbly offer our Immaculate Queen and Mother the homage of our filial love and heartfelt devotion.

*Purer than crystal streams or mountain snows,
Whiter than lilies on the lake's blue crest,
Distilling fragrance sweeter than the rose,
Virgin Immaculate, we hail thee blest.*

With St. Alphonsus let us meditate on the Immaculate Conception.

The ruin was great which sin brought upon Adam and the whole human race; for when he unhappily lost grace, he at the same time lost the other blessings with which, in the beginning, he was enriched, and drew upon himself, and upon all his descendants, both the displeasure of God, and all other evils. But God ordained that the Blessed Virgin should be exempt from this common calamity, for he had destined her to be the mother of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, who was to repair the injury done by the first. Now, let us see how befitting it was that the Three Divine Persons should preserve this Virgin from original sin. We shall see that it was befitting the Father to preserve her from it as his daughter, the Son as his mother, the Holy Spirit as his spouse.

In the first place, it was fitting that the eternal Father should create Mary free from the original stain, because she was his daughter, and his first-born daughter, as she herself attests; "I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures," for this passage is applied to Mary by the sacred interpreters, by the holy Fathers, and by the Church herself, on the solemn festival of her Conception. Whether she be the first-born on account of her predestination, together with her Son, in the divine decrees, before all creatures, as the school of the Scotists will have it; or the first-born of grace, as predestined to be the mother of the Redeemer, after the

prevision of sin, according to the school of the Thomists, all agree in calling her the first-born of God; which being the case, it was not meet that Mary should be the slave of Lucifer, but that she should only and always be possessed by her Creator, as she herself asserts: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways."

Moreover, it was meet that the eternal Father should create her in his grace, since he destined her for the restorer of the lost world, and mediatrix of peace between man and God; and thus the holy Fathers name her, and especially St. John Damascene, who thus addresses her, "Oh blessed Virgin, thou art born to procure the salvation of the whole world!" St. Bernard says that Mary was already prefigured in the ark of Noah; for as by the ark men were saved from the deluge, so by Mary we are saved from the shipwreck of sin; but with this difference, that by means of the ark few only were saved, but by means of Mary the whole human race has been redeemed. Hence it is that Mary is called by St. Athanasius: The new Eve, the mother of life; Nova Eva, mater vitae. A new Eve, because the first was the mother of death, but the most holy Virgin is the mother of life.

It was especially fitting that the eternal Father should preserve his daughter from the sins of Adam, because he destined her for the mother of his only begotten Son. Thou wast preordained in the mind of God, before every creature, to bring forth God himself made man. If for no other reason, then, at least for the honor of his Son, who was God, the Father would create her pure from every stain. The angelic Doctor St. Thomas says, that all things ordained by God must be holy, and pure from every defilement. If David, when he was planning the temple of Jerusalem with a magnificence worthy of the Lord said: "Not for man a house is prepared, but for God;" now, how much greater cause have we to believe that the great Creator having destined Mary to be the mother of his own Son, would adorn her soul with every grace that it might be a worthy habitation for a God. God, the Creator of all things, affirms blessed Denis the Carthusian, about to construct a worthy habitation for his Son, adorned her with all pleasing gifts. And the holy Church herself assures us of this, when she affirms that God prepared the body and soul of the Virgin to be, on earth, a habitation worthy of his only begotten Son. "Omnipotent, eternal God!" thus the holy Church prays, "who, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin mother, that she might become a worthy habitation for thy Son."

It is acknowledged to be the greatest glory of sons to be born of noble parents. The glory of children are their fathers. So that in the world the imputation of small fortune and little science is more endurable than that of low birth; for the poor man may become rich by industry, the ignorant learned by study, but he who is of low birth can hardly become noble; and if ever this occurs, the old and original reproach is liable always to be revived. How can we then believe that God, when he was able to give his Son a noble mother, by preserving her from sin, would have consented that he should be born of a mother defiled with sin, and permit Lucifer to reproach him with the opprobrium of being born of a mother who once was his slave and an enemy of God! No, the Lord has not permitted this, but he has well provided for the honor of his Son, by ordaining that his mother should always be immaculate, that she might be a fit mother for such a Son. The Greek Church confirms this: "By a singular providence, God ordained that the most holy Virgin should be perfectly pure from the

very beginning of her life, as was becoming her who was to be a mother worthy of Christ."

It is a common axiom among theologians, that no gift has ever been granted to any creature with which the blessed Virgin was not also enriched. St. Bernard thus expresses it: "We certainly cannot suspect that what has been bestowed on the chosen among mortals should be withheld from the blessed Virgin." And St. Thomas of Villanova says, "Nothing was ever given to any of the saints that did not shine more pre-eminently in Mary from the beginning of her life." And if it be true, according to the celebrated saying of St. John Damascene, that there is an infinite distance between the mother of God and the servants of God, it certainly must be supposed, as St. Thomas teaches, that God has conferred greater graces of every kind on the mother than on the servants. Now, asks St. Anselm, the great defender of the privileges of the Immaculate Mary, this being granted, was the wisdom of God unable to prepare a pure abode for his Son, free from every human stain? Has it been in the power of God, continues St. Anselm, to preserve the angels of heaven unstained amidst the ruin of so many, and could he not preserve the mother of his Son and the queen of angels from the common fall of man? Could God, I add, give the grace even to an Eve to come into the world immaculate, and afterwards be unable to bestow it on Mary?

Ah, no, God could do it and has done it, since it was altogether fitting, as the above-named St. Anselm says, that this Virgin, to whom God was to give his only Son, should be adorned with such purity, that it not only should surpass the purity of all men and of all angels, but should be second in greatness only to that of God. And still more plainly does St. John Damascene declare, that he preserved the soul as well as the body of this Virgin, as beseemed her who was about to receive God into her womb, for He being holy, dwells only with the holy. Thus the eternal Father could say to this beloved daughter: "As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters. Daughter among all my other daughters, thou art like a lily among thorns; for they are all stained by sin, but thou wert ever immaculate and ever my friend!"

Besides, it was fitting that God should preserve her from original sin, since he destined her to bruise the head of the infernal serpent, who, by seducing our first parents brought death upon all men, as our Lord predicted; "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head." Now, if Mary was to be the strong woman brought into the world to crush Lucifer, surely it was not fitting that she should first be conquered by Lucifer, and made his slave, but rather that she should be free from every stain, and from all subjection to the enemy. As he had in his pride already corrupted the whole human race, he would also corrupt the pure soul of this Virgin. But may the divine goodness be ever praised, who prevented her with so much grace, to the end that remaining free from every stain of sin, she could overthrow and confound his pride, as St. Augustine says, or whoever may have been the author of that commentary upon Genesis, "As the devil was the head from whence original sin proceeded, that head Mary crushed, because no sin ever entered the soul of the Virgin, and therefore she was free from all stain." St. Bonaventure still more clearly expressed the same; "It was meet that the blessed Virgin Mary, by whom our shame was to be removed, should conquer the devil, and there she should not yield to him in the least degrees."

(To be continued)



The Catholic Church in the Philippines

SR. TERESA OF THE HOLYFACE(1), M.I.C.

Paulino Albano entered the Minor Seminary last June. He is one of the 1,670 Seminarians in the Philippines. In his college there are one hundred and ninety boys of all ages, preparing to receive Holy Orders. Following the natural course of things many of Paulino's companions will drop out before completing the course. Is this small number of candidates for the priesthood sufficient to supply the 15.8 million Filipinos who declare themselves Catholics?

It has been estimated that two hundred new priests a year would be needed to keep pace with the expanding work of the Church here.

To maintain Paulino in the Seminary, Mr. Albano has to deposit practically 1000 pesos per year at the registrar's office. Normally it will take between eleven and twelve thousand pesos to put the boy through. Since there is no financial return in this investment many parents refuse to pay; others simply cannot afford it. Some of Paulino's classmates benefit from endowments or scholarships offered by the Knights of Columbus, the YLAC, or individual benefactors. The Bishops of most dioceses are shouldering the expenses of qualified boys. In one instance, a Bishop told the author he was paying for fourteen candidates of his district whose parents consented to give only an allowance for personal expenses.

In the Philippines today there are only 2,492 priests. It is normally accepted that a Catholic priest can attend to the needs of about two thousand faithful. Here it is a national average of one to eight thousand; in some localities the proportion is still higher. This brings it to one of the lowest averages in the world. In Manila proper there are 539 priests; many of these are not actually doing parish ministry but are engaged either in administration work or teaching.

In Paulino's parish, Galalangin, there is one priest for twenty thousand Catholics. How can he be expected to minister to all his parishioners? It is physically impossible for a priest in these conditions to be present at the

1. Therese Leblanc, Moncton, N. B.

bedside of the dying. Is it surprising then, that sixty per cent of all Filipino Catholics die without receiving the Last Sacraments?

Paulino is one of three hundred thousand Filipino children who had the advantage of receiving a thorough Catholic education. Three hundred and fifty thousand receive a minimum amount of religious instruction in Public Schools while over two millions of his Filipino Catholic brother students never even had the opportunity of studying the Commandments of God and of the Church because there is no one to teach them.

Paulino had the good fortune of belonging to an ideal Catholic family. His parents were convinced Catholics before they were married. They upheld in their home staunch Christian principles and traditions; Paulino was trained in self discipline at the same time as he was taught his prayers.

THE ALBANO FAMILY, GAGALANGIN MANILA. PAULINO THE ELDEST IS AT THE SEMINARY PREPARING FOR THE PRIESTHOOD.



Unfortunately some of his companions at the Seminary did not all have such basic training; eventually they had to leave. Their parents had probably been too engrossed in business speculations and the children's upbringing had been left to the maids.

Statistics tell us that eight out of ten Filipinos are Catholics. They fail to mention that only ten out of one hundred Catholics hear Sunday Mass. Of these ten Catholics only a few can really be said to be practising Catholics. Thousands of Filipinos are devotees whose Faith shows up only at Fiestas. How many of those who venerate the Black Nazarene at Quiapo ever think of fulfilling their Easter duty?

Now supposing all the practising Catholics decided to go to Mass on the same Sunday, would there be churches enough? Let us hear the answer from Father Horatio de la Costa, S.J., noted Filipino historian and reliable authority.

"While no exact figures are available, we can hazard a rough guess. One of the better organized Manila parishes has a Catholic population of thirty thousand. Four Masses are held in the parish church every Sunday. The standing capacity of the church is about one thousand. It is not filled to capacity at each Mass, but we shall assume that it is. This means that four thousand of the thirty thousand Catholics in the parish go to their parish church for Mass on a Sunday. Even if we do add to this figure those who go to Mass elsewhere and make due allowance for those who are excused from the obligation the proportion would still be not more than twenty per cent."

The shortage of personnel is perhaps one of the biggest problems facing the Philippine Catholic Church this year. Few will deny the profound influence of the Church upon Filipinos. Even the poorly instructed peasants cling to their Faith; it is part of the tradition and civilization handed down to them by Spain.

But Catholicism is a living and growing Faith and it has put forth new roots. The hierarchy has taken a firm stand on the social question. Lay organizations are effectively helping the undermanned clergy; free labor unions and collective bargaining procedures have been supported; research centres and seminars are preparing various programs for agrarian reforms. A large portion of political, professional, and business leaders of the nation are provided by Catholic Colleges and Universities.

Evidently the Catholic Church in the Philippines is at a crisis because of lack of personnel. Unless something is done to support the clergy, unless Filipino parents play their part in the recruiting and financing of vocations to the priesthood, how long will the Catholic survive in this country?

Mass is celebrated once a week in the chapel of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for the intentions of Subscribers to THE PRECURSOR and all living Benefactors.



Another Marian Victory

SR. MARGARET OF THE CHILD JESUS(1), M.I.C.

In August we opened a school in Maximo Gomez. Ours was a very delicate task from the outset for this parish which had long been deprived of priestly ministrations had fallen a prey to the manoeuvres of freemasonry. In order to recruit pupils for our classes, we decided to visit every single family in the *pueblo*. Almost everywhere we received a pleasant welcome.

One afternoon as I was making the rounds accompanied by an obliging Cuban lady, I halted in front of a cafe. "Madre," the lady whispered, "Here you must go very slowly. The landlord is a militant freemason who hates priests and religious." With this warning still ringing in my ears, I knocked at the entrance to meet with a rather cool reception from the master of the house. Still, his innate courtesy prevailing, he invited us to enter his private residence by the side of the cafe. His wife who had apparently guessed the purpose of our visit showed great pleasure. After exchanging civilities we came to the point. Would Mr. X, not send his three small school age children to our Colegio? He frowned, looked annoyed, then declared, "Well, this is too important a matter to be settled lightly. I cannot promise anything. If I do send any of my children to your school, it will be my eight-year-old son, Andrew. A cafe is not a good place to bring him up. It would be much better for him if he went to school all day." In Cuba, the public schools function only during the forenoon.

Some time later, Sister Superior went shopping in this part of the town and incidentally called at the cafe. Mr. X. persisted in his mood of procrastination.

1. Fleur Ange L'Heureux, Montreal.

tion. "Calma, calma, Madre," (No hurry, Mother) he exclaimed as soon as he saw her figure looming in the doorway. "Of course," replied Sister "I do not want to insist; I was passing through, and merely entered to know whether you were ready to have us put your little ones on our roster. Just let us know yourself as soon as you have made up your mind."

A few days before school opened, we were overjoyed to notice Andrew among the children waiting to be enrolled. He was accompanied by a friend of the family who had severe instructions from Mr. X. regarding the boy's religious instruction. No catechism at all for him, for never would he be allowed to be baptized. We decided to entrust this case to Our Lady who would surely know how to outwit the wiles of the eternal enemy of souls.

On October 1, Andrew began his classes. He was a bright, studious pupil who very often held first rank in his class but during the doctrine lessons, his usually merry face became downcast especially when baptism was mentioned. In January, Holy Childhood activities were launched in the different primary grades and I took the occasion to give my pupils a talk on the importance of baptism and on the sad fate of all those babies allowed to die unshriven. Andrew who was listening attentively exclaimed, "Madre, what about me? I'm not a baby but even so, I have never been baptized." Before I had time to put in a word, the children chorused, "O you poor, poor boy! If you died you would not go to heaven." Andrew sobbed, "It's not my fault, Papa does not want me to be baptized." Upon my urging them to pray hard for Andrew, they all promised and the boy went home with a lighter heart.

Preparation of the First Communicants was intensified during the months of March and April and Andrew looked on, all his soul's yearning burning in his dark eyes. As the date fixed for the great day neared, Sister Superior came to my classroom to preside the preparatory tests. The list with all the names of the First Communicants inscribed was presented to her and as she called out each name the children came forward in turn. Andrew's name also figured on the list with the other second Graders. When he passed by, Sister Superior (1) feigning ignorance of his situation asked, "Are you happy to make your First Communion?"

"Madre, I cannot make it with the others because I am not baptized."

"Why not?"

"Papa will not allow it."

"Have you ever asked him? Perhaps he would give you the permission if you begged hard enough . . . Ask our Blessed Mother to help you. Somehow I feel sure she will not refuse to grant your request."

"Oh, Madre, if only my papa allowed me to be baptized!" His eyes shone in anticipation. "I will hurry home and ask him right away."

What happened in that Cuban family while a child battled for his right to his divine inheritance? His innocent pleadings won and the obdurate

1. Sister Eustelle of the Blessed Sacrament (Lucienne Pelletier, St. Louise, l'Islet Co.)

father was conquered in the end. The very next morning as he hastened to school, Andrew spread the glad news all along the way, "*Papa dice que si, dice que si,*" (Papa said yes, he said yes). Classes over, arrangements were taken with the pastor to have Andrew baptized that same evening. At the appointed hour, however, a messenger ran in to tell us that the godfather could not be found. Meanwhile the devil desperately tried to thwart our plans. On the day fixed for the ceremony, godfather and godmother were late keeping us all in suspense. At last, after many trials and setbacks, the boy was finally baptized at 5.30 p.m. in our convent chapel.

Is not this another great victory won over Satan by Our Lady, Queen of Charity? The prayers and sacrifices of some fervent souls perhaps of some sick person or of fervent members of the Holy Childhood Association, doubtless touched her maternal heart in favor of this Cuban child. Please do not forget him in your prayers. Who knows? He may some day become the apostle of his *pueblo* where the harvest indeed is great but where the laborers are pitifully few.



Spiritual Needs of South America

Although the South American continent has one-fifth of all the Catholic population of the world, it counts only 7 per cent of the total number of Catholic priests. There are only 25,000 priests, secular and religious, in the whole of South American, which means only one priest for every 7,000 Catholics. But some countries fall below the average. In Guatemala there is only one priest for every 27,968 Catholics; in San Domingo one for every 14,679 Catholics; in Haiti one for every 11,966 Catholics; in Honduras one for every 10,345, and even in Cuba there is only one priest for every 8,301 Catholics.

The result of all this is that the reception of the Sacraments is unusual, marriages in Church are few, and what makes the situation worse is the terrible pressure put on these uninstructed Catholics by the Protestant sects. Protestants have access to the most powerful radio stations in South America. They establish schools, dispensaries and centers for the most neglected and wretched of the people, especially in the rural districts. They sing hymns with the people and read the Scriptures to them, the first time in their lives that many of these poor people have heard the Bible read. Things are going to grow worse when the 10,000 Protestant missionaries expelled from the Far East invade Latin America as they plan to do. Already the sad results of this propaganda is seen. In 1925 there were only 708,000 Protestants in South America. Today there are nearly seven times that many, 4,700,000.

Medical Mission News



KORIYAMA, JAPAN

Maria Sama *wins the Day*

SR. ST. ANNE(1), M.I.C.

The father of one of our kindergarten pupils, Mr. Kobayashi, was dying of a very painful disease diagnosed as a cancer of the brain. Desperately clinging to every flimsy hope of an impossible cure, the patient had become an adept of Ten Rikyo, a religion which promises health to its devotees in return for the sacrifice of their worldly goods. No medical recourse is then allowed to these poor victims of superstition.

Accompanied by Sr. Agnes of Assisi(2), I visited Mr. Kobayashi with the hope of doing something to prepare his soul to appear before its Maker. When we arrived, he was writhing in a paroxysm of pain. The miraculous medal which we offered him was gratefully accepted. He listened while we spoke to him of the one true God.

"Tell me what this *Kami Sama* (god) requires of me and I will try to please Him," he said. "You must believe in Him and be baptized," replied Sister. "I believe in Him from the bottom of my heart. Please baptize me."

Since there was no immediate danger, we decided to leave Mr. Kobayashi mature his decision. What was our surprise and our emotion when we heard

1. Marie-Louise Gosselin, Ste-Sophie de Mégantic, P. Q.

2. Lucienne Renaud, Montreal, P.Q.

him begin to pray out loud with a sincerity that could not be doubted. "O Kami Sama, my father whom until now I have not had the happiness of knowing, hail! My eyes are sightless (he had become blind from the effects of his illness) but since these kind persons have told me about you, I feel all bright and happy inside. Forgive me the evil that I have done. I abandon my future to your paternal solicitude. I will try to endure patiently all my sufferings but if I complain because of my weakness, bear up with me." At this moments the moribund called his astounded wife to his side begging her forgiveness for any sorrow he might have caused her. Too deeply touched to answer, she merely nodded while tears silently coursed down her cheeks. The sick man then resumed his prayer or I should rather say his conversation with God. "By the very nature of my illness, I am aware that my reason may fail me utterly. In advance, I protest that until the very end I want to serve and love You only, O my Father! I hope no more to offend you and implore for my soul a place in Paradise."

Mr. Kobayashi's wife offered no opposition to her husband's conversion but two of his sisters pestered him with their admonitions. The Ten Rikyo bonzes hurried to his bedside and also tried their best to make him retract but nothing could shake his resolution. After the bonzes had left in desperation of winning him back to his former beliefs the moribund sent a friend to call us. He was in terrible pain but still had lucid intervals during which he begged for baptism. Nothing else mattered for him now, but the eternal realities of faith. He yearned after the privilege of becoming a child of God, an heir to the heavenly kingdom. After the regenerating waters had been poured over his clammy forehead, he again burst out in prayerful accents. On the very next day, his sufferings came to an end as God beckoned him home forever. May his young widow and her four children be also brought from the labyrinth of Ten Rikyo to the straight narrow Way that leads to eternal bliss.



VOTIVE LIGHTS IN THE CHAPELS

of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

Sanctuary lamp. \$50.00

Vigil light or candle	{	10 cents each
		90 cents for a novena
		\$ 3.00 for a month
		35.00 for a year



Pitara

Fortnight

Sr. CECILIA OF THE TRINITY M.I.C.

Pitara is a tiny mountain village with no resident missionary. The White Fathers who visit this out-station once in a while have built here a combined bush school-chapel. In order to help in preparing the local catechumens for Baptism, Sr. Marie Delia⁽¹⁾ and I spent two weeks living African style in Pitara. During this time we were housed in a two-room hut with fiber and mud walls. The floor had as superfine finish a fresh layer of cow's dung; this floor beautifier has according to the Blacks the virtue of keeping noxious insects at bay and of preventing cracks in the packed dirt underneath. Our furniture consisted of one table, two chairs, and two African beds with "bamboo spring" mattresses. In the space in front of our hut stood the fireplace where the catechist cooked our meals.

From half-past eight in the morning to half-past one at noon we taught catechism to a group of children between seven and seventeen years old. Sr. Marie Delia who knows *Citumbuka* better than I do, explained the lessons and gave the tests whereby the degree of her pupils' religious science could be ascertained. I managed discipline in the improvised classroom and helped the children learn their lessons by heart. Need I tell you that it is far from easy to hold these lively bush youngsters in place for any length of time. The temptation is always strong for them to jump at every insect they see fluttering unwarily within grasp. Could you blame them? They relish nice morsels of fresh meat and their scanty meals really can stand such additions. To keep them reasonably attentive, I utilized a *view-master* brought along from Katete. Nobody in Pitara had ever seen or heard of such a wonder. The Sisters in Katete later had a good laugh when I told them to what use I had put their *view-master*; I had gone against all sound rules of modern methodology they said. For every answer correctly recited I awarded my pupils

1. Marie Marthe Terrien, Ottawa. >

the right of glancing into the lens, and their attention was immediately and almost miraculously improved. Why worry as long as the results were satisfactory?

When the catechumens returned home around 2 p.m. we mounted our bicycles and made the rounds of neighboring villages. Hoary old grandmothers knelt in the dusty road, begging us to remain with them. Such was their joy when we promised to visit their hamlet soon again that they offered us as *cawanangwa* (tokens of gratefulness) eggs, corncobs, and sticks of sugar cane which are considered as sweets in these parts. One often meets men, women, and children contentedly munching such sticks four or five feet in length. Knowing in what destitution these people live, only the fear of offending them by our refusal could prompt us to accept their modest gifts of food. It often happened when we returned to our convent hut in the evening, that we would find a bowl of *sima* which someone had brought during our absence. This generosity of the Blacks was all the more touching, since famine was then stalking the land in the wake of drought.

Reverend Father Riopel, W.F., came to admit the catechumens we had prepared to make their First Communion. One little girl who had been refused admittance because of her failure to pass the tests, studied so hard that she finally obtained permission to undergo a second exam in which she was successful. The happiest of the group was a youth of seventeen, ailing since childhood. When he was two years old he fell into the kitchen fire, burning himself badly. Being keenly sensitive to the disfigurement brought on by one of his eyes which was a running, festering sore, he usually kept to himself, fleeing all social contacts; it was quite a problem to get him to attend our doctrine classes. Now, he feels happy and contented for he need no longer spend his days alone. Jesus Himself keeps him company.

The Pitara First Communion ceremony was of the simplest but that did not detract from the joy that filled these youthful hearts. Frills and finery they had not but genuine happiness they did have. After Mass, as soon as Father announced a distribution of rosaries and medals, the First Communicants took the altar railing by storm. At a given moment I looked up from my missal only to be confronted with two strapping pagan lads dressed in medals and sporting a million dollar smile. Eventual catechumens I supposed! There is still much work to be done at Pitara and everywhere in this immense bush mission of Nyasaland, where emerge as yet only a few clearings of Christian civilization. Who among you will lend a helping hand?



The motive of loving reparation for our sins makes our acceptance of suffering at once warmly human and divine. Christ experienced suffering under many forms; so, willy-nilly must we. Christ accepted them willingly FOR US — we will try our best to accept them willingly through love for Him. In this way patience is no mere "self-perfecting" — it is the paying back to Our Lord a little of the all we owe Him.

The Eastern Messenger

Safari to Misuku

SR. ST. JEAN DE LA LANDE(1), M.I.C.

For the past two years I had been contemplating the possibilities of a *safari* to Misuku where, I had been told, we might later on be able to establish a flourishing mission center. The biggest obstacle to hurdle was the lack of vehicular routes. Among the persons consulted on the advisability for us Sisters of undertaking the journey via roads that were nothing other than a series of narrow shelves winding up the hillsides, the majority shook their heads in disapproval. On the other hand, a few optimists urged us on nonchalantly remarking that after all it was a mere trek of some twenty miles or so and the *Wamayi* (Sisters) should easily make it with guides to show the way. This was enough to hasten our decision. Sr. St. Bernadette (2) who also had been hugging this same dream to her heart for many many moons prevailed upon me that the time had come to put our project into execution.

The July temperature being the most amiable of the year in our parts we selected July 9 as a suitable date to set out on our momentous *safari*. On the day appointed we started, just as the silvery bell from the mission belfry woke up all and sundry. Kaseye's catechist was to act as a guide; two stronglimbed boys and one sturdy girl from the Mission school did duty as porters.

The first part of our ascension was easily tackled. From the hilltop we admired the valley below decked in a mantle of green and gold. Pouring out of the Mission school for recess the pupils gleefully waved back at us and shouted encouragement. After a few moments' rest we resumed our journey reaching the village of Ciwula as early as 9 a.m. People crowded around us to inquire about our destination. "Ku Mughese," we replied as we hurried on without stopping. All the villagers exclaimed sympathetically, "*Kulali comene!*" (How very, very far!) By now we were beginning to feel the heat and our throats and tongues grew parched. Fortunately we found an abundance of clear, cool streams all along the way.

Around half-past-ten, we stepped into an enchanted forest which the natives had often told us about. We half suspected them of exaggeration when they extolled its magnificence and expected to see an unusually thickly wooded forest full of ordinary trees. What struck our wondering gaze was a real tropical jungle with tall, huge trees shooting upwards like the arches of some venerable cathedral. Round their trunks were draped plushy, magical draperies of velvety green moss while overhead forming parasols, lianas and

1. Clemence Caron, St. Jean de Port Joli, P. Q.

2. Marie Fyfe, Laprairie, P.Q.

vines intertwined so inextricably that the tiniest sunbeams could hardly filter through their exuberant growth. A mysterious and pervading stillness reigned in this sanctuary of nature. No loud howlings of wild beasts on rampage, not even the chattering of monkeys disturbed the silence but only once in a while sounded the mournful call of some gaudy plumaged bird startled by our approach. After we had crossed this wonderland, the trodden paths began to lead downward on more and more precipitous inclines until we reached Tajumpa half.

We were told this meant that more than half the journey was now completed for Iponjora, whose mud-and-dung plastered huts could be seen in the distance, is only four miles from Mughese. But we soon learned that this was intended as a kind ruse to encourage us; it took us three more hours to reach Iponjora. The Africans like the Irish will never leave you under the dismal impression that you still may have many a long and weary mile to go. "Apa pafupi." (It is quite near) they cheerily declare pointing at some more or less illusive point in space.

On and on we walked, hailed once in a while by the inhabitants of Yuruwu who were going out to a lamentation bee for one of the village women who had just died. After climbing up another arduous slope we arrived at Iponjora, an important town with headquarters of the law court where resides the *Mwene Misuku*. The pupils of the Protestant School trooped out to greet us but their teachers held aloof until one of them diffidently asked for some medicine. The educational establishment where they teach has an enrollment of over five hundred pupils while Mughese's Catholic school has only one hundred. This is a deplorable state of things especially when one takes into consideration the fact that these children under Protestant guidance are only too often imbued from their earliest years with prejudices against the Catholic Faith as we have had occasion to notice among the youth of Cinunka.

At Iponjora we stood on level ground again, thanks be to God. Here according to Brother Nazarius' English expression with a German flavor we had at least "two inches straight" stretching out before us. In this country where there are no telephones messages still manage to get through with amazing celerity. The capitao (overseer) of Msgr. St. Denis' coffee plantation in Mughese heard of our arrival in the neighborhood and climbed up to bid us welcome. Then as happy as a lark and as agile as an antelope he clambered down to prepare our lodgings for the night. When we arrived late that same evening, he had everything ready for our reception. By the flickering light of a candle we ate our meal, a piece of chicken meat prepared by our boys, native style, and washed down with glasses of milk. Every member of our party being literally dead tired we went to bed early. Two young girls from the plantation lay down on the floor with only their *saru* in lieu of blankets. They had been commissioned to keep the fire burning through the night, they said, but in a few moments we could already hear their rhythmic snores and I doubt whether they poked the embers even once.

We rose at six on the next morning. Sr. St. Bernadette admitted she felt somewhat tired and my articulations groaned at every step. Our spiritual exercises over, we partook of a frugal breakfast, then set out to visit the coffee plantation which had once been the property of an Englishman who died at Mughese.

Natural beauty runs rampant all around here. A triple row of fir trees girdles the plantation laid out in terraces covering almost the entire area. A belt of bush-clad hills hem in a gulley several hundred feet deep. At the bottom, laborers were at work, felling trees. Next year, the steep inclines will form other tiers neatly dotted with young coffee plants. In this region all farming work is done by means of a primitive hoe, modern implements being completely unknown. In spite of the present acute drought in Northern Nyasaland, the vegetation was of a vivid green, for the sun is slow in climbing over the mountain top. The difference of altitude notwithstanding, Mughese stands five thousand five hundred feet, the climate is much the same as that enjoyed in Kaseye. The spot where our future convent will eventually emerge is a little to the rear of the main residence. A picturesque spot it is, worthy of an artist's brush.

SR. ST. JEAN DE LA LANDE (CLEMENCE CARON, ST. JEAN PORT JOLI) AND A FEW GUIDES, RETURNING FROM A *safari* TO MISUKU.



After touring the plantation we took a rest of several hours. At 2 p.m. the natives began to call begging for medicine. Conversations were brief for we knew only a few words of the *Wasukwa* dialect spoken in these highlands.

Another and easier route was mapped out for us when we finally spoke of returning to our home in the valley. Going through Cipwara, we were to meet Mr. Waterfield of the Agricultural Department who would obligingly take us back to Kaseye in his jeep. The *capitao* equipped us with a sedan-chair and sent an escort of four plantation workers and four robust young women to accompany us part of the way.

We started out in the wee small hours. The road was really far more accessible than the one we had previously taken. Yielding to the coaxing of the porters, I gingerly sat down in the *sedia* and let myself be carried swiftly on for a while. Seeing the sweat cascading down the bodies of these poor men was more than I could long endure. I soon alighted and firmly refused to be carried another step.

At Cipwara, we met with our first big disappointment for Mr. Waterfield was absent. We sent the Mughese party home and resolved to keep on walking in the hope of seeing the jeep come bouncing up our way. The heat had grown oppressive in the sun-scorched plain and there was no water available anywhere except that of stagnant pools. Mid afternoon caught us plodding onward all hopes of meeting the jeep vanished and gone. Just as we were wondering whether we could make it to Kaseye before nightfall, the "put put" of a motorcycle sounded in the distance, and in a cloud of dust loomed the familiar figure of Rev. Father Superior. He had been getting uneasy on our account and had come forward to meet us bringing food and bedding. He insisted on having us call a halt of a few hours at least. Sr. St. Bernadette stoutly denied that she was tired out but I really did not have the heart to join in her boasting. Still, we preferred pushing forward to reach our convent as soon as possible. That would be the best place to rest. As long as the sun shone, our small caravan kept up a smart pace but when shadows deepened we progressed very slowly feeling our way along with sticks so as not to stumble or fall in ruts. At 7.30 we finally arrived to receive a heartwarming welcome home from Sr. Marie Berthe, Sr. Teresa Margaret, and the children. To say that we were fagged out is putting it mildly.

Our Misuku expedition has convinced us that there is plenty of work to be done on the heights and that missionaries will be welcome among the natives. Little girls in Mughese flock to the Protestant school in great numbers. If the natives show us sympathetic interest the Protestants resent our intrusion on what they consider as their undisputed domain. The *Free Church* apostles are putting up tremendous opposition to our project but truth will win out in the end.

—————

If one could read the secret history of our enemies we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.

Longfellow



"'Twas the night before Christmas . . ."

AND THE POSTULANTS WERE BUSY DECORATING THEIR PREMISES.



MOTHER MISTRESS LAYS THE WAX FIGURE OF THE HOLY CHILD
IN THE CRIB OF THE RECREATION HALL.

Christmas
at the Nov



stmas Noviciate

MANY WONDERFUL SECRETS ARE WHISPERED
TO THE BAMBINO AS "DOVES" AND "SWALLOWS"
KNEEL IN PRAYERFUL RECOLLECTION.



O the thrill of skating



over polished surfaces!



Winter sports have their place on the schedule

Sima

SR. ST. YVES(1), M.I.C.

The winds that blow around here during the months of July and August may scarcely be termed zephyrs. Of a rowdy, violent temper they set our eyes smarting with the dust of the roadside which they hurl into our faces; they mischievously rumple the neat new thatch on the roof of our bush convent and make themselves thoroughly objectionable. To avoid these windy pranks the natives wisely stay indoors weaving palm fiber mats. The harvest chores over, they enjoy a well deserved rest from out-door activities. First on their harvest list come the peanuts, then maize, and finally, rice. The corn on the cob is stored away in cone shaped tampas (silos); the rice is left on the stalk and the grain remains unhulled until it is needed for immediate consumption. Sweet potatoes and cassava cannot be said to be properly harvested, for they are pulled out of the ground a few at a time as they would otherwise spoil. Cassava rootstocks are sometimes baked in their jackets but more often than not they are crushed into flour between two stones and used for the daily *sima* (mush). Here is the recipe in case you are interested. First, peel the cassava, then let it soak in water during twenty-four hours. After this time has elapsed it will have grown soft and will be easily handled; roll into individual balls and lay these out in the sun to dry.

Whenever she lights the home fires to cook the family meal, the African housewife reaches out into her basket-pantry for a few of these cassava balls which are transformed into delicious *sima*. How would you like a taste of this African substitute for bread? Begin by washing your hands carefully. Now, help yourself from the pot with the knives and forks provided you by nature. Take a morsel of *sima*, dip it gracefully into the second pot filled with *dende* (seasoning), then plop it into your mouth without more ado. If you enjoy a hearty appetite, let me warn you not to dawdle over the daintiness or size of your mouthfuls else those who share your meal will have licked the pot clean ahead of you.

1. Yvette Ricard, Grand'Mere, P. Q.

Vua mission is still in the very first stages of organization. There is only one Catholic family here as yet but there are over one hundred and fifty names on the list of catechumens. Besides a school with three classes at the Center, there are six other tiny bush schools scattered in the outstations. Youthful mammas enjoy attending sewing sessions at the workroom opened here especially for their intentions. Last but not least we must mention the dispensary where Africans flock from a radius of over thirty miles to secure relief from their various aches and pains.

While I am writing this a group of women catechumens are marching past my window. All are repeating their catechism lessons at the top of their voices. How touching it is to see the eager goodwill of these no longer youthful students! Estera who is more than sixty finds the going difficult at times. One of the youngest women encourages her. "Don't worry, old mother. Just remain close to me and I will help you repeat the lesson until you know it by heart." Estera's courage soars while her charitable friend patiently goes over every word of the lesson learnt that day.

The children enrolled in our classrooms also give us much consolation by the friendly spirit of mutual understanding that reigns among them. Muyaya, seven, appeared at the school some time ago, minus any clothing at all. Calling him aside I urged him to go home for the day and report at the mission center where he would be given something to wear in return for doing a few light chores. "But, Sister," he wailed, "If I go home today, I'll miss the doctrine lessons. Please let me stay . . . I'll hide in that dark corner." His nine-year-old sister eloquently pleaded in his favor. "Sister, please allow him to stay for the catechism lesson. Tomorrow I will help him to work." Another little boy came to the rescue handing me his turban. "Let Muyaya stay. He can have my turban to cover himself up for today." What will such children not do for God once they know and love Him better?

Africans are thankful people and they like to express their gratitude in picturesque language. The dispensary was filled to capacity; I was ministering to the needs of an ailing and wailing bundle of humanity when a woman suddenly rose and launched into a harangue telling the baby's mamma what a wonderful doctor I was. Without any exception the assistants nodded acquiescence, then chorused into calling down abundant heavenly blessings upon my work.

Among the more serious cases treated at our dispensary was a man suffering from the bite of a *chitumbi*, a huge and highly venomous serpent. For a while his life hung in the balance. He slowly recovered only to give us the apprehension of being obliged to amputate one of his feet. Lately, his general condition has improved in such a manner that we may now reasonably hope he will come through his terrible adventure with every limb intact.

Once in a while, we Sisters are also favored with visits from poisonous reptiles. The other day, a *satu*, serpent that bites or sprays its victims with a treacherous liquid causing immediate blindness if it reaches the eyes, strolled

over to our verandah. Fortunately, a passer-by noticed it and called a Brother from the Mission to blow its serpent brains out with his gun.

A few weeks went by and another serpent, a ten-foot specimen this time and just as dangerous as the former, put in an appearance. With the help of the children we tried to kill it but it slithered away into one of the outhouses. Some time later one of the Sisters upon opening a wooden box found it comfortably coiled inside, enjoying a nice beauty sleep. She hurriedly dropped the cover and ran in to give the alarm. Brother once again shouldered his trusty gun and drove five bullets into the terrible reptile. Among the savage beasts that roam the jungle all about us, lions, hyenas, leopards, crocodiles, the serpent is the one we stand most in fear of for it comes to our very door while the others keep at distance. But we try to live in peace in spite of these noxious and unpleasant neighbors. Nothing will happen to us but what God wills, and we trustingly rely on His Providence to protect us in all dangers.

Do you believe in miracles? Well, transformations here have taken place that may be labelled as miraculous or almost. As you know, Vua is built on ground overrun with thorns. The mission church itself was erected on the spot where grew an enormous thorn bush which deeply resented the intrusion upon its kingdom and which keeps on sprouting new growths all

BABY PARADE. SR. ST. YVES (YVETTE RICARD, GRAND MERE.)



around the adobe walls. We have only to put out our hands through the apertures used as windows to touch their scraggy heads. Every morning during prayers, myriads of graceful yellow birds alight on the branches and chirp their *monire* (good morning) to *Fumu Yesu*. Looking out at this moment one might fancy that the ugly crabbed plants had suddenly burst into bloom and song. How happy we would be if all the thorns growing in Vua's soul gardens were also transformed into melodious beauty! What a magnificent bouquet to offer the Savior of mankind! Will you not help us through your prayers to bring this transformation about?



Kaseye, Nyasaland

Felisi's Faith

SR. ST. BERNADETTE(1), M.I.C.

Twilight shadows were lengthening over Felisi's village, a handful of palm leaf huts clustering together like frightened children under the shade of a huge baobab. Beyond, like some mysterious backdrop, stretched the dark, tractless jungle. My friend who was squatting in front of her hut called out a cheerful greeting as she saw me passing by. All the other huts being empty, I sat down beside the old woman for a chat. "Good mother, are you not afraid to stay here all alone?" I queried. She clapped her hands together as if to draw my attention in a more particular manner, then her finger pointing to the star-spangled skies above she motioned me inside her miserable dwelling. Propped up against the smoke-blackened wall, I noticed a beautiful picture of Our Blessed Mother. She bowed respectfully in front of it and spoke words that will forever remain etched in my memory. "After I have eaten my supper of *sima* (corn mush) I recite my prayers, then I lie down to rest. Why should I be afraid of wild beasts or of wicked men when the all-powerful God is with me?" O the depth and simplicity of this poor catechumen's faith! It suddenly seemed to me that never had I a clearer grasp of the reality of God's tender solicitude for each and every one of His creatures. Together we knelt to recite evening-prayers and to sing our goodnight song to our Lady, *Causiku Mama Maria*, (Night has fallen, dear Mother).

Outside, it had grown quite dark except where the serene light of the moon lit up the narrow scraggy path leading to the Mission. I left my aged friend, treasuring in my heart of hearts a precious lesson of faith and abandonment to God's Holy Will not unworthy of the Fathers of the Desert.

1. Marie Fyfe, Laprairie, P. Q.

ADVENTURES in CUBA

SR. ST. NEMEZE M.I.C. (Claire Garceau, Three Rivers.)

Please do not smile when I assure you that I have already grown wise to the vagaries of the weather in Cuba. On the next day after my arrival here, August 18, the sun had been brightly shining from early morning hours when a heavy rainstorm unexpectedly broke over the *pueblo*. It caught me unawares in one of the classrooms in the left wing of the Colegio, a wing which lies completely separated from the rest of the establishment by a small patio. At first, believing this might be only a passing shower, I decided to remain where I was although I had vague misgivings as to the prudence of this course of action. In a few moments the rain was pouring in from all directions. There are no glass panes to the openings doing duty as windows so I dashed around closing the heavy wooden shutters which had the effect of plunging me into complete obscurity. For fear of the thunder which now rumbled and growled in an ominous manner, I dared not turn on the light. I tried to force the door open but the rain rushed in with such violence that I hastily slammed it shut again. Thunder claps are not exactly my idea of restful security so a few moments later I tried to pry the door open the fraction of an inch and make good my escape but the wind shoved me back inside. I doubt if the dove poised on Noah's ark windowsill was more fidgety than I was during that bad quarter of an hour! After a while I resolved, come what may, to get out of my prison. Squeezing through the door, I scurried across the patio, my dress held up at a very unreligious angle, the water sloshing in my shoes at every step.

Sisters Frances Teresa⁽¹⁾ and St. Ann d'Auray⁽²⁾ who saw me streaking in, could not help laughing at my ludicrous figure. What do you think of this, my first missionary adventure? Now that it is over and done with I also find it very amusing, and laugh goodnaturedly with the others.

To think that I really and truly am on the missions! I have to pinch myself at times to make sure it is true and not just a beautiful dream. Los Arabos is very poor and the Sisters tell me I did not see the worst days of its foundation. The first time I realized that Canada was indeed far away was when I entered the tiny chapel of our *convento*. I wish you could see it just as it is with its rafters showing overhead and its cracked and creviced walls. While I watched Sister Superior open two diminutive barred windows minus panes, tears coursed down my cheeks and I wondered at the condescension of our God who deigns to dwell in such a modest sanctuary. Beside the chapel our convent comprises a magic room which is a combined, refectory - sewing-room - community - classroom and a large dormitory with a tiled floor.

Too bad I do not yet perfectly understand Spanish for during siesta every day the neighbor's radio presents what appears to be a very interesting program. I cannot exactly tell what it is all about but yesterday I caught the word

1. Jacqueline Breault, Val Racine, P. Q.

2. Aline Quirion, Sherbrooke.



matar (kill) and the "clippetty clop" of horses with poignantly passionate snatches of song in between. All this sounds very romantic especially when you are trying to catch up on the sleepless hours of the night before. Once in a while, however, the air waves carry more prosaic elements such as the barking of dogs, the wailing of babies, and the grunts of little black pigs so numerous around here. All in all, being on the missions is getting more and more interesting as the days go on. I would not exchange my place for all the treasures of the world

Anna receives the Last Rites

SR. ST. YVETTE M.I.C. (Yvette Carle, Joliette, P. Q.)

While I was reciting my Rosary, a messenger ran in to tell me that Reverend Father Riopel, our pastor, had unexpectedly been called to visit a Christian woman called Anna, who was in a dying condition. Would I get ready immediately to accompany him, he wanted to know. A few moments later we boarded the Mission jeep with one of our aides at the dispensary; Ignasio, the mission catechist, was at the wheel. After a ride of seventeen miles, we had to get off and continue the journey along rocky footpaths. Lianas and vines intertwined overhead forming lacy arches through which the sun barely filtered. Father Riopel silently walked ahead bearing Holy Viaticum. I felt like one of the disciples of old following the Master on his visitations of the Palestine countryside.

At last we reached Anna's hut. The ailing grandmother crouched in front of the entrance warming her old bones in the bright sunshine. We helped her inside so that the missionary might hear her confession in preparation for giving her the Last Rites.

Never in my life had I seen the Sacraments administered in such primitive surroundings. There squatted Anna in the middle of her hut with some kitchen utensils on one hand and a clucking hen on the other. The latter trumpeted a vibrant cock-a-doodle-doo just as the priest began to anoint her mistress, while a playful puppy darted out from another corner and joyfully licked Granny's hands. Nobody smiled, nobody shooed the animals away. The native spectators seemed to find this a perfectly normal setting for receiving Extreme Unction.

While the missionary, the ceremony over, went out of the hut to talk with his parishioners I gave Anna what medical care I could. On my homeward way such was my heartfelt joy that this reflection more than once presented itself to my mind, "If only Canadian young girls of my acquaintance could know the happiness one feels in being a missionary for Christ in these distant lands, not one of them would hesitate in answering the call to religious missionary life."

PRAYER SAVED THEIR LIVES

SR. ST. CHARLES GARNIER(1), M.I.C.

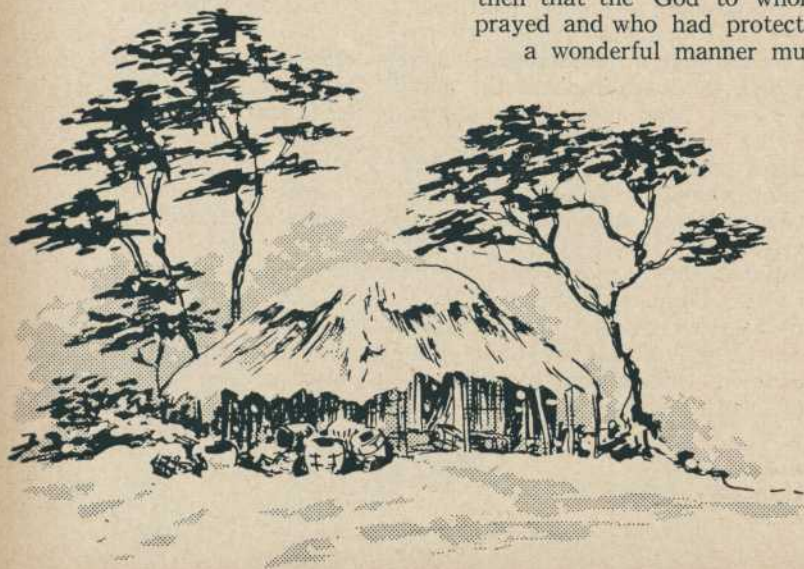
Wakamatsu is a quaint, tranquil little city nestling at the foot of verdant hills. The majority of its citizens cling to their simple old-fashioned way of living from day to day. Do not expect them to make any provisions. The Biblical teaching of not hoarding anything beyond strictly daily necessities is something that they readily understand and naturally put into practice. The housewife who decides that an egg will improve the flavor of her noodles and bean curds soup, will saunter out to market and buy, not a dozen, but that one and only egg. When we try to tell them that buying in quantity has its advantages and turns out cheaper, they listen politely and keep on buying just what they need for the day.

We called on the *sumiya* (charcoal man) this morning, to see if he could not let us have a few bags of hard charcoal. He greeted us with joviality and assured us he could manage to let us have at least two.

After the bargain was clinched, he unexpectedly remarked, "I also believe in the God of Christians." He apparently wanted to chat, so we asked him whether he was a Catholic. "No, not yet... During the last war, I was in the army. One day, in Singapore, we were ordered to take as target of our machine guns a certain Catholic Convent in that city. As soon as the engagement was over, I ran into the gutted building with a few companions. To our surprise we found, huddled in a room, men, women, and children gathered around some ladies dressed just as you are and praying for all they were worth. Not one of the inmates had been killed! I understood then that the God to whom these people prayed and who had protected them in such a wonderful manner must really be the

one, true God!

Since that
unforgettable
day, I have
always be-
lieved in Him.



1. Graziella Lan-
glois, Quebec.

The sincerity of our *sumiya* was so evident that we promised to call again and to bring books that will tell him more about the God whose Providence he glimpsed in warshattered Singapore.



Children around the World

Manila, P.I.—Sr. Teresa of the Holy Face who has organized the Eucharistic Crusade among her Juniors of Immaculate Conception Academy looks upon these youthful crusaders with legitimate pride. When they kneel down to pray with their bright eyes modestly downcast and their chubby hands folded, they look for all the world like cherubs out of one of Murillo's paintings. Imagine the shock Sister sustained some time ago when she heard one of the said cherubs enunciate a brand-new invocation, to wit, "Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my *truck* in Thee!" She was destined to be further scandalized a few days later when some of her crusaders boldly introduced into the Credo the un-orthodox variance, "I believe in Jesus Christ who... suffered under a bunch of violets." Shades of the Holy Apostles!

* * *

Koriyama, Japan.—Since he enrolled at the kindergarten, Toshio had learned to recite a short prayer before and after meals. This he found to be such a splendid idea that he decided to have his pet hens learn about it.

One fine morning, he trotted out to the hen house with a small box of grain and ordered his pets, "Recite your prayers before I give you your breakfast." After a few moments of "recollection", he gravely scattered the grain he had brought and returned to the house to eat his own breakfast. Some time later he again sauntered out to see if the hens had eaten their ration. "Now, don't you forget to thank God," he admonished as he cheerfully set out for the kindergarten. What do you think this child will be when he grows to be a man?

Canton, China. — The youngest among the orphans of To Kom Hang were marched off to Police headquarters. "When I was a child" ranted a Red officer, "I also lived in an orphanage. One day just because I accidentally broke my rice bowl, a devil of a foreigner beat me black and blue." He glared at the children to force them into making similar "confessions" but one tiny maid piped, "When we break our rice bowls, we are told to be more careful another time and are then given new bowls."

* * *

Katete, Africa. — I dare you to find in the whole wide world more lovable children than the children of Africa. What do you think of a two-year-old black baby who, whenever he hears the clock striking the hour, immediately stops romping about, joins his fat little hands and, piously mumbles prayers of his own composition? When he happens to pass in front of the chapel, this same dusky gentleman insists on having the door opened, reaches up to the holy water font, makes the sign of the Cross and gleefully shouts a loud Amen. He may genuflect wrong side up but he knows how to blow the sweetest Canadian kisses to Jesus with his hand! And this prodigy is only one of a wonderful ebony dozen. How could you help falling head over heels in love with such as these?

* * *

Los Arabos, Cuba. — Our pupils love to play ball. On a holiday some time ago, we had hardly finished eating our breakfast when Estella arrived at the *Colegio* with some of her playmates. "*Madre*", she cajoled with her most devastating smile, "we love the *Madre* so much that even on holidays we can't keep away from school..."

"That's very nice of you all."

"*Madre...* pelota por favor..." (the ball please).

Sister St. Edward(1) could hardly repress an amused smile. Estella and friends may indeed love the *Madre* but they love their *pelota* (ball) still more.

* * *

Port Salut, Haiti. — Sr. St. Alberic(2) smiled enigmatically as she went on correcting the exam papers of her Fourth Grade prodigies. She was learning among other astounding facts that St. John the Baptist lived in the "dessert" from childhood; that the word success means "loads of sugar bags" and that a pill is something used to "put into a flash" (the word pile in French being pronounced pil.)

"Let us rejoice and give thanks because we have not become merely Christians, but Christ... Do you appreciate the favour which God has granted you? Wonder and rejoice: we are become Christ. He is the Head; we are the members; He and we are together the whole man... Head and members, therefore, are the fullness of Christ. Who is the Head, and what the members? — Christ and the Church."

St. Augustine

1. Rose Allaire, Quebec.

2. Genevieve PAQUIN, Montreal.

The Martyr of Futuna

by Florence Gilmore

(Continued)

Father Chanel went again to the king, but could get no satisfaction. "I will speak to my people," was the only answer he made and nothing came of the interview. Some men who were standing near said to him, "We have learned that there are bad people among the whites; that some of them are thieves and murderers." "That is true," Father Chanel admitted; "But all honest men despise them. You might have been told, also, a great deal of good about those who obey their consciences and practice the religion I have come to preach." A native, called Farema, distinguished for his facile tongue and his hatred of Christianity, wished to argue with him, but knowing how fruitless such a discussion would be, Father Chanel said goodbye to the king and returned to Poi.

Farema was an avowed enemy, and it was easy to see that Niuliki, influenced by him, was hardening his heart against the missionaries and their message. The king's example was followed by the chiefs in their eagerness to stand high in his favor. They feared, too, that by becoming Christians, they would lose their authority, supposed to dwell in them through the friendship of certain gods. The mass of the people, densely ignorant and horribly superstitious, dared not renounce their traditions. "If we become Christians," they said, "Our evil deities will eat us in their anger" (meaning that they would die). And they feared, not only the gods, but Niuliki, and believed that with the triumph of the new religion, all public celebrations, all dances, and all marriage feasts would end forever.

Is it surprising that few attached themselves to Father Chanel? As Father Servant said, "There were so many obstacles in the way that the seed of Christianity could be sown only slowly and noiselessly. It was the young generation, better disposed because their souls were purer, that received the Gospel with some courage." (1)

Father Chevron confirmed this view: "The greater number of the natives are deaf to the promptings of grace, though secretly many of them tell us that they desire to embrace the Faith. We believe that the young mean what they say; all our hopes are founded on them. The old, guilty of the horrible crime of cannibalism so common in earlier reigns, are tainted almost beyond redemption." He added that the fear of being obliged to lead better lives kept some aloof from Christianity. But all these difficulties did not daunt Father Chanel's zeal. He preached constantly and sought the natives out, one by one in private, trusting that, at last, God would make the good seed to fructify in the hard soil on which he cast it.

In the autumn of 1840 his heart was gladdened by the conversion of Thomas Boog. During all the time he had spent in Futuna Father Chanel had spared no effort to win him to the true faith, and he was overjoyed when Thomas asked to be received into the Church. He was baptized conditionally and made his first confession on the eve of All Saints. On the feast he heard Mass and received Holy Communion with edifying reverence. A number of natives were present and seemed to be deeply impressed.

1. Father Servant: History of Christianity in Futuna.

Shortly after this a schooner anchored at Futuna, bringing a letter from Father Bataillon which contained wonderful news. The entire population of Wallis, with the exception of King Lavelua and some members of his family, had become Christian. A banner of the Blessed Virgin had been carried in triumph the length of the island, by fervent, happy neophytes. Father Chanel's joy was too deep for words. He was able to judge for himself of the good dispositions of the natives, a few of whom had come on the schooner. Two of their number went to Poi on Sunday, were present at Mass, and remained for hours in the chapel, praying in their own language and singing hymns. Everyone in Poi and Singave and at Tamana heard of the conversion of Wallis, and the neophytes were eagerly questioned. Only the king and his close friends held aloof.

A few days later Father Chanel sent the two lay-brothers to a distribution of food which followed a pagan feast. To their astonishment no one paid any attention to them. The king deliberately turned his back, and they got nothing until Meitala, Niuliki's eldest son, was moved to compassion and threw them a piece of liver. "To what should I attribute this change?" Father Chanel wrote in his journal. "Have we displeased His Majesty, or is the extraordinary progress of religion in Wallis the cause of his coolness? God knows."

In his letter Father Bataillon had asked that Father Chevron be sent to help him instruct his catechumens and prepare them for baptism. Father Chanel did not hesitate to make this last sacrifice. It seemed to be for God's glory that his companion should go, and God's glory was all he sought. His difficulties pushed into the distant future the moment when he would need such assistance. But, always hopeful, he went twice to see the king before Father Chevron's departure, longing to be able to send word to Father Bataillon that at length Niuliki had yielded to the pleadings of grace. His Majesty was deaf to all arguments, and the letter which Father Chevron carried to Wallis was as follows:

"Dear Reverend Father:

"We are deeply interested in the marvellous work you are doing, so I am willing that Father Chevron and Brother Attale should leave us to share your labors and your consolations. The news of the conversion of your island seems to have stirred the hearts of our Futunians; but alas, our poor king appears to feel in honor bound to follow the example of Lavelua; and since his late victory, he clings more closely than before to Fakavelikele. Nevertheless, the tidings from Wallis have agitated him. I hope they may have real influence over his mind.

"Some of the natives have threatened to roast the young men who joined the catechumens who came to us from Wallis. This has intimidated them a little. God grant that the example of your catechumens will give them strength. Father Chevron will have good and bad tidings of our island, but I am confident that the fervor of your neophytes will in the end work the conversion of Futuna." *(To be continued)*

Mass is celebrated every week in the chapel of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for the deceased subscribers to THE PRECURSOR and all deceased benefactors.

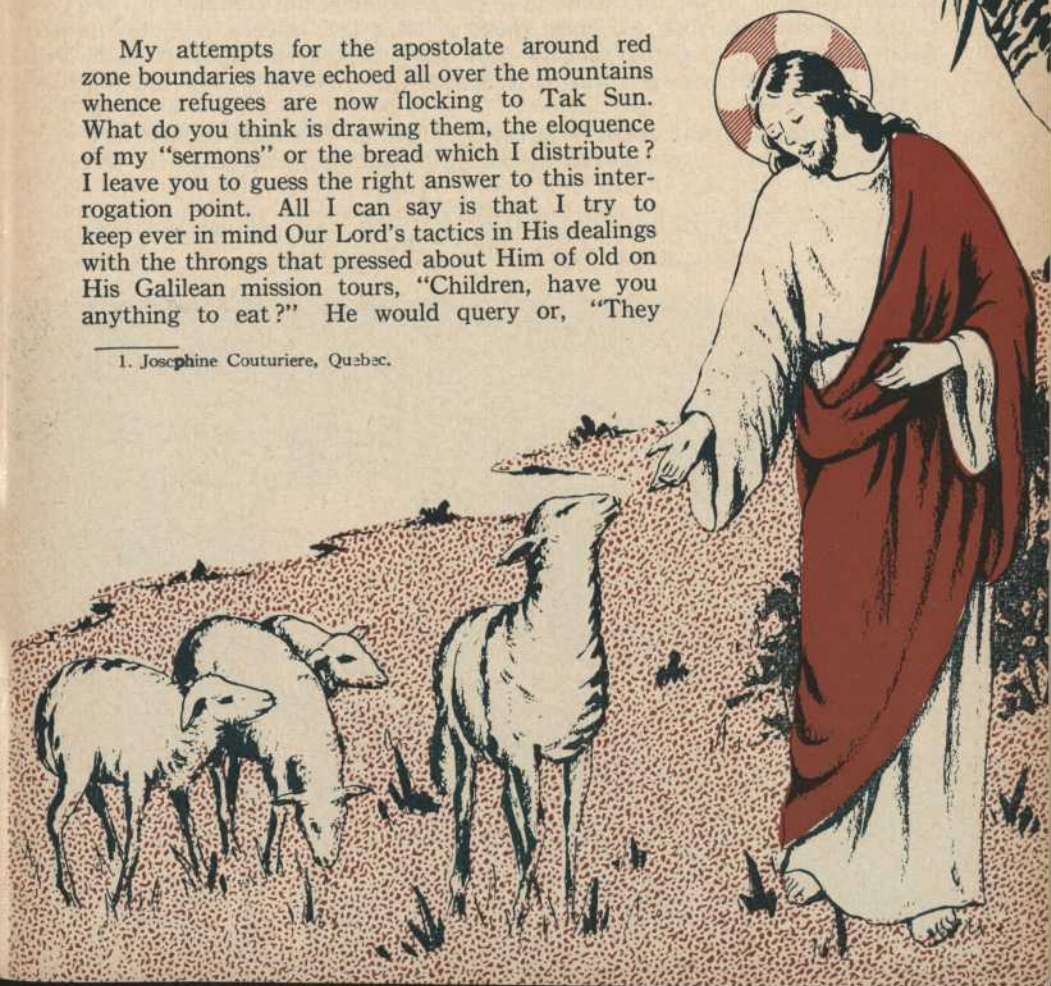
Kowloon, Hong Kong

Helping the Refugees

SR. LAZARUS OF BETHANY(1), M.I.C.

My attempts for the apostolate around red zone boundaries have echoed all over the mountains whence refugees are now flocking to Tak Sun. What do you think is drawing them, the eloquence of my "sermons" or the bread which I distribute? I leave you to guess the right answer to this interrogation point. All I can say is that I try to keep ever in mind Our Lord's tactics in His dealings with the throngs that pressed about Him of old on His Galilean mission tours, "Children, have you anything to eat?" He would query or, "They

1. Josephine Couturiere, Quebec.



have nothing to eat . . ." and the inspired author goes on to tell us that the Savior even deigned to sit down to eat with them. All this was doubtless meant to teach us that the simplest method to reach men's souls is to begin by relieving their ailing bodies, and most of all by allaying the terrible hunger pangs of the famished. Once this has been done, conversions will be wrought through God's grace which will astonish and delight at the same time.

Every morning at Tak Sun I come face to face with all possible human miseries. However much I may endeavor to heal the wounded hearts of the suffering with the balm of Christian charity I feel most painfully my own helplessness in reaching every one of those in distress. I daily distribute food rations, blankets, medicine, and clothing to about fifty persons. It is very consoling to see that these poor people coming into contact with the Catholic missionaries soon recognize them as their true friends. Under the warm radiance of Christian charity they show themselves ready to listen to the vivifying truths which bring to their souls the true liberty of the children of God.

Besides the corporal works of mercy exercised at Tak Sun we also visit, three times a week, a government hospital with eight hundred patients. We

SR. ST. PHILIP (ANNETTE BEAUDOIN, CHAMPLAIN) WITH A FEW OF HER NUMEROUS MUSIC PUPILS, TAK SUN SCHOOL, HONG KONG



teach the doctrine, distribute refreshments to the sick, and occasionally baptize moribunds. Giving doctrine lessons in this place is a problem because of the medley of dialects spoken.

Popular China today presents a sorrowful picture indeed. It is like a huge book where every one may read and from which one may draw salutary lessons. Many are those whose thoughts have been turned from material interests to untangible spiritual values. Tepid Christians have been jolted out of mediocre living and have returned to the Fold some after eight, fifteen, and even twenty years of straying, far from the Good Shepherd.

Lately, something happened that almost made me believe I must be the "saint" of Kowloon since I was being credited with the gift of ubiquity. One morning, an old Chinese gentleman hailing from the north and whom I had never seen before, hurried forward exclaiming delightedly, "At last, I have met you again, Kou Sieou Niu! Since you gave me some food and clothes in Nanking how I have missed you. Two months ago when passing through Shanghai, I caught sight of you in the streets but dared not go up to speak to you...There were too many "friends" about. And now to think that I have found you here in Tak Sun! Surely the Lord of Heaven is protecting me. I want to be a Catholic." Needless to say all this flowery talk was but a preamble to an even more eloquent plea for food and clothing. Such comical incidents which happen once in a while enliven the ordinariness of daily life. What with my spiritual exercises and my work, I have not much leisure. That is as it should be, for a missionary's life is a busy one. Long live the missions, say I! No time to be bored here but all that is needed to superabound with joy as St. Paul says somewhere in his epistles.



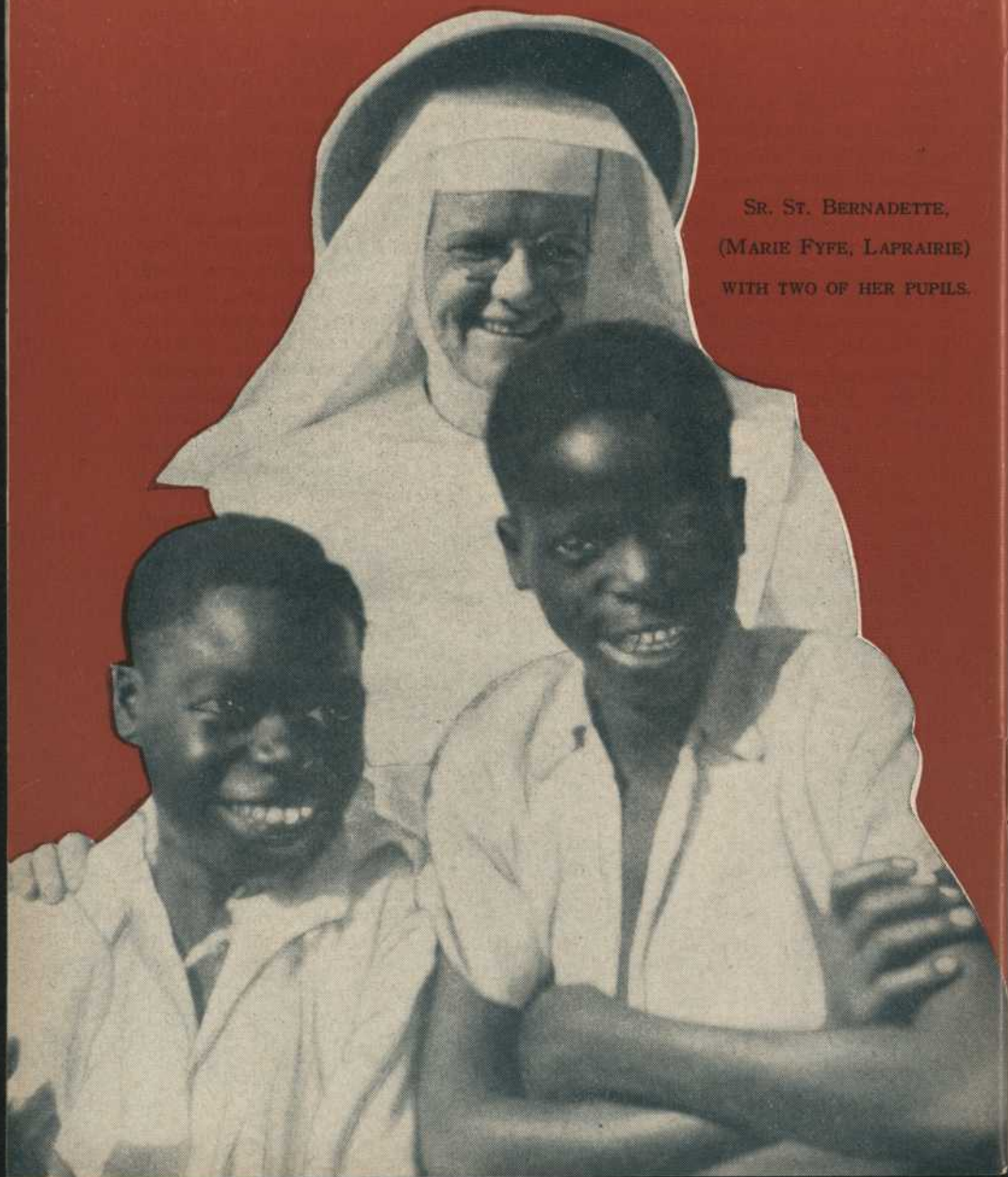
Potential Apostles

It is often said that doctors and surgeons are more exposed than others by their profession to materialism. In Japan the contrary may be said to be true. Among the intellectuals of this country, doctors and surgeons are keenly appreciative of the curative value of Christian Faith for the sick. They easily make comparisons between Christian and non-Christian patients. They realize the necessity of admitting the existence of man's immortal soul. Is not this verily providential?

Within the last five years in the one district of Himeji, more than thirty doctors among whom were many chiefs of clinics have been baptized. What a splendid harvest of potential apostles!

Schent Missions in Japan

SR. ST. BERNADETTE,
(MARIE FYFE, LAPRAIRIE)
WITH TWO OF HER PUPILS.



The Death of the Python

SR. ST. BERNADETTE(1) M.Z.C.

With a group of little girls I was making my way to the schoolhouse when I descried a huge green serpent lying across the road just ahead of me. Moments of commotion followed as I called out to the boys who had already entered their classroom. At my warning cry, "Iwe!" out they trooped armed with stones and sticks to give battle to the python.

It is a very exciting and interesting thing to watch how expert African children can be in killing these large and often poisonous snakes that abound in their country. The one attacked on this occasion was fortunately of a non-venomous variety which does not mean that it was not at all dangerous; being first cousin to the boa, it possesses the same laudable family habit of constricting its victims to death in its powerful coils.

My little soldiers took their position on both sides of the road. At the psychological moment both boys and girls waved gesticulating arms and shouted at the top of their lungs. Then the boys with the stones set to work stoning the enemy to death. The harassed snake convulsively writhed trying to crawl away to the opposite side, only to be assailed by a series of smart whacks from the children who wielded sticks. At last the reptile collapsed in the dust apparently dead. We had to be prudent however before we approached it for it might not be really dead and in a desperate burst of energy might leap at its tormentors. Let me assure you that it is no easy task to kill a snake twelve inches in circumference. After more stones had been aimed at both head and tail, the two vital points, as it remained perfectly still, we drew near to examine it at close quarters. "You are brave children," I complimented my pupils. "That is the way courageous little Mbalambya soldiers should fight against Satan." A salvo of cheers greeted my words. The children felt proud of their exploit. It filled them with courage for the tasks set before them. For my part I felt privileged in having to deal with such wonderful children.

1. Marie Fyfe, La Prairie, P. Q.

Our Beloved Dead



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