

THE PRECURSOR

January - February
1965



The more our Lord makes me comprehend the spirit of our vocation, the more it seems to me that the chief reason for our existence is truly thanksgiving in union with Mary Immaculate and all the saints in heaven... The apostolate among non-Christians has been entrusted to us merely as an exterior means of manifesting our gratitude. God has given us everything, even His own Son. What better return can we hope to make — puny creatures that we are — than to give Him children who will join in singing His mercies forever and ever.

Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit

Our Cover:

Illustration by Sr. Marie of Carmel, M.I.C.
This illustration recalls the dynamism of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit, humble woman apostle, who enkindled a flame that ignited the Faith in thousands of souls the world over.

THE PRECURSOR

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A CENTENNIAL



Thank the flame for its light but do not forget
the lamp holder standing in the shade.

Tagore

ANNIVERSARIES of loved ones are always faithfully kept. Society likes to pay homage to its illustrious sons, artists, poets, politicians, founders. No centennial is allowed to pass by unnoticed whether in the artistic, literary, religious, or political sphere. Do not those who have contributed to universal enrichment deserve the gratitude of their beneficiaries?

The foundress of a religious family leaves a lifelong impress on her followers. When such a foundress is, moreover, an apostle, her influence is not limited to the members of her own society but is felt throughout the Church. All Christendom, then, should celebrate her anniversaries, rejoice on her feastdays. On February 4, 1965, will be commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the birth of



Délia Tétreault was
born in this house.

Délia Tétreault, humble daughter of Marievalle, who played in our Canadian Church the role of initiator of the present-day missionary movement.

The years 1902 and 1921 brought her the realization of her apostolic dreams: the foundation of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and the erection of a Foreign Mission Seminary at Pont Viau, near Montreal. Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit loved her country and wished to establish national institutions. "I am convinced that the time has come for the Canadian Church to begin cancelling its debt for the priceless gift of faith received of yore thanks to courageous European missionaries."¹ For his part, Reverend A. M. Daigneault, S. J., director and advisor of the foundress, wrote to Archbishop Bruchési of Montreal, "It is my firm belief that our beloved homeland is destined to vie in generosity with France, Belgium, and Ireland always so generous in the mission cause."² This ardent Jesuit apostle met in this pioneer of feminine active apostolate in Canada, a soul attuned to his own.

In May 1916, the founding Mother launched a campaign for the reorganization of the Pontifical Work of the Holy Childhood. Desirous of carrying the mission message in ever widening circles, she inaugurated the first issue of a missionary publication *LE PRECURSEUR* as early as 1920. Through

these various channels her missionary goal was steadily and successfully pursued.

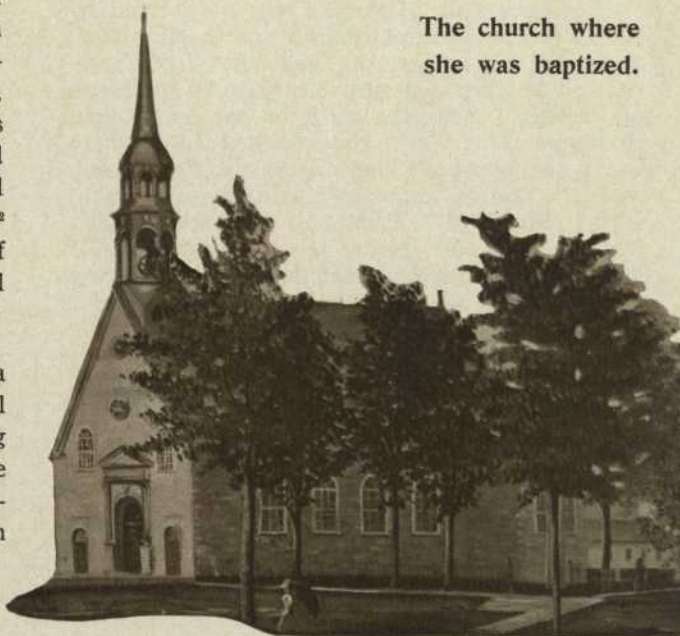
The works accomplished by Délia Tétreault testify that in her heart reigned, perfectly harmonized, love of country, intelligence of the Church, zeal for the salvation of souls. To assess the breadth and fruitfulness of her apostolic activity would be well-nigh impossible. We are too near to measure the greatness of her task; time will reveal it in its proper perspective. Heirs to their foundress' spirit of thankfulness, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception through the voice of *THE PRECURSOR* acknowledge their gratitude to God and share the joys of this Centennial with their numerous subscribers. This special issue presents a few facets of the soul of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit, a woman apostle of rare prudence, limpid simplicity, and boundless zeal. According to Cardinal Suenens, "There is no better way of releasing the missionary élan underlying the foundation of active religious congregations, than the earnest study of the life of their foundress."

by Sister Marie Sylvia, M.I.C.

(Gisèle Villemare, Yamachiche)

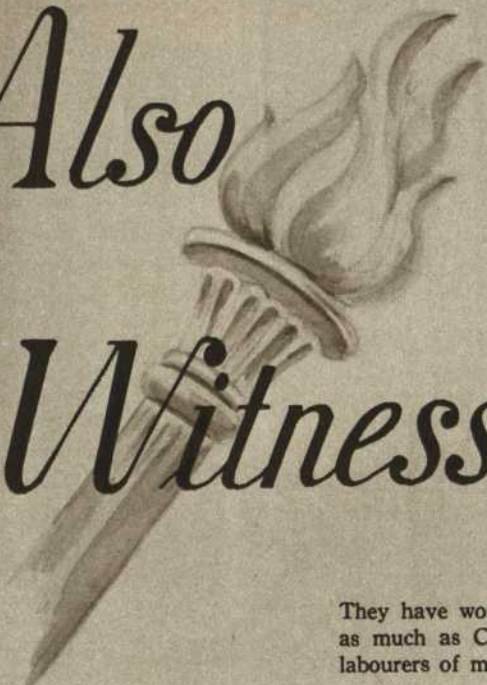
¹ *Dreams of Soul Harvests Come True*, p. 57

² *Idem*, p. 51



The church where
she was baptized.

They Also Bore Witness



They have worked for the Gospel at my side
as much as Clement and those other fellow-
labourers of mine.

Phil. 4 : 3

by Sister Mary of the Redemption, M.I.C.¹

Dawn of Christendom

The apostolate of women was inaugurated by the Queen of Apostles bearing "with all haste," across the hill country of Judea, the Word Incarnate on His first redemptive mission to the house of Zachary. After the birth of her divine Son, Redeemer of the World, she presented Him to shepherds and kings. "They found the child there, with His mother Mary, and fell down to worship Him" (Mt. 2: 11). Present at the Cana wedding feast at the very beginning of Christ's public ministry, she discreetly urged her people to look up to Him and to follow His teaching, "Do whatever He tells you" (Jn. 2: 5). Mother of Him who came not to be served but to serve, she gave to the women who would devote themselves to the spreading of the Kingdom among men the significant watchword, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord."

When Jesus walked the dusty roads of Palestine preaching the glad tidings of His Gospel, He revealed the secrets of His divine mission to the

lowly Samaritan woman, who, once she had comprehended His message, forthwith became an ardent apostle. "Many of the Samaritans of that town believed in Him, because of the word of the woman who bore witness" (Jn. 4: 39). Another "deliverer of this true Gospel, the joyous tidings of the living Christ, Mary Magdalen, early received the title *Apostola Apostolorum*."² The holy women who followed Jesus and the Twelve in their apostolic peregrinations, also bore witness in their own humble way.

Poring over the Acts of the Apostles, we find that the precious seeds of Christianity were carried through the hands of women from one end of the Roman Empire to the other. In his epistles, open letters to all the world, Saint Paul inscribes in indelible traits on the roll of honour of the primitive Church the names of nineteen women apostles, from the affluent Lydia, who placed her wealth and home at the disposal of the Apostle of nations, to

the faithful Phebe who "a good friend to many, myself among them," acted as messenger, carrying the Pauline letters from one mission centre to another.

Bearers of Good News

In the centuries that followed, women continued to hold their own in the works of apostolate especially suited to their position. Even before Constantine the Great gave the Church its charter of freedom, nine out of eighteen of the parish churches of Rome owed their erection to wealthy Roman matrons, who had, moreover, offered the persecuted brethren refuge in no less than twenty-four catacombs.

Among those women called upon to bear witness during the first centuries when the Church suffered almost continual violence, many were young slave girls. Such a one was Blandine, who "by putting on Christ became an overmatch for all the art and malice of her enemy." She was the last to die with the boy Ponticus of that glorious band of martyrs, called the Martyrs of Lyons (A.D. 177). Despite her youth she acted like a mother, encouraging the other martyrs, sending them like so many favourite children to the heavenly King (Butler's Lives of the Saints). A slave known only under the name of Nina, (Christiana), was responsible for the conversion of the kingdom of Georgia. She was offered precious gifts by Mirian, the king, for having obtained the miraculous cure of the queen, but she refused, saying that nothing could give her greater happiness than the conversion of both to Christianity.

Among the Fathers of the Church, Saint John Chrysostom was a firm believer in the necessity for women to take an active share in the apostolate.

In one of his letters to Italica, a noble Roman lady, he affirms: "It is generally understood that the place of woman is in the home, while man must see to the interests of the city... But things are different as far as divine combats and labours to be sustained in favour of the Church are concerned. It will often happen that here woman will prove braver and stronger than man. Paul gives testimony to this state of things when, in his letter to your city, he extols a certain number of women who worked with him in the evangelization... God wants you, women, to assume as your own works of zeal which tend to the good of the Church; He desires you to do your share or to urge others to do theirs in putting a stop to the trials and storms that afflict the Eastern Church."²

² Peter Ketter, *Christ and Womanhood*, p. 407

³ Letter 170, quoted in *Chrétiennes des premiers siècles*, by A.M. de la Bonnardière

Saint Augustine, in one of his homilies, stresses the fact that the word gospel literally means "good news" and that the happiest of "good news", the Resurrection of Christ, was brought to the future evangelizers by women on the first Easter morning.

Weaving links of peace

After the disintegration of the Roman Empire, when the Church sent out her missionary sons to evangelize the barbarian nations of Europe, women apostles were not slow in sharing their apostolic work. If the missionaries found precious allies in the person of queens and princesses, who led their royal spouses to accept the sweet yoke of Christ, they also were given precious co-workers in those intrepid nuns who left the peace and quiet of their well-organized monasteries in Ireland and in Britain for the wilds of old Saxony. They were true *freedowebbe*, weavers of the links of peace, who trained in ways of Christlike gentleness the proud daughters of the land of Thor. Saint Boniface and his fellow-workers testify to the assistance given them by nuns such as Saint Lioba "the beloved", so called because of her all-embracing charity, Thecla, Walburga, Bertigia, and many others.

This golden age of active feminine apostolate was followed by a break of several centuries no doubt due to the severe enclosure enforced on consecrated religious women during the medieval period.

It took the daring of a Saint Vincent de Paul to open up new avenues of freedom to generations of women apostles who yearned for occasions to exercise their joyously expanding zeal. To those who opposed his plan he replied, "For about eight hundred years, women have exercised no public office within the Church. To some who are tempted to ask, 'Is it woman's business to mingle in the activities of the Christian people?' my answer is God makes use of those whom He chooses for the work He wants to be done."

In France, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the *Relations des Jésuites* giving vivid accounts of missions in the New World, were read everywhere. Noble ladies, women of the bourgeoisie, fervent nuns, were stirred to their soul depths by appeals such as that launched by Father Lejeune in 1634, "to have courageous women come to Canada to instruct in the doctrine women and girls". First among those who answered the call and picked up again in earnest the golden thread of active apostolate was saintly Mother Marie of the Incarnation who with her resolute little band



landed in Quebec August 1, 1639. Accompanying the group and providing for its material needs was the courageous lay apostle, Madame de la Peltrie. Not content with donating her wealth this delicately nurtured lady of *la douce France* spent herself in tender, maternal care of the unkempt Indian children who swarmed about her.

Shortly afterwards, other groups of dedicated women came from France to care for the sick, to teach, to train women to become good Christian wives and mothers or to lead them in the ways of religious life. Ursulines, nuns of the Hotel Dieu, Jeanne Mance, Marguerite Bourgeoys, who can tell at the cost of what hardships these noble women watered the seed cast into the ground of the New World by the first missionaries?

It was doubtless thanks to their generous apostolate that so many daughters of Canada followed in their footsteps to be "presented as brides to the King of kings".

In the following centuries, the movement sparked by Mother Marie of the Incarnation gathered mo-

The chapel of Quebec Hotel Dieu.

Over these pillars erected in 1695, the Canonesses of Saint Augustine have built their admirable hospital.





Photo credit : Canadian Pacific

Monastery of the Ursulines founded in Quebec by Mother Marie of the Incarnation.

mentum. Ursulines founded missions in Louisiana in 1724. Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres inaugurated their apostolate among the sick and the unfortunates of Cayenne, South America, in the early nineteenth century, later extending their work to islands of the Indian Ocean and of the West Indies. Long before the close of the century, their educational and hospital labours encircled China, Japan, Tonkin, Siam, Laos, and the Philippines. Sisters of Saint Joseph of Cluny laboured for Christ in Africa, Ceylon, India, the West Indies. Sisters of Our Lady of Africa trekked to the heart of the dark continent in 1894. A few short years after its foundation, in the last half of the nineteenth century,

the Society of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary knew a remarkable expansion throughout the mission world.

In Canada, meanwhile, the Grey Nuns and the more recently founded congregations sent out missionaries to the Indian missions of the North and of the Far West. Five years only after the death of their Foundress, in 1856, a small group of Sisters of Providence left in turn for missions beyond the Rockies. Four Sisters of Saint Ann travelled the long roundabout route through the Isthmus of Panama to reach their first mission in Victoria, B.C. They were two months on the way. The year was



1858. In 1859, a number of Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary left for Oregon then farther from Montreal, if the time taken to reach it is considered, than Japan is today!

The year 1869 was to mark the departure of the first Canadian nun for a foreign mission field, India. Her name was Sister André de Jésus-Marie, of the Society of Jésus Marie in Sillery. Verily, these daughters of Canada followed in the tradition of the pioneering Ursulines who had come to their land two and a half centuries hence.

But, as yet, Canada did not possess as Europe did its own missionary congregation. "The time had come for our youthful nation to pay back in full the apostolic debt incurred.

God's plans like lilies white unfold...

On February 4, 1865, — one hundred years ago — was born in the quiet little town of Marieville, P.Q., Délia Tétreault, the valiant apostle chosen by God to found Canada's first missionary Society for women and to bring about the establishment of Canada's first Foreign Mission Seminary.

Although the seed of her future vocation early quickened in her heart, it came to fruition, only after long years of trials and vicissitudes.

While waiting God's providential hour, she poured herself out in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, teaching catechism to newsboys, imparting religious instructions to ignorant youths, visiting the ailing and the destitute. As she went about these humble duties, her unquenchable desire grew to serve the missionary interests of Holy Mother Church. She knew that God "moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform" and she firmly believed that, in time, the full pattern of His designs would be made clear to her and to her guides in the spiritual life.

Finally, she outlined her own plan of action to Archbishop Paul Bruchési. Seeing that he remained hesitant in allowing the foundation lest the new community prove an added financial burden to the archdiocese, she courageously offered to shoulder the whole responsibility, giving the assurance that her religious family would always provide for its own upkeep, promise inspired by her deep faith and her unshakable trust in Divine Providence.

Bonsecours remains a perennial token of Blessed Marguerite Bourgeoys' love for Mary.

Photo credit: Canadian Pacific



Sisters of Our Lady of Africa were the first women apostles to reach the heart of Africa.

The foundation

It was only in the early days of June 1902 that, under the guidance of her director, Reverend Gustave Bourassa, her projects began to take shape at Cote des Neiges, Montreal, where an apostolic school was opened. The little family, which numbered three members in 1902, grew to fourteen within the first year. In a letter written to her companions while on a short leave of absence, she clearly defines the spirit of her religious family, "To labour for the interests of God in every possible way, and to thank Him unceasingly in our name, and in that of all men - such is our definite aim."

Even though the first important step had been taken, the founding Mother remained in the dark

regarding the future scope of the foundation as may be gathered from personal notes penned at about the same date: "My God, what do you require of us? What is the work you want us to accomplish? Do you merely desire this school or do you wish a regular religious Society?"

While in Rome for the jubilee celebrations in honour of the Immaculate Conception dogma in 1904, Archbishop Bruchési presented to Pope Pius X the documents relating to the foundation, saying that he was ready to dissolve the association or encourage its development just as the Holy Father would decide. Without having recourse to the ordinary mode of procedure, the saintly Pontiff replied, "Let the work be founded and all celestial



Pope Pius X gave the Society founded by Délia Tétreault the right to live and prosper. He told Archbishop Bruchési, "Proceed with the foundation and all heavenly blessings will descend upon the new Community which you will call Society of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception."

"blessings will descend upon the new society which you will call Society of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception."

The tiny seed had burst its primary cell. Watered by heavenly dews, protected by Holy Mother Church, it eventually grew into a tree whose vigorous branches today spread over the world.

Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit's broadminded vision reached far beyond the immediate circle of her community. In her desire to procure the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, she left no stone unturned. In 1911, she was the first to organize the collective Closed Retreat Move-

ment for women in Canada. Under her active direction and following her personal example, her Sisters visited the educational establishments in the Province in order to re-awaken among students interest in the Pontifical Works of the Holy Childhood and of the Propagation of the Faith. She launched her community's missionary magazine, *THE PRECURSOR*, in both French and English editions, as early as 1920.

Even as she laid the basis of her first apostolic school, she endeavoured to outline the statutes of the future Foreign Mission Seminary, the object of her constant solicitude. She spoke of

her project to the pastors of various dioceses, but such were the difficulties entailed that those who should have come forward were appalled and deterred from risking the attempt.

Not so the founding Mother. For close to twenty years she laboured by every means in her power to bring about the desired foundation. In 1920, she felt inspired to add to prayer and action, the heroic offering of spending the rest of her life a prey to humiliation and suffering.

Presently, the potent seeds of her suffering were to sprout into a promising harvest. On February 2, 1921, the Archbishops and Bishops of the Province of Quebec unanimously decreed the foundation of the Foreign Mission Seminary.

* * *

Since the first departure for the foreign missions September 8, 1909, hundreds of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit's daughters have borne afar the

banner of Mary Immaculate in a joyous spirit of thankfulness. At present, the Society staffs 80 establishments in China, Formosa, Japan, the Philippines, Madagascar, Africa, South America, the West Indies, Italy, Canada, and the United States.

Among members of the Society are Sisters of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Malagasy, Latin American and European origin.

Besides, four autochthon Societies of religious have been trained by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception: Sisters of the Holy Rosary in Manchuria, Theresians in Tsung Ming, China, Rosarians in Malawi, Africa, Sisters of Our Lady of Haiti in Haiti.

Thus has a glorious chapter been added to the apostolate of women who bore witness through the ages by this daughter of our race who had but one thought in mind — the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Photograph taken on the occasion of the first departure of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for Canton, China, September 8, 1909. Six of the then professed Sisters left for Canton. Front row, centre: Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit; left, Mother Mary of Saint Gustave, her first companion.



MOTHER MARY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN A FAMILIAL SETTING

INTERVIEW



by Sr. St. Mary Magdalen, M.I.C.¹

Q. Sister Saint Mary Magdalen, it was your privilege to live close to our beloved Mother Foundress. What was she like in the intimacy of the family circle? The Church insists that we trace back the spirit of our Society to its source. This I would like to do by having you recall our Foundress as you knew her in the humdrum of daily life.

A. Our foundation being relatively recent, we can easily retrace its pristine spirit.

Q. Can you sketch her personality for me?

A. There was about her a remarkable air of gracious dignity mingled with tenderness. Hers was that naturalness of manner that comes from forgetfulness of self. Totally absorbed by the duty of the present moment, she devoted herself to the Church, the salvation of souls. I have never known her to waste a particle of time. A born leader, her very presence disseminated vigour and enthusiasm. If she noticed that a young Sister worked in a spiritless manner, she gently but firmly called her to account saying, "Dear little Sister, do put your heart into your work." The first

Sisters remember the sense of urgency, of ardour attached by Mother Foundress to the various tasks assigned them.

Q. As far as I can see, she taught you to tackle work with a will. Modern people ought to appreciate this aspect of her personality.

A. She urged us to do everything out of supernatural motivation. Often, she would remind us, "Life is short at its longest. There is so little time in which to do good... In a few years all will be over. The Gospel tells us how our

blessed Mother went in all haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth; let us imitate her and hasten along the way of perfection, hasten to procure the salvation of souls." She required work well done, worthy to be offered to God as a sacrifice of praise. One of her favourite maxims was, to do the task of the present moment well, for God alone.

Q. I have heard it said that our dear Mother Foundress had a remarkable devotion to divine Providence. Could you give me some examples?

A. The chief example is the foundation of our Society itself. Did it not require unshakable confidence in divine Providence to face the hazards of a pioneer work without any appreciable human resources? Nonetheless, as Mother Foundress stated several years later, "We have never asked ourselves what we would eat, what we would wear, and yet like the little birds of the air, like the lilies of the field, we have never wanted... Before launching an enterprise, let us always consider whether it is willed by God. If it bears this divine seal, then we should go ahead without hesitation. Everything will be given to us when the time comes." God was often pleased to reward her filial confidence in a tangible manner, as may be gathered from the following familial episode. One Holy Saturday, in the first years of the Society, Mother Foundress sadly reflected that she had nothing on hand with which to provide a little Easter treat for the Sisters. Late that evening the doorbell rang. A benefactor gave the portress a parcel saying, "This is for your Superior." How delighted Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit was when,

upon opening the parcel, she found that is contained enough chocolate "eggs" for each Sister. Although deeply touched by this exquisite attention of divine Providence, she was not surprised. "God is always ready to provide, but we too often fail in giving Him the chance to do so," she liked to repeat.

Q. Did she have a definite missionary programme?

A. She sought the inspiration of her apostolic action in the papal encyclicals, more especially in Benedict XV's *Maximum Illud*, and in Pius XI's *Rerum Ecclesiae*. Her broad, lucid vision discovered in these directives the import of apostolate. The activity of the enemies of the Church spurred her to immediate action. Once, having pondered the passage of the Gospel where it said that the children of this world are wiser than the children of light, she cried, "O if we could only grasp the full significance of these words! See how fired with enthusiasm the sectarians are in their opposition to the Church. Such is their tenacious will to supersede her, that difficulties and hardships are nothing to them. Shall we dread failure, allow ourselves to be stayed by fear?" This was said with such forcefulness that none of the Sisters present ever forgot it. One of my novitiate companions home from the missions, recalled it to me word for word twenty years later.

Q. This points to a strong, resolute nature. Was she ever strict or rigid?

A. No, Sister. She was humilified personified, putting everyone at ease. Nothing escaped her kind eyes, her far-seeing love that knew how to deal harmoniously with all kinds of people. When

it was her duty to do so, however, she fearlessly pointed out to the Sisters their shortcomings but without the possibility of their thinking her unkind. They knew too well that she was actuated by motherly interest in their welfare. She was glad when she met someone who could be corrected without having to put on "white gloves". She used to say, "I know by the way a Sister accepts admonitions, how far she has progressed towards the way of perfection."

Q. Mother Foundress seems to have been deeply attached to the members of her Society. What was her reaction to the frequent departures for the mission field?

A. At that time the Sisters used to leave "for life". Although happy to provide missionaries for the Church, she never got used to seeing them leave. At each departure, she felt the sacrifice anew in all its acuteness. After accompanying them to the railway station, she would return home in a pensive mood. During the last eight years of her life, as she was bedridden, the Sisters assigned to the missions went to her room to take leave and ask for her maternal blessing. Through her tears, she invariably gave them the same parting advice: "Do your duty by everyone... Be straight as a die... Never become inordinately attached to a house, an office... Always be ready to go anywhere obedience bids you go, like true missionaries..."

At times, when recalling her absent daughters, she used such endearing terms as, "gentle Sister Saint Joseph," "our dear sunbeam, Sister Saint Jean l'Evangéliste". (These two Sisters died in Canton.)

Quick at repartee, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit, enjoyed teasing the Sisters. One day, during

¹ Anne Marie Magnan, Berthierville

² Emilda Charbonneau, Montreal

³ Rachel Lalumière, Montreal

her illness, the Sister-nurses had moved her to a more comfortable position in bed; she thanked them graciously then, dinner time being at hand, she added in a bantering tone, "Off to dinner, my angels."

"Angels live on love," parried one.

"Live on both," she replied with her genuine humaneness.

Q. Did she ever show any severity in her dealings with the Sisters?

A. On the following three points: lack of obedience especially in matters regarding health, negligence in the service of God, lack of frankness. She abhorred complaining as a great indelicacy towards the Lord. Of loyalty she used to say, "It is better to eat black bread with persons one can trust than to share banquets with those who are falsehearted."

Q. Very true! Loyalty should indeed be the basis of mutual understanding.

A. Mother Foundress wanted us to remain always closely united. She instilled in her religious Society, a warm familial spirit. "As long as you remain attached to your Community," she often said, "you will not go astray. If you do not love one another you will be tempted to seek satisfactions outside, for the heart cannot live without love. Never have I sought affection outside of my religious family; the love of my Sisters satisfied me. Do help one another all you can. Give one another a friendly smile when you happen to meet." In her talks to the novices she stressed the conquering force of amiability, proposing Our Lady as model. "You may consider this virtue as unimpor-

**Principal work of
Mother Mary of the
Holy Spirit — the Pont
Viau Novitiate.**





H. OAKMAN
PETERSON

tant... Believe me, it is very important. It presupposes many other virtues such as charity, simplicity, humility, frankness... In order to acquire it, self-abdication is absolutely necessary." A custom of hers was to have us read in common, every Saturday evening, the leaflet "Fraternity of Kindness", which practice was long continued in the community. As you know, we still recite every morning one of her favourite invocations to obtain amiability, "O Mary, Mother most amiable, make us amiable like you."

Q. This reminds me of something Pope John XXIII advised in a letter to Sisters the world over, "Cultivate gracious kindness, be affable to all".

A. A similar advice to missionaries may also be found in an encyclical by Pope Pius XI.

Q. Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit seems to have been cheerful.

A. Indeed, she was; although, whenever we met her during the hours when silence is the rule, she appeared absorbed in deepest recollection. I have seen many persons in a prayerful attitude. I have seen *Mother Foundress pray*. The prayers she favoured were those of the Church stressing praise, thanksgiving. Whenever she proposed "intentions" to prayer, these were always to obtain that we be true apostles, that the community be fervent... I never heard her petition for material favours.

Q. How did she expect the Sisters to manifest their joy?

A. She wanted the houses of our Society to be centres of joyousness and of thanksgiving... We, her children, were to be ambassadors of joy to the world. It is doubtless in this spirit that she once wrote, "Make everyone around you happy by your serenity, your cheerfulness. Joy is

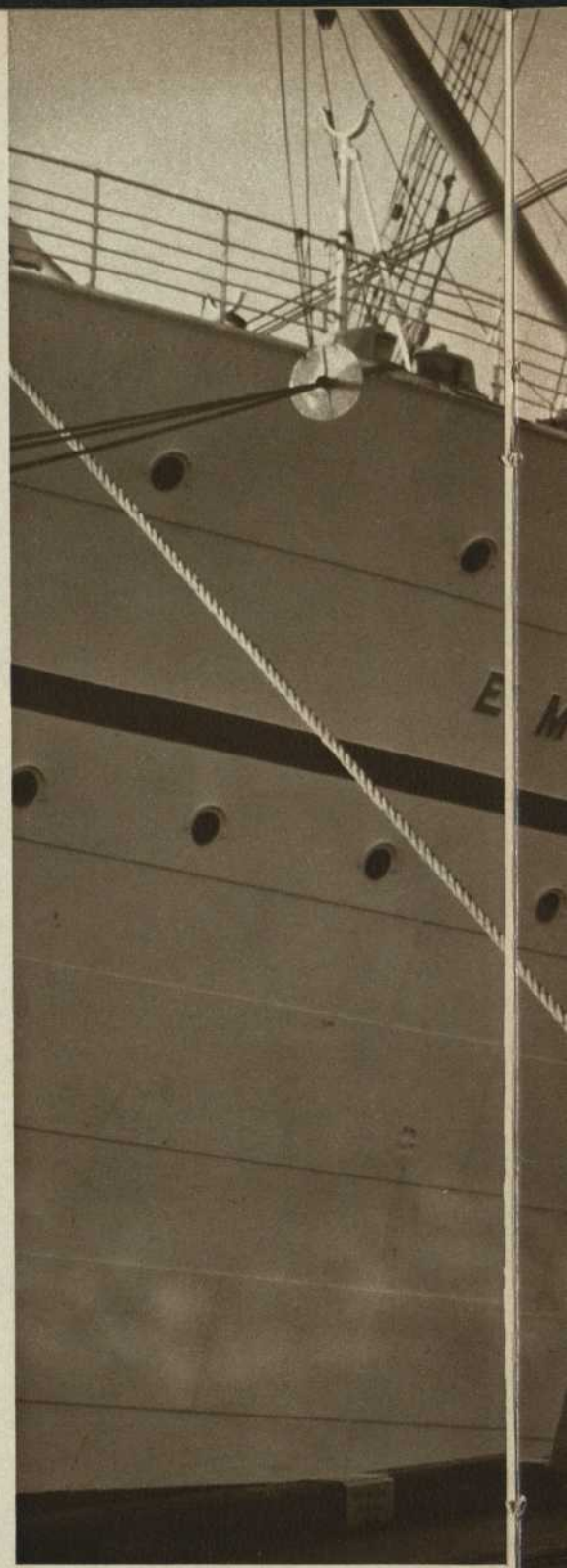
what this poor world of ours lacks most." When she supervised the construction and furnishing of our convents, she took care to have the rooms airy and bright. She was under the impression that white walls contribute to the joyfulness of inmates. "Sentences" and pictures hung about the rooms emphasized joy, thankfulness, zeal for souls, and other characteristic virtues she wished to see us practise; representations of our Lord, of our Lady, of the patrons of our Society, she selected with care, in perfect taste.

Q. Somehow, I imagine that Mother Foundress was more or less austere in her tastes...

A. To a certain extent, yes. However, she urged us at all times to enjoy with simplicity the good things God bestowed upon us. "Where is the mother who is not happy to see her children accept with grateful hearts what she has prepared for them?" she would ask. But, she took care that the gifts of God were never squandered. In all our houses, she saw to it that poverty was faithfully observed, that nothing was left to waste, that the Sisters practised detachment. There was not the hint of narrowmindedness in all this, but a deep respect for the gifts of God.

The humble furnishings of her room which we have carefully kept as "heirlooms" are eloquent testimonials of her spirit of poverty: the little square table made of uneven planks, the crude, backless chair, the folding bed she refused to exchange for a more comfortable one until her last illness... She cautioned a group of Sisters about to open a new mission post, "Let the furnishings of your house be such that the poor cannot envy you. My dear daughters, take care not to introduce luxury in the community under the pretext of adaptation. I tell you frankly that if after my death I learn that any of our con-

vents is fitted up in too luxurious a manner, I will, if it is in my power, ask that these houses be





In the beginnings of the Society, the Sisters left
"for life". 1929 departure for the Far East.

destroyed by fire or lightning or in some other way. It would be the best service I could render the Society."

Q. Evidently, her spirit was that of the Gospel. Our Lord Himself bade His disciples gather up the fragments...

A. Another aspect of her character was her limpid simplicity. Archbishop Bruchési was once heard to say of her and of her first companion, Mother Saint Gustave, that they had the simplicity of angels. Our beloved Foundress desired all her daughters to be as natural and as spontaneous as Nathanael. She had no liking for the stereotyped version of Sisters. One day, a Sister, who had just been assigned to replace a highly esteemed superior, confided to Mother Foundress that she feared she would never measure up to her predecessor. "Sister, be yourself," was the tart reply.

Q. If Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit were to live in our times

would she accept the new formulas of our existence?

A. I am sure she would. She grasped the needs of her own times too well, not to adapt herself to the changing patterns of ours. Besides, when we examine the

general plan of her work, we discover many dispositions far in advance of the epoch in which she lived.

Q. Could you give me a short résumé of her missionary method? Before leaving for the mission field





What would Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit have said of speech laboratories? Certainly she would have approved of this new means of learning languages more rapidly.

afar, I want to assimilate as much as I can of her spirit and teachings.

A. The following are the most salient points. *Appreciation for any kind of work* whether intellectual or manual performed in a joyful spirit of submission to God's will, animated by prayer and purity of intention. In his Radio Message to contemplative Sisters (1958), Pope Pius XII extolled labour, recalling that "the ancient law, *ora et labora*, had lost nothing of its wisdom and necessity." In 1961, Pope John XXIII blessed work with an indulgence.

The spirit of mutual understanding and of collaboration which she instilled in all members of the Society.

Heartfelt love of the poor, the neglected, the helpless translated into works of hospitality and of social assistance in the mission field or at home. On the opening of a new convent in 1930, she urged, "Let us be kind to the poor; they are God's friends." Today, more than ever, the solicitude of the Church turns to the poor.

Doctrinal instruction of the children of the poor. While she was yet in the world, Mother Foundress exercised this form of apostolate. In a letter dated 1917, she stated, "We are above all catechists, i.e., the teaching of the doctrine is our chief duty..." She worked at making contacts with diverse ethnic groups in Canadian cities in order to offer their members the opportunity of studying Christian doctrine.

Spreading joy. The founding Mother often remarked that what

human beings hungered after most was joy. She ruled that in her Society joyfulness should reign, that its members should spread their message of joy throughout the world.

Gratitude, the hallmark of her religious family. More than ever today gratitude is needed to counterbalance the self-conceit of modern man claiming everything as his due, but forgetting to say Thank You to God for His bounties.

Q. Thanks, Sister Saint Mary Magdalen, for making me better acquainted with the story of our beloved Foundress. I have been more particularly impressed by her zeal for teaching Christian doctrine. Her wise counsels will surely help me become a true Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception.

WHEN A MISSIONARY LIFE IS SET TO
THE RHYTHM OF THANKFULNESS

A THANKFUL HEART

by Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity, M.I.C.¹

In their essential personality, saints are wholly different. The amazing variety encountered in the material universe is as nothing compared to that envisioned in the mysterious world of the spirit.

Saint Francis Xavier and Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, although both recognized patrons of the missions, did not understand Christian perfection in identical fashion. By diverse pathways they reached God, won His friendship; by diverse means the giant of the mission field and the humble contemplative nun realized their baptismal and apostolic vocations in the heart of Holy Mother Church.

A powerful personality cannot rest content with imitating models. It invents its own methods in order to produce original works.

The core of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit's spirituality

Her temperament was a happy blend of the "iron, the ivory, the crystalline, the fiery". Individualistic and spontaneous, she never tried to copy some particular saint or other, not even the great Founders, although she herself was to become the Foundress of a Congregation of Sisters and bring about the organization of a Foreign Mission Seminary.

A- First tokens of thankfulness in the child and the young girl

The chief families of souls may be divided into categories more or less related to the four ends of the Mass. Thus, some are drawn to adoration, others to reparation, still others to intercession...

A divine attraction early drew Délia Tétreault to thanksgiving. Of a passionate sensitive nature, she manifested from childhood a remarkable sense of thankfulness.

Her gratitude went first of all to the aunt and uncle who were her foster parents. Saint Thomas remarks that a benefit calls for gratitude and that gratitude in turn calls for love. We find this exemplified in an episode of the life of Délia Tétreault when she was yet a toddler.

One day, as she sat at an open window watching her foster father working in the garden, she gleefully clapped her hands and piped, "Daddy, daddy!" Her uncle, not overfond of children, had adopted his niece only out of regard for his dying sister-in-law's wishes. He parried with a certain gruffness, "I'm not your daddy." Not to be gainsaid, Délia roguishly replied, "You don't know anything about it. I know... You *are* my daddy."

Daddy! First floweret of gratitude to bloom in this ardent young heart.

Délia expressed her gratitude to her friends and acquaintances in delightful accents. She wrote to a friend, "Thank you for remembering me, for loving me, for praying for my intentions, especially for making them your own."

Throughout her life, she was to show heartfelt gratitude to her benefactors. She urged the Sisters never to forget benefits received.

But the supreme object of her gratitude was God, Father and Creator. Grafted onto her natural inclination, this joyously filial sentiment reached to the innermost depths of her being. Recalling God's infinite mercies in her regard, she was often heard to exclaim, "He has loved me so!"

The old Outremont Mother-house whence the founding Mother let her work radiate to the ends of the earth.



She was not slow in discovering that, since bounties of the supernatural order can find their full flowering only in eternal life, we must thank the Lord not merely for the past and for the present, but also and particularly for the future which will bring unending happiness. She was consequently thankful even for trials in as much as they are the source of countless merits and graces, and may therefore, be considered as bounties calling for gratitude on our part.

It was in this vein that Miss Tétreault wrote to an intimate friend, September 3, 1899, to apprise her of the financial straits in which her foster

parents found themselves: "Their money losses spell the ruin of my fondest hopes to which I was doubtless too strongly attached. As if God needed our poor little human resources to accomplish His works! Please join with me in saying *Fiat* and "Thank You" to our dear Saviour."

"God be praised!" was the message she sent one day upon learning of a certain sad event. "We must accept with thankful hearts not only the good things God sends, but also the little and big annoyances, the deprivations... All are meant for our sanctification."



She thrilled to the song of this leaping brook.

The rustic "garden bridge" where Mother Foundress often sat during instructions to the Sisters.

From her earliest years, Délia tried to bring others to dedicate themselves to the duty of thanksgiving. Some time after the inception of the Society, she confided, "Many years before the foundation of our little work, I used to dream how in our future dwelling all would proclaim God's greatness, His mercy, His goodness... I wanted everything in it to be an encouragement to follow Him in the way of loving abandonment to His will."

To proclaim the greatness of God is to praise

Him.. Now, the praise that lauds divine attributes is linked to adoration and thanksgiving. In the New Testament, these two movements of the intellect resulting in perfect praise are often designated under one and the same expression.

On the other hand, if thanksgiving calls for love, love generates trust. Délia Tétreault lived in a climate of utter dependence upon divine Providence.

B- The thankful heart of Mother Foundress

1. Instructions and correspondence

Through her exhortations and her correspondence run numberless variations of the theme of thankfulness. Thus, in 1904, she wrote: "What we need above all in our vocation is the spirit of gratitude. To labour with all our heart for the interests of God, to thank Him unceasingly in our name and in that of all men — such is the definite end of our Society. To me, this end is very clear. Whether we pray, instruct children, cook the meals, sweep the floor, always and in all things our intention must be to work at spreading the reign of Christ upon earth, at thanking Him for His gracious bounties." These lines reproduced by photostat in this issue give a clear insight into the genius of the Foundress, the end of her work, the core of her spirituality — *to make life a hymn of perpetual thanks in her own name and in that of all men.*

2. Enjoyment of the beautiful

Giving thanks was in her as in all generous natures, a deep and constant virtue. Well might she have made hers the phrase that welled up continually from the heart of a Saint Francis Borgia, "I give thanks, I give thanks!" Hers was the gift of seeing the true loveliness of the universe, of recognizing and admiring the unmistakable reflections of Beauty Uncreated everywhere she looked. She thrilled at the rose-gold glory of sunrise, at the opalescent hues of sunset, at the music

of a leaping brook. Like the poet-martyr, she saw ... "His blood upon the rose, and in the stars the glory of His eyes."

To a group of Sisters about to leave for the missions, she said, "Do not carry too many books for your meditations along the journey... For several weeks, (the era of jet planes was yet to come) you will be privileged to read from the open book of Nature and your communings with God, the Creator, will be made easy. Never tire thanking Him for the rolling ocean, the stars, the moon, the rivers, the mountains, the plains..."

She had flowers of all sorts planted in the community garden. The fairest and most fragrant she reserved for the chapel. It was characteristic of her delicacy of feeling, that she bade the Sisters not to throw any away before they had entirely spent their loveliness at the Lord's altar. On her morning rounds of house and garden, she delighted in picking little nosegays for those of her daughters consigned indoors because of illness and unable to enjoy the beauties of nature.

Thanks to her care, an orchard occupied part of the extensive grounds at the Outremont Motherhouse. "Enjoy with grateful hearts the fruits Providence provides," she told her daughters as plates of apples, plums, grapes were, by her order, placed on the refectory tables. When Sisters from some other convent visited the Motherhouse, she took them at once to the refectory and served them the rosiest, juiciest apples she could find; when, in



Monicaingus, 4 septembre, 1916.

Ma bien chère fille.

Votre lettre me disant
votre joie, vos bonnes dispositions et
celles de vos compagnes me fait bien
rire. Vous êtes contentes de tout ce
qu'il permet, de tout ce qu'il
vous donne : c'est dire que ce bon
Maître est aussi content de vous---

Saisissez toutes les occasions de
cultiver les vertus, celles surtout

qui doivent caractériser
l'institut : l'humilité,
l'obéissance, la foi,
la reconnaissance
dernière, chaque
l'avantage de la
Ah! que je voudrais
long sur cet im-
digne de l'acti-
Plus Notre-Seigneur
présent dans
vocation, et par
que la principale
notre société, et
de grâces, en

caractères notre
milité, la charité,
la foi, le silence et
la pureté. Quant à cette
que moment nous apporte
la pratique.

voudrais vous en dire
important et délicieux
l'action de grâces !
Seigneur me fait
l'esprit de notre
et plus il me semble
principale raison d'être de
té, c'est vraiment l'action
en union avec notre

Immaculée Vierge et tous les bien-
heureux du ciel. --- L'apostolat
auprès des infidèles nous a été donné,
me semble-t-il, par la St Vierge
comme moyen extérieur de manifester
notre reconnaissance. Dieu nous a
tout donné, même son propre Fils :
quel meilleur moyen de le payer
de retour, — autant qu'une faible
créature le peut faire en ce monde, —
que de lui donner des enfants, des
enfants, qui eux aussi chanteront ses
louanges dans les siècles des siècles.
Que notre vie à tous soit donc par

la prière, le sacrifice et le travail un
chant perpétuel de reconnaissance pour
nous-mêmes et pour tous ceux qui
oublient de remercier Celui auquel
ils doivent tout. — Apprenons-
nous de cette idée, vivons-en, faisons
si bien que nous la laissions en
héritage à celles qui nous rempla-
cent. — Il faut m'arracher à ce
sujet qui me captive, pour vous
donner quelques conseils qui vous
pourront peut-être être utiles.

De M. du Saint-Esprit
m. L. C.

winter, fruit was not available, she prepared slices of bread dipped in cream and sprinkled with maple sugar, then watched them eat this collation with maternal satisfaction.

To a sick Sister resting in Nominigüe, she wrote: "I am sending you a case of apples and a box of peppermint sticks. I hope they will help you recuperate. If you want anything else, don't be shy. Just let me know." To another: "Yester-

day, I had some strawberries sent to you. Please let me know if you enjoyed them. If you would rather have some other kind of fruit, let me know, and I will send those you like best."

Overindulgence! some may be tempted to say. Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit thought otherwise. "God has created good things for our delight," she used to repeat. "Let us make use of them with gratitude in order to please Him." She took to heart the words of Saint Paul, "All is good that God has made, nothing is to be rejected; only, we must be thankful to Him when we partake of it."

then it is hallowed for our use by God's blessing and the prayer which brings it" (Tim. IV: 3-5).

Thus, notwithstanding the stark poverty of the beginnings, the founding Mother found means of fanning in the hearts of her daughters the warm flame of gratitude for God's gifts by her countless delicate attentions.

The grateful remembrance of the countless celestial favours granted her Society since its foundation, prompted Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit to determine a special Thanksgiving Day for her religious family. Celebrated for the first time, November 30, 1916, it has ever since been religiously kept by Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception everywhere. The date chosen was very dear to the founding Mother, for it was on November 30, 1904, that the saintly Pontiff Pius X encouraged the project of our foundation.

3. Prayer life

Her deportment at prayer also expressed her natural bent for giving thanks. The hymns she preferred were hymns of praise and of thanksgiving: the *Te Deum*, the *Benedicite*, the *Benedictus*, the *Magnificat*, still regularly sung or recited throughout the Society.

When praying in private, she was in the habit of lingering over the first part of the *Pater* which stresses praise, and of going rapidly over the second part which stresses intercession.

4. Principal devotions

Here the word devotion should be understood in the etymological sense of the word — self-consecration, devotedness.

a) To the Holy Spirit, the Most Holy Trinity

As she chose to be called in religion Mary of the Holy Spirit, it was natural for her daughters to infer that she cherished a particular devotion to the Holy Spirit. Is it not the Holy Spirit who stirs up gratitude within our hearts, giving it outward expression? Pentecost, the culmination of the paschal mystery is, so to say, the festival of thanksgiving. Nonetheless, the perusing of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit's writings brings us to the conclusion that she felt herself drawn, above all, to the Most Holy Trinity. The Sunday more particularly dedicated to this adorable mystery, a solemn Sung Mass was celebrated as on Pentecost Sunday and the day was one of unusual rejoicing for the Community.

"Dear Sisters, cultivate great devotion to the Holy Trinity," she urged in a talk to the Sisters, September 25, 1921. "I have perhaps not placed sufficient emphasis on this matter from the beginnings. Today, more than ever before, I feel the need of insisting on the importance of this devotion. It was that of the saints in whose footsteps we ought to follow."

Once, as she was travelling with the Bursar, the latter saw her suddenly plunged into deep recollection while she kept repeating, "O Holy Trinity, be all in all to me." Coming out as if from a sort of ecstasy, she said to her companion, "Can there be a more beautiful prayer? We should say it often throughout the day."

Rosy apples still grow in the Novitiate orchard.



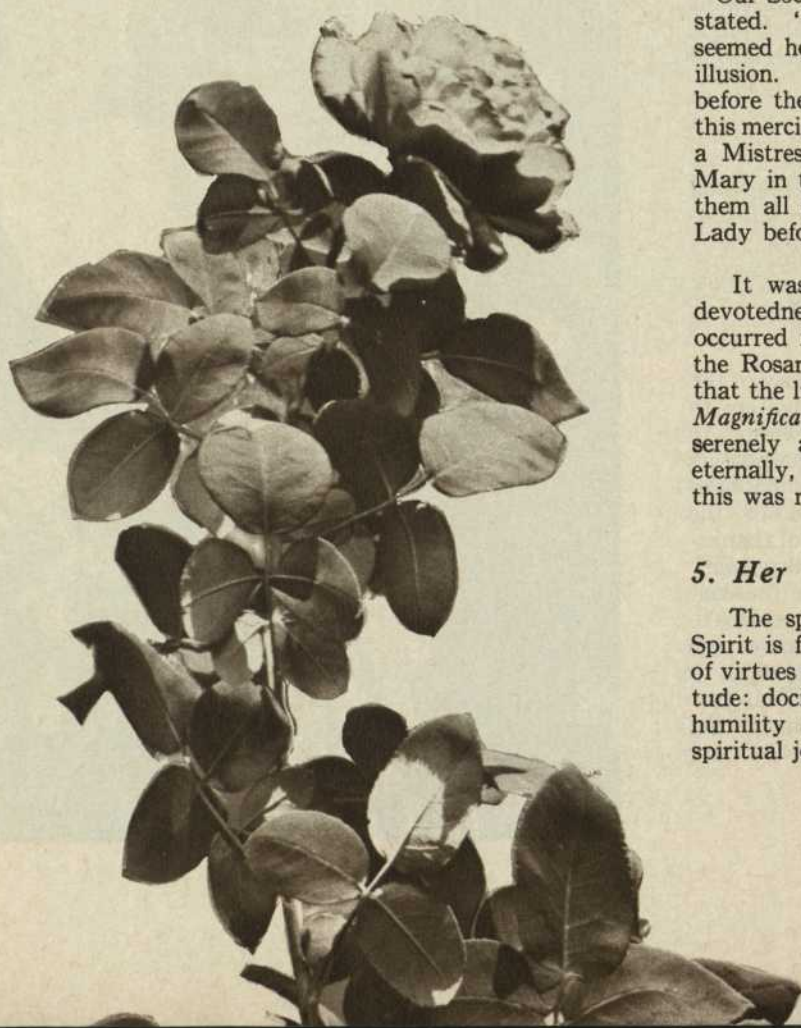
b) To the Holy Eucharist

This was the focal fire around which she longed to gather all men, in order to have them chant forever, in union with Christ, the perfect hymn of gratitude to God. In her zeal for honouring Jesus in the Eucharist, she obtained for all the houses of her Society the privilege of daily Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. On days when exposition was allowed in the chapels of her convents, on Sundays, First Fridays, feasts, she invited neighbours, friends, acquaintances to join with the Sisters in adoring our Lord in His Sacrament of Love.

She wrote to the Sisters assigned to open a new mission post, "What great joy your letter brought me! Thank God that, already, you are allowed to have the divine Guest with you."

Once, she musingly observed, "Who knows? Maybe the last consecrated Host on earth will be adored in one of our Tabernacles... This is only a dream of mine, but how wonderful it is! Why should it not come into the realm of reality?" On another occasion she said, "I have always felt the

Some of the flowers she loved.



need to pray that the last consecrated Host on earth be taken up into heaven, there to be eternally adored." Perhaps this was only the simple desire of a loving soul but it seems to concur with the thought of theologians according to which Christ, in consummating His paschal mystery, has forever been established in His function as Priest, Victim, and Host of propitiation and of thanksgiving.

c) To our Lady

"The Eucharist and our Lady these are the two devotions dearest to my heart," Mother Foundress once confided to a friend.

Whenever she prayed to our Blessed Mother, she became transfigured. Long before her missionary foundation, she worked at rendering those about her more Mary-conscious. Mary, how she loved her and how she longed to make her known and loved! In her visits to the poor, the sick, she distributed copies of Saint Louis de Montfort's *Treatise of True Devotion to Mary* and countless miraculous medals; she also encouraged the devotion of the First Saturdays. But her predilection went to the Rosary. On March 14, 1915, she enrolled her Society in the *Association for Perpetual Rosary*. "Our Society owes everything to Mary," she often stated. "She helped me out when everything seemed hopeless, when I feared to be the butt of illusion. I had dedicated myself to her by vow before the statue of Our Lady of Pellevoisin, and this merciful Mother never failed me." She advised a Mistress of Novices, "Instill true devotion to Mary in the hearts of your novices. Try to have them all make the vow of 'holy slavery' to our Lady before they leave the novitiate."

It was doubtless as the reward of her entire devotedness to the Queen of Heaven that death occurred for her on the first day of the month of the Rosary. Often she had manifested the desire that the lives of her children should be a perpetual *Magnificat*, so that at death's hour, they might serenely answer the Bridegroom's call and sing eternally, "My soul magnifies the Lord". Surely this was realized in her favour.

5. Her virtues

The spirituality of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit is further divulged in her regard for a host of virtues which she considered as satellites to gratitude: docility and submission to the will of God, humility and simplicity, magnanimity and zeal, spiritual joyfulness, and to crown them all, charity.



Our Lady is queen of the Society.
Lourdes grotto on Motherhouse grounds.

Utter dependence on God's will

"I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me." These words inaugurate the redemptive mission of the Word Incarnate.

It is not to be wondered at that Délia Tétreault, always so desirous of dedicating her life to singing the bounties and mercies of the Lord, should have been at all times entirely surrendered to the will of God.

Stricken with a serious sickness at the very moment when her plans for the foundation had begun to materialize, she humbly bowed to the dispositions of Divine Providence. "O my God," she prayed, "let it be done to me according to Thy

will. I desire nothing but what You Yourself desire."

She eventually recovered and the work of the foundation was inaugurated. In her personal notes of this period, we find the following little prayer which proves how perseveringly she pursued her ideal, "O divine Saviour, may Your will and Your interests become as nourishment to my soul." In order to perfect her conformity to this divine will, she made the vow to accomplish it always, and at all costs thus making her entire life a vibrant *Magnificat*. More than a form of submission, her obedience was a loving, profound act of self-surrender.

When the crucible of adversity, misunderstanding, rebuttals claimed her for its own, she did not complain, but cast herself still more trustingly into

the arms of God's Providence. Having broken the web of self-love, she drew ever closer to God in perfect detachment, in the genuine poverty of the Gospel. She had but one desire — to give joy to her Lord and to others. "To do His will smilingly no matter through what creatures it may be manifested, to smile kindly at others, what else have we got to do here below?"

Humility and simplicity

"God does not proceed as men do," wrote Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit. "He builds on nothingness. Hence, if we want to perform God's work, we must bury ourselves and entirely disappear from sight." Ever conscious of being but a poor instrument, she admitted in all humility, "God Himself accomplished everything..."

She perceived in the good done by her Society the fruits of divine assistance for which she gave joyful thanks. She trained her daughters to appreciate their natural endowments, to develop them with a real sense of humility, for the greater glory of God. In teaching them the art of self-acceptance, she encouraged them to practise self-giving.

Never did she allow her persevering energy of will to extinguish the warmth of her feeling. Everyone of her daughters, from the oldest to the youngest, from the greatest to the lowliest was allotted her share of motherly love, of tender solicitude. She believed in them, gave them confidence, excelled in making them rise to the crest of their powers. Her dealings with each and every soul were marked with infinite respect, for in each she discovered and adored the divine Artist at work.

Despite her numerous duties as Foundress and Superior, she took her share in the Community bees. In the first years of the foundation, she often cooked meals while her companions studied or taught school. Later on, she called at the kitchen every morning after breakfast to make sure nourishing meals were prepared. Excellent housekeeper, she taught the Sisters to turn everything to account. Once, when she passed through the Rimouski Apostolic School, the students were amazed and delighted to have her share their morning chore of vegetable peeling. While she worked, she spoke to them in a familiar manner about the virtues she wished to see them practise, especially simplicity.

"You all recall," she said, "how our Lady appeared to Bernadette while the latter was on a family errand. With what simplicity Our Blessed Mother spoke the mountain dialect, the only language the girl understood! She loves humility, simplicity. That is why she chose Bernadette. I

like to think of the latter as the very first little Sister of the Immaculate Conception... Pray to her in order to obtain the virtue of simplicity."

Magnanimity

Humility is in every way compatible with courage, resolution, magnanimity, a longing to do great things, a will to win.

To what degree of magnanimity rose Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit? He alone could tell who required of her the carrying out of an enterprise as bristling with difficulties as is the foundation of a missionary society. But, we can gauge something of her loftiness of purpose by what we know of her life.

It required high courage indeed to tackle, virtually unsupported, the foundation of the first Canadian Missionary Society of Sisters. Not content with this, she further nourished the holy ambition of inciting the Bishops of Canada to found a Foreign Mission Seminary. Faced with such a tremendous task, a person of ordinary strength of character might have faltered. Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit boldly took up the wager. Nothing surprising that her favourite hymn should have been the *Magnificat*. "My soul magnifies the Lord... because He who is mighty has done great things for me."

Zeal

Zeal stems from thanksgiving. It was in order to thank God for the priceless boon of faith that Délia Tétreault resolved to become a missionary. She was forever haunted by the dream of her childhood in which she had glimpsed ripe ears of wheat transformed into thousands of pagan children's heads. Why should so many souls be deprived of the knowledge and the love of their heavenly Father? What she had freely received, she wished freely to give. "The best means of thanking God for drawing us to Himself is to pray, and to work at drawing others!"²

Desirous of procuring God's glory and of proclaiming His mercies while working at the salvation of souls, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit encouraged her first companions to pray for the virtue of zeal. Before the foundation of her Society, she had made up her mind to leave for Africa, at the request of Reverend M. Daigneault, S.J. Such a project did not fit within the scope of God's plans in her regard. This she understood and accepted. Her sacrifice was the living seed of innumerable generous vocations to the foreign apostolate. Hundreds of courageous missionaries carried the flaming torch

of truth not only to Africa but to the ends of the earth, and thousands of souls were brought to swell the universal chorus of praise and of thanksgiving.

Spiritual joy

Another facet of Mother Foundress' thankful heart, was a joyousness ever ready to blossom forth into kindly smiles and encouraging words which swept away, as if by magic, the webs of diffidence, the clouds of despondency. Her cheerfulness acted like a tonic on her first companions. If one of them felt depressed, a glance at Mother Foundress' smiling countenance was sufficient to lift up her dejected spirit. To foster joyousness in her convents, she encouraged the presentation of simple sketches, songs, music. Always gracious and agreeable, she enlivened the community recreations with amusing stories, and enjoyed having the Sisters recall anecdotes of their childhood or comical incidents which had occurred during the day. Her crisp sense of humour gave her sympathetic enjoyment of the various contrasts and incongruities of life.

³ Letter to Sr. Marie Immaculée, September 4, 1916

⁴ Triduum preparatory to perpetual vows, February 1932

"See that recreations are as merry occasions as possible, so that your companions may not be tempted to envy people in the world," she advised a superior.³

Personally, she found countless ingenious ways of making those around her happy. Hearing her laugh so good-naturedly at a joke, at a flash of wit, who could have guessed that at certain periods her soul was plunged in darkest desolation? Her smile at such times was an act of heroism, a wonderful act of faith.

In the course of a conversation with a group of young Sisters, she once suggested that they should each day distribute alms of joy to those they met. "Send your angels on errands of joy to your dear parents," she added. "Whenever you pass in front of a house, say an *Ave Maria* so that happiness may dwell therein. Many people are destitute as far as earthly goods are concerned; a far greater number are destitute of the spiritual riches of joyfulness. If they were happier, they would be more inclined to thank God for His bounties."⁴

"Joy," she affirmed, "is the best of all medicines." And again, "We who are privileged to live



Thanksgiving Day par excellence was that on which Mother Foundress witnessed the blessing of a new wing added to the ever-expanding Foreign Mission Seminary.

in Our Lady's house and to be missionaries have no right to be sad; we must be joyful at all times, out of gratitude."

Her daughters took these lessons to heart. The wire sent to tell of the happy landing in Canton of the first group of Missionaries contained but this one word, "Joy!" In spite of the depressing conditions found in their new mission home, they practised that spirit of joyous self-denial instilled by Mother Foundress. One wrote in December, 1909, "We are all in excellent health and as merry as larks. The somewhat harsh realities of everyday life cannot diminish our joy at being the missionaries of the poor." When, after only one year on the missions, a young Sister found herself mortally ill, she exclaimed: "No words can tell how happy I am. The three perfect days in my life have been Profession Day, Departure Day, and now comes this most perfect of all days when I will see God face to face... Tell Mother not to grieve over my death. I am happy, happy, happy... Dear Sisters, do keep on being gay. This is not a sad occasion." While Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit mourned the untimely death of this ardent young apostle, she wrote: "The joyous passing of our beloved Sister Saint Jean l'Evangeliste should prove a challenge to all Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception to progress in the ways of apostolate, of religious perfection... Despite our sadness at losing this dear companion, our hearts are filled with inexpressible joy..."

Charity

Here below, the best manner of giving thanks is to use our gifts of mind and heart in the service of others, for the greater glory of God. Grateful to God for His innumerable favours, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit showed her thankfulness by spending herself wholly for others.

Pledge of the love of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, love of neighbour is to be exercised first of all within the humble sphere of human relations. Before reaching out to the supernatural, every virtue must plunge its roots deep into human soil.

Mother Foundress loved her family and her spiritual daughters with a warm, understanding heart. Her maternal vigilance, her constant concern for the welfare of all, her tender care of the sick, her compassion for the distressed, the unfortunate, reveal the exquisite delicacy of her loving heart.

She unceasingly reminded her daughters of the necessity of translating charity into deeds. "Let

your affection for others be genuine. Perfect mutual understanding is the treasure above all treasures in a religious community; it is worth any sacrifice which may be required of us. We must learn to give up our personal views, our likings, our tastes; get used to do the will of others rather than our own.⁵ We will find the energy to fulfill our task, however difficult, through the practice of fraternal charity. Family affections sweeten the bitter, lighten the unbearable... If you love one another sincerely, your sanctification as well as the prosperity of our little Society will be ensured."⁶

In one of her instructions to the Sisters of the Motherhouse, she remarked, "In order to work out our salvation, it is not required of us all to leave for China; what is of paramount importance is that we practise all the Christian virtues, more particularly charity which is their queen."

To her daughters who missioned in Canton, she wrote: "Do not scatter your efforts over sundry practices. Concentrate on charity. The older I grow, the more I feel the need of being excused, forgiven, helped... I no longer have any other attraction but to be the apostle of that gentle charity which alone suffices and without which nothing can suffice."

On the occasion of the seventh departure for China (April 19, 1917), the Sisters about to leave took supper at Mother Foundress' table. One of them exclaimed, "Mother, this reminds me of the Last Supper."

"Then I must, like Jesus, make known my last will," replied the Foundress. "I have no other wish but that of the Saviour, 'That all may be one.'"

She went on to say, "Dear Sisters, if I knew that in China you would not practise charity, fraternal union, I would rather see you dead... Thanks be to God, I know that your one desire is to spread the reign of charity everywhere."

Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit required of her daughters love of the destitute, of the orphans entrusted to their care. She wanted them to lavish upon these unfortunates the same attentions, the same devotedness they would lavish upon their superiors. Ahead of her time in this as well as on many another point, she practised a charity at once ecumenical and universal.

In the memory of those who have known and loved her, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit remains the tender mother who surrounded them with delicate attentions, whose charity was manifested through tangible affectionate gestures because her sentiments sprang from the very Heart of Jesus whose love set her own on fire.

⁵ Correspondence, 1923

⁶ Letter, Oct. 22, 1913

MISSIONARY METHOD

by Sister Alfred Marie, M.I.C.¹

At the time when Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit sent the first group of her daughters to China (1909), missiology, considered as a well-defined science, did not exist. In European centres, it was slowly taking shape, borrowing elements from theology, anthropology, ethnology, the critical history of the missions, the study of non-Christian religions, researches in adaptation and methods of celebrated missionaries, etc. From Germany its birthplace, it travelled to Rome, Louvain, Paris, Nimègue, Ottawa. The movement was inaugurated in Canada through the organization of Mission Weeks by the University of Ottawa where the first Missiology Institute was organized in 1948. Ten years later, the Jesuits launched the Montreal Centre of Missionary Studies.

Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit, who would doubtless have welcomed such scientific initiatives meant to accelerate the evangelization, died in 1941. She lived through the period of improvisation. Stranger still, she lived through it without ever seeing active service on the mission front. Twice, she had been on the point of leaving, first for Africa, secondly for the Far East; twice, serious illnesses prevented her from realizing her ambitions. God, in His mysterious designs, had signified His will that she serve His interests while staying in Canada.

It may appear presumptuous to credit with a missionary method this apostle of the homefront. Nevertheless, in her letters and directives lie revealed the broad lines of a plan of action born of her intuitive and lucid apostolic spirit. Perhaps

by the very fact that she was so keenly conscious of our delay in co-operating with other evangelizing nations, her plan, far from being limited to the distant mission field, embraced the development of the missionary spirit in the homeland.

Her method, therefore, ought to be studied under these two aspects — revival of interest in the missions throughout Canada, zeal for the spreading of God's kingdom among non-Christian or dechristianized countries abroad.

Church of the poor

When she laid the basis of her missionary Society (1902), the Foundress already possessed the rich experience of ten years spent in the social and catechetical apostolate as lay member of a Montreal centre of charitable works. So dearly did she love her task among the poor and the neglected, that it was a genuine sacrifice for her to give it up in order to launch a work bristling with difficulties.

In 1909, she welcomed with joyful enthusiasm the call of the Prefect Apostolic of Canton, Most Reverend J. M. Mérel, transmitted through Archbishop Paul Bruchési, "Let your Sisters come here to share our works, our poverty... I want them to conduct orphanages, workrooms, dispensaries, schools..."

The Canadian Sisters inaugurated their apostolate in China by assuming the direction of a crèche, an orphanage, a workroom, and an asso-

¹ Marcelle Prévost, Quebec



Those towards whom were sent the first daughters of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit: abandoned infants of Canton, leper patients of Sheklung.

Bottom: Laden with gifts, Canton orphans return from Christmas party aboard American gunboat.



ciation of lay women catechists. To these activities they soon added a Catholic school for girls, first of its kind opened in Canton, a dispensary, and a leper hospital on the banks of the Pearl River. Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit rejoiced to find herself once more, and on a much larger scale, in the active service of the outcasts of society.

Of late it has been advanced that the conducting of crèches, the baptism of thousands of dying infants is irrelevant as far as the implantation of the Church in any milieu is concerned. Let us not forget the hundreds of children snatched from death in these same establishments, children who have grown up in the faith and have multiplied the fundamental cells of numerous Christian families.

It would have been worthwhile to maintain the Canton Crèche as our Sisters did for over forty years, if only to obtain the courageous testimony of Cantonese orphans before Communist tribunals.

Be that as it may, Msgr. Mérel attached the greatest importance to this work as may be inferred from a letter he wrote to the foundress in 1910: "Every year, your predecessors (French Sisters) used to baptize in the two crèches of Canton and of Shahopo from 16,000 to 17,000 moribund children. You will not want to be behindhand and limit your zeal to educational establishments... Please encourage your Sisters to do all in their power to rescue as many little ones as possible." The three thousand babies baptized before the



close of the same year prove that Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit and her missionary daughters were not remiss in carrying out their Pastor's instructions.

Upon their arrival in Canton the Sisters had straightway organized a shop where weaving was taught to the older orphans. Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit believed in the necessity of providing a basic feminine formation in order to ensure the success of her Society's apostolate. At a time when civil war had compelled the Sisters to flee to Hong Kong with their orphans, the Foundress wrote, "What a pity that Canton had to be abandoned... No more babies to be made children of God through baptism... No more little girls to be brought up in a Christian manner, to be given a good education... Who will train them to become good Christian wives and mothers? I have always been convinced that to prepare truly Catholic generations we must first educate young girls, providing them with elementary schooling, teaching them the household arts. It seems to me that a firm, serious formation would in the end produce good results... Make haste to fill your house with destitute little girls, with crippled children, with waifs."

It should not be inferred from this that the founding Mother despised the rich. No. But, she felt that they stood a much better chance of securing a good education.

The choicest portion of the Church of the poor confided to her care was, in her appreciation, the leper colony of Sheklung. Often, in her letters, she mentioned her beloved "children" of the lazaretto: "Cherish these suffering members of Christ entrusted to your care," she urged the Sister-nurses of Sheklung. "Love them as if they were your own children. Is it not for their sake that you have left us, that I have made the sacrifice of parting with you? Care for them as tenderly as you would care for me, were I sick in your midst."

On another occasion, "I cannot hear about the lazaretto without shedding tears at once sweet and bitter: sweet because God has seen fit to call you to this most sublime apostolate, bitter because I am powerless to help you as I would like to." To each of the 214 patients at that period an allo-

Sheklung: Sr. Saint Raphael (Malvina Biron, Coteau Landing), devoted catechist and nurse of lepers during over thirty years.





At the Vancouver Chinese Home for the Aged, John Vianney hails his 101st birthday and shares cake with Rev. Father Chow. Sr. Joseph of Providence (Angèle Rondeau, St. Elizabeth, Warwick), looks on approvingly.

cation of five cents a day was allotted by the Cantonese government. Soon, the number of patients rose to 600. To make both ends meet, the Sisters went on begging tours in Hong Kong. For her part, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit forwarded them alms she collected in Canada. "I am sending you a cheque for \$200.00 wherewith to buy medicine and food for your poor lepers. Another cheque of \$100.00 is also enclosed so that you may prepare during the summer months the warm garments they will need next winter."

Year after year, the Foundress grasped every opportunity of providing assistance to the Sheklung colony so often and so sorely tried by typhoons, floods, famines, civil wars, pirates... Having received a gift of \$250.00 on the occasion of the silver jubilee of her religious profession she hastened to send the sum to Sheklung. "Please use this money," she wrote to the Superior, "to buy mosquito nets for the patients' beds. I have added a cheque for \$50.00 to provide a Christmas dinner for all. It is a deepfelt consolation for me to know that your dear charges will find at least some slight

relief when their beds are fitted up with netting... See to it as soon as possible and in your next letter, let me know whether they were pleased."

*Start in a humble way
Go to the people
Create contacts*

One of the salient points in Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit's method, was to start in a humble way, to go to the people. To Sister Mary of the Epiphany¹, first superior of the Tsungming mission in the diocese of Haimen (1928), she gave the following directive: "Keep in mind, my dear daughter, that works of apostolate will not spring from our hands fully developed as Adam sprang from the hands of God. No. The greatest human works have all had modest beginnings. The humbler their origins, the deeper their influence."

When her daughters assigned to the Vancouver Chinese mission complained about the slow progress of their work, she replied, "If you want your activities to bear fruit and to endure, you must be content with slow, humble beginnings."

Nothing brought her greater joy than a call to serve the poor. She wrote to the Sisters in charge of a foundation in Italy: "How happy I am to hear that you are pressed to accept teaching the children of the poor... This was the very first task God entrusted me with, and how sorrowful I felt at having to lay it aside at the foundation of our Society. If the sublimity of this apostolate in favour of the children of the poor were understood, everyone would want a share in it."

On the other hand, when Bishop Valtorta urged her to open in Kowloon a large college for girls she thanked him for his offer, but exposed her point of view in the following lines, "I would prefer opening in the Chinese portion of the city a small elementary school." The Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong at first declined. Later, however, confronted with the rapid increase of the population and the scarcity of elementary schools, he reconsidered and gave the daughters of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit the direction of an unpretentious educational establishment. Sunday doctrine classes were eventually organized, and the Sisters began their rounds of home visits and of personal contacts with the people. Such were the humble beginnings of present-day institutions in Kowloon: Tak Sun School attended by 1,800 pupils; Good Hope School, with a student population of 3,000; Saint Joseph the Worker Catechumenate annually dispensing doctrinal instruction to 2,600 families.



Sisters of the Holy Rosary — first fruits of the Szepingkai Church.

In Japan, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit preferred starting with kindergartens and private lessons for adults. She reasoned that through the child, the parents could be reached; that through private courses, personal contacts could be made. Such was then the Japanese mentality, that the religious question was rarely raised in the presence of others. In the course of private lessons, however, students felt more at ease to discuss religion.



Theresians of Tsungming diocese.

The Foundress never ceased urging her daughters at work in the Philippines, China, Manchuria, Japan, to visit the sick, the aged, the destitute. Sister Mary of Sion¹, a veteran of the Tsungming Mission who spent herself in the fatiguing ministry of the dispensary and in home visits, tells of the happiness that flooded her soul at the end of a particularly tiresome day going by cart from one hamlet to another to visit the sick. "I was coming back home after a very full day during which it had been my privilege to baptize fourteen dying persons. The *four hours* of riding in a crude wheelbarrow over bumpy roads seemed all too short a time in which to thank God for His mercies."

Intensification of missionary activities thanks to autochthon Societies

When she accepted the direction of a crèche, an orphanage, and an apostolic school in Tsungming (1928), Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit was already planning the foundation of a Chinese community. While he greatly desired such a foundation, the Vicar Apostolic of Haimen, Most Reverend Simon Tsu, S.J., had at first wanted it to be merely a Chinese novitiate of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. However, the founding Mother who had already received other proposals of the kind, considered her Society still too young to multiply its formation centres. She had attentively studied the encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* in which Pope Pius XI, after having sanctioned the admission of autochthons into ancient orders, urged the bishops and superiors "to ponder seriously and prayerfully the question whether it might not be more expedient to found new congregations such as may answer better the genius and character of indigenous subjects and be more in keeping with the needs and spirit of the country."

She, therefore, offered Bishop Tsu to have her Canadian missionaries in Tsungming undertake the formation of Chinese Sisters having their own Constitutions. Relating to this matter, she gave Sister Mary of the Epiphany precise directives: "It belongs to the Bishop to decide what rule the Chinese Sisters will follow, to choose their name, to determine what habit they will wear. I appreciate the new arrangement that autochthon Sisters should enjoy complete independence as soon as their formation is achieved. This makes it easier for them to live the religious life, and the Bishop is freer to claim their services as he sees fit. Moreover, it is the express desire of the Holy Father who, while he acquiesced in the admission of autochthons in our Societies, prefers having them form autonomous communities."



Adaptation. The Sisters used the crude local means of transportation.

The Bishop of Tsungming approved the plan and authorized the foundation of the Society of Theresians whose Constitutions he elaborated. Shortly afterwards, a similar experiment was repeated in favour of the Church of Szepinghai, Manchuria. There also, daughters of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit trained in the religious life, Chinese Sisters of the Holy Rosary, a congregation sanctioned by Bishop A. Lapierre of Szepinghai.

In both Tsungming and Manchuria flourished a work dear to the foundress — apostolic schools. She never forgot that in just such an apostolic nursery had her own Society originated. In Canada, the apostolic school of Rimouski held out good hope for the future of the missionary Church.

Balance and adaptation

Were the first Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception assigned to the foreign mission field adequately prepared for their task? When we consult the history of the Society's missions, we find that before sending out her Sisters, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit made careful inquiries regarding professional requirements. For instance, the Sisters sent to Sheklung to care for the lepers received training at the Hospital for Incurables before leaving Montreal; likewise those destined to work in dispensaries, spent a period of formation in various hospitals. The Sisters en-

trusted with the school and orphanage in Canton were given special courses in painting, bookbinding, sewing, etc.

But, the Foundress herself considered this training as inadequate. At least twice, she wished to put off the Sisters' departure in order to give them more time to study. Only upon insistent requests from Reverend A. Lapierre, P.M.E., Manchuria, and Reverend E. A. Langlais, O.P., Japan, did she finally allow the Sisters to leave before their complete formation could be effected.

Like missionaries everywhere, the Sisters assigned to new foundations were faced with the difficulties of adaptation to a new country, a strange language, a trying climate, a more or less hostile milieu. The wise Foundress admonished a youthful superior who, in her eagerness to succeed, failed to gauge differences between eastern and western mentality: "I think that your most imperative duty at present is to learn the language. Once you can understand others and make yourself understood, everything will be different. The poor people around you are as puzzled by your deportment as you are by theirs... Especially on the missions, patience is a MUST. At times, one can only stand and wait..."

In her correspondence with the Sisters stationed in Manchuria, she repeatedly urged that they apply themselves to the study of both the oral and the written language. She also advised the first missionaries assigned to Koriyama, Japan, "As your apostolate is not yet fully launched, you may perhaps chafe for action... Make use of this time to study Japanese all the harder. Otherwise, you will later regret your lack of diligence..."

Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit held Oriental civilizations in deep respect. To a superior recently arrived in Japan who wrote of her difficulties in adapting herself to strange customs, the founding Mother replied, "Adaptation to customs that appear peculiar certainly require many an act of self-denial on our part. But the missionary vocation is worth any sacrifice."

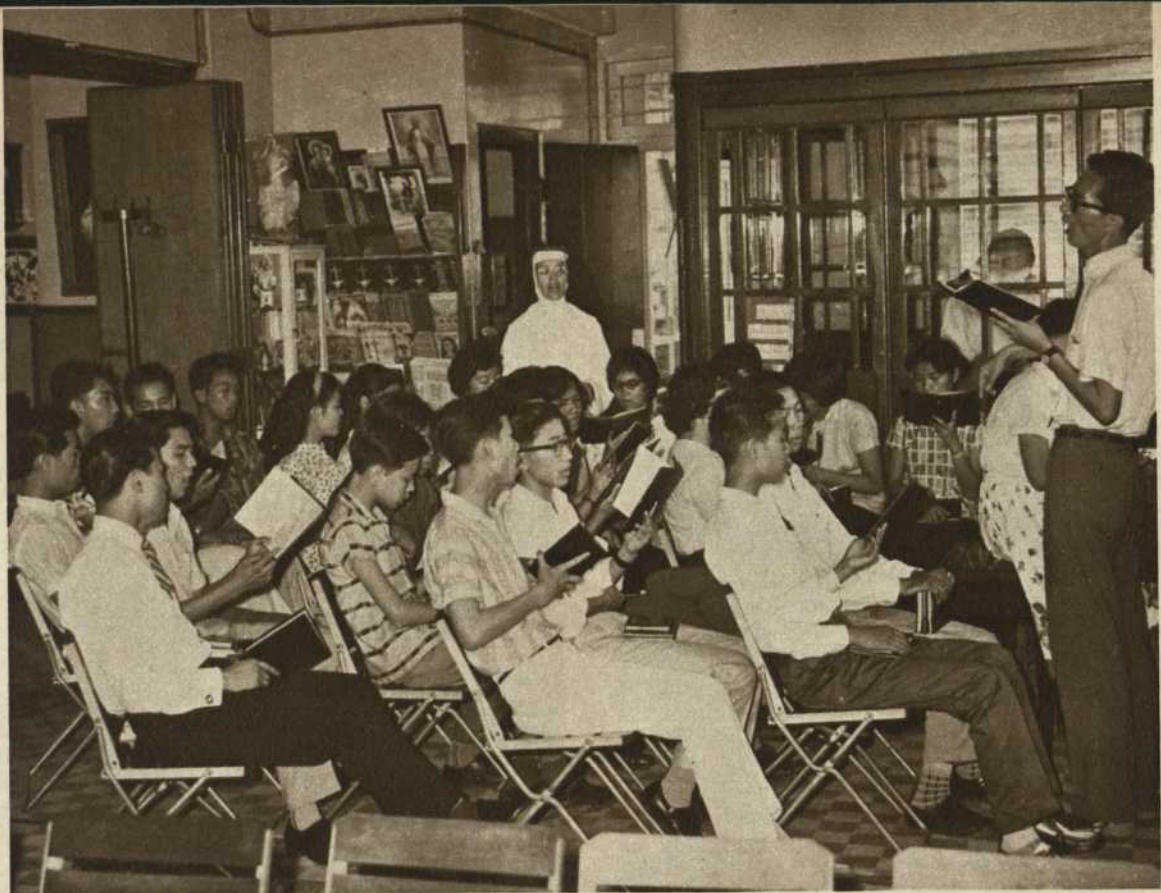
Missionaries among the masses, her Sisters lived the life of the poor. One of them humourously wrote that in the mission to which she was attached, the Sisters had not many occasions to prevaricate against poverty unless it were through desires! Wherever they went, they made use of the means of communication at the disposal of the poor: wheelbarrows in Tsungming, ox-carts in Manchuria, crowded third-class trains in China.

The main activities undertaken by the Society were the care of the sick and educational works. But, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit considered them as a means to an end — carrying the gospel message in the most efficacious manner. In her opinion, the works of paramount importance would always be teaching of the doctrine, formation of catechists and of religious. Her chief reason for insisting on the necessity for the Sisters to learn local languages was to facilitate the religious instruction of the people. She recalled an episode of the time when she herself had taught the catechism to Italian immigrants. Berenice, a lively little girl, had candidly told her one day. "Miss Tétreault, you talk like a book. I'll teach you to talk Italian as we do."

To her wise counsels on adaptability in the apostolate, the Foundress added timely advice on

In Manchuria,
the Sisters
travelled by ox
cart.





Sr. Marie des Oliviers (Gertrude Laforest, Montreal) conducts choir at Saint Joseph the Worker Catechuminate.

the need for balanced living. Although she rejoiced to see her daughters share the poverty of the people among whom they worked, she wanted them to take reasonable care of their health. She cautioned the Sisters in charge of the lepers, "Do not deprive yourself of food. Buy everything you need. The vow of poverty does not require you to do without suitable nourishment. On the contrary, this very vow obliges you to eat sufficiently in order to be able to perform the tasks assigned to you, to spend yourselves in the service of God and of souls." In another letter, she insisted, "You tell me that penance is indispensable... Of course it is. Let me remind you, however, that the best of all fasts consists in mortifying self-will, in obeying without repining. These mortifications will promote your progress in perfection without any impairment to your health."

When the Sisters of the Sheklung colony sent her their daily schedule for approval, she noted: "I am very happy to know how faithfully you observe our regulations. As for the spiritual reading period, I wish you could arrange to divide it in two, let us say a quarter of an hour in the forenoon or in the afternoon. This would be a greater advantage to the soul and a lesser fatigue to the body than doing the whole half-hour on end,

in the evening, just before night prayers when you are tired out with the labours of the day."

With regard to the expansion of apostolic activities, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit remarked with her fine sense of discretion, "Remember the old proverb: 'Grasp all, lose all.' If you insist on doing the work of ten years in one, you will simply court disaster. Once your health is ruined, who will replace you? I may not have anyone I can send."

When the sad news reached her of the untimely death of a young Sister-nurse in Manchuria and of the extreme state of fatigue in which were several of her daughters, she suggested to Bishop A. Lapierre, that fewer enterprises be launched. Otherwise, the mission would soon find itself encumbered with sick or exhausted missionaries: "It would indeed prove regrettable if, after having learned the language, they were to fall sick and be powerless to do anything more. Please ask the Fathers in charge of the different mission posts to warn

the Sisters against excessive zeal in the discharge of their functions. Is it not better to go more slowly so as to work longer for the glory of God and the salvation of souls!"

Saint Teresa of Avila might well have countersigned such advice.

Missionary information

As a child, Délia Tétreault liked to climb into the attic of her home there to pore over old copies of the Propagation of the Faith Annals. Later, she enjoyed listening to missionary talks given in Marieval by such outstanding apostles as Bishop Charlebois and Bishop Clut.

She was undoubtedly influenced by these missionary reviews and sermons. After she had become the foundress of a missionary society, as she saw herself providentially kept from active service in the field, she reflected on the importance of in-

formation in the development of a missionary mentality. The needs of the missions would have to be made known through the spoken and printed word if such a mentality was to be created.

In the course of the year 1913, she happened to meet two persons who confirmed her in the idea of inaugurating an active propaganda through the press and through mission conferences. The pastor of one of Montreal's largest parishes sadly pointed out how generous the Presbyterians were in the support of their foreign missions and how niggardly, alas, the Catholics proved to be when asked to give the missions of the Church monetary assistance. Shortly afterwards, Bishop Ovide Charlebois confided to her: "To awaken interest in the mission cause, talks on the missionary vocation ought to be given in colleges. During the few months I have just passed in France and in Belgium, I gave such conferences in 26 educational establishments. Someone ought to do the same in Canada..."

Sr. Saint Christine (Therese Blais, Sherbrooke) teaches the doctrine to attentive African pupils.



At that period, the Foundress who kept planning for the organization of a Foreign Mission Seminary thought that priests from this seminary could best assume such a task. But, as the time was not then ripe for the realization of this project, she cast about for another way of solving the problem. In 1916, with the authorization of the Archbishop of Montreal and of the heads of other dioceses, she undertook the re-organization of the Holy Childhood Association in elementary schools; the following year she sparked a similar movement in favour of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Archbishop Paul Bruchési encouraged the activities of the Foundress and sent out an appeal to the pastors of his vast diocese: "This great and noble work of the Propagation of the Faith ought to awaken our heartfelt interest. It should hold first rank among all the good works of our diocese... I am sorry to admit that of late it has been sadly neglected... It could easily be re-organized as the Holy Childhood has recently been. This latter work is now functioning satisfactorily, thanks to efficacious methods used to promote its progress. Make it your duty to spur the generosity of your parishioners in the interest of the great cause. Let a holy rivalry exist among parishes as to who will give most. Take the Work under your special protection. The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception will prove good helpers. Already in charge of collecting Holy Childhood fees in the different parishes, they have accepted upon my request to do the same for the Work of the Propagation of the Faith. They are, therefore, authorized to collect subscriptions to the latter Work, which subscriptions they will transmit to the Archbishop's House. Thus the progress of two admirable works will be assured. How much good it will thereby be given us to accomplish at home and in the field afar..."

The work was organized on a parochial basis; talks on the missions were regularly given by the Sisters; promoters were enrolled. These lay apostles utilized in their respective parishes the subscription card system invented by Pauline Marie Jaricot.

Eventually, the Sisters were invited to take over the re-organization of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in dioceses where they were already at work in favour of the Holy Childhood. The first dioceses to foster the movement were Joliette (1919), Rimouski, and Quebec (1922).

Towards the same time (May 1920), Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit inaugurated her apostolate of the press by the publication of a missionary magazine, *LE PRECURSEUR*. She wanted it to be a voice reminding Canadians of the urgency of

the mission cause and of the duty of every baptized Christian to share directly or indirectly the riches of salvation with non-Christians everywhere. There were many who tried to dissuade the Foundress from an enterprise they judged inopportune and promised to failure, but she firmly held her ground. In 1923, she even added an English edition, *THE PRECURSOR*.

Should the Closed Retreat movement for women and girls also be included within the scope of information? Why not, since it is intended to lead to a better knowledge of God's divine plan, for the greater glory of God.

In the establishment of the Foreign Mission Seminary, the role of the Foundress has been at times compared to that of Our Lady at the Cana wedding feast in that she hastened the determination of the Bishops to proceed with the foundation.

This brings us to conclude with Reverend E. A. Langlais, O.P., that "her influence undoubtedly contributed to the remarkable development of the missionary movement in Canada". She was what is called, in modern parlance, a personality.

In the shadow

Although a key figure, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit, nevertheless, chose to work in the shadow of humility. Reverend E. A. Langlais wrote that "the hallmark of her character was a perfect discretion, the discretion of charity as mentioned by Saint Catherine of Siena, which is the measure of the love of God in a soul led by the light of upright reason, the prudence of the saints".

"Work in the shadow!" was the watchword the founding Mother gave to those of her daughters inclined to seek the limelight. In the following prayer she once addressed to the great Saint Francis Xavier, patron of missions and of missionaries, her spirit is clearly delineated, "Teach me, direct me, live again in me although so unworthy of such a favour. Let me do much good but without being aware of it..."

In her, such an attitude of humility and of detachment was fully consistent with a pulsing dynamism. One who knew her well, a faithful friend of the work of foundation, Reverend Mother Saint Ann Marie, C.N.D., once paid her the following delicate tribute, "I thank God for all He has done in you and through you".

Our modern world, eager for dialogue, requires the work of the Church to appear in its full light. What would be our beloved Mother Foundress' attitude with regard to this exigency? Her sense of the Church and of adaptation would doubtless incline her to comply for the greater glory of God.

MOTHER MARY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

and MODERN YOUTH

by Sister Marie Agathe Martin, M.I.C.¹

To be what You would have me be,
Just a tool in Your Hand
With no will of my own but to discover Yours,
Just a child at Your feet.

To do what You would have me do,
Always a life of service,
Seeking nothing for myself,
Always a life of faith, a life of love.

The ardent desires expressed in these lines sum up the story of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit who spent all her energies in giving us, her daughters, concrete instances of the possibility of realizing aspirations which might seem quasi-utopian to our fellow-men.

Modern youth with its high hopes and ideals may certainly learn a good deal from the life of the first Canadian Missionary Foundress. Very often, the young are made to feel that their ambitions in life are far-fetched, nothing but castles in the air easily shattered by haphazard or calculated missiles. When their propositions are frowned upon by the older generation, they would do well to remember, how less than a century ago, a courageous lady braved countless rebuffs and stubborn opposition in laying down the basis of



a great and noble work. Steadfast to her goal, she succeeded not only in establishing a missionary Society of women, but also planted the seed of a Canadian Seminary destined to form apostles for foreign lands. What valour, what unabated zeal were needed for her to realize her double ideal!

In their quest for the absolute, in their attempt to realize their hopes in life, modern youths are perhaps too easily daunted by the many obstacles they have to overcome. They should not flinch in striving for what they sincerely believe to be right. Let them keep their ideal constantly before them like the Star of Bethlehem.

Lodestar of her life

What was the lodestar of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit's life, I hear you ask? The will of God. Yes, loving and courageous submission to the will of God was her sole guiding principle. In the sketch of her life, we read that she went

¹ Mary Olga Lam, Hong Kong

so far as to make the vow of seeking always the will of God in all things and of accomplishing it at all costs. What is meant by this? How could Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit know exactly what was God's will in her regard? God is not in the habit of manifesting His will through visions and miracles. Lively, penetrating faith it was, which in the founding Mother's case, worked miracles and gave her visions through which she saw God in everything and everywhere. She recognized this will of her Lord in the decisions of legitimate authority, in the least of the ordinary events that go to make up the humdrum of daily life.

In some personal notes penned a few months before the foundation are faithfully mirrored her dispositions of complete surrender to grace: "Let it be done to me according to Your will. Nothing do I desire, but that which You yourself desire... My good Master, lead me wherever You will. Give me life or give me death but do not refuse to grant me Your love."

Obedience as she understood it

Obedience was the touchstone of her character, not a servile obedience but a childlike submission to the will of God expressed through His representatives on earth. We have a most striking instance of this when at the critical period of the foundation she sought the direction of Father Bourassa. Instead of acquiescing, he bade her consult a certain parish priest of Montreal about her vocation. She complied out of deference only to meet with scorn and rebuff. Nevertheless, she was not discouraged. With filial simplicity, she went back to Father Bourassa and rendered an account of what had happened; she again implored him not to refuse her his guidance in the ways of God. A few moments of prayerful silence elapsed while he steadfastly gazed at the Tabernacle, then he replied, "I shall begin to help you." God had manifested His will. His humble servant felt content.

Today, the ideal of obedience as lived by the early hermits is scarcely appreciated. It is difficult to imagine a twentieth century youth planting and watering, for months on end, a dried-up stick out of obedience. But our so-called "dialogued" obedience is not without offering occasion of merit. A certain amount of self-control, and of humility are called for to be able to present our point of view to, let us say, the dean, the principal, the form-master, the superior, the managing director,

etc., when confronted with a traditional order. It is understood that, whether we like it or not, the last word belongs to the superiors. But, before we get to the second last word, should we not prepare ourselves to accept the final verdict with filial abandonment? Indeed, after having tried our best to present our case, should we not remain calm and joyful however disappointing the outcome may be? Joy is not in the things that surround us, it resides in the interior of the soul.

Heirloom of the present moment

The apparently common and simple life of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit conveys a forceful and convincing argument that saints are not born, but made, and that we are all called to sanctity. "Be ye perfect as Your Heavenly Father is perfect." Like Saint Thérèse of Lisieux she realized that holiness does not consist in this or that practice, but in a disposition of the heart which keeps us always humble and childlike in the Hands of God, well aware of our feebleness, but confident to audacity in the Father's goodness."

Among the spiritual heirlooms she left to her Society was her extraordinary devotion to the present moment lived to the hilt for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. She often told her daughters that this was of prime importance in their lives, "The past is beyond your power, and you can only leave it to the tender mercy of the heavenly Father; so it is of the future. But the present moment is yours in which to do great things for His love." How encouraging to think that "God hears the lark within the songless egg, in the folded seed sees the bud, in the will the deed". Our days would be less burdened by anxieties and regrets if we were to live the present moment perfectly, in a spirit of faith and love. To lay hold of this truth is to discover in the common-place happenings of life numberless opportunities of building up our personality and of advancing in sanctity. Fidelity to the multiple requirements of our duties in life calls for fortitude, for the virtue of perseverance. It acts as a curb on the restlessness of our nature, its impatience of restraint, its eagerness for change.

Challenge to modern youth

Is the modern generation reared in all the comforts of life, so lacking in the sense of self-denial that it cannot grasp the meaning of the spirit of sacrifice? It would be an injury to think so.



Does Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit's ideal appeal to modern youth? Students of Délia Tétreault School reply in the affirmative as they listen to Sr. Marie Assunta (Theresia Miyoko Kofuji, Tokyo), Sr. Marie Agathe Martin, and Sr. Anabella Ayoroa (Cochabamba, Bolivia) tell the story of their vocation.

I feel sure that the challenge of the missions is one that our flaming youth will accept, and which will send their best and noblest into the mission fields where the Church needs them most.

May the example of the Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit's life be a beacon beckoning modern girls to the glorious adventure of being instruments for good for all peoples.



LIFE

Is What You Make It

Hello there! What? You don't recognize me? Well, I admit that the veil and the wimple and the habit do make a difference. Now, I want

to tell you about a perfectly marvellous book I've just read — the life of Délia Tétreault, a dynamic woman apostle.

Never heard of her, you say. Well, then, it's high time you did, for she is an outstanding personality of our modern times. Let me introduce her. Please don't for one moment imagine her as a sort of starchy, ready-made saint. God forbid! Délia was an alert, stouthearted, gracious lady who was convinced that it lay within her power to change the world for the better.

You also feel the pull of the heights, I know. But, you are torn between the "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," and the "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may". Miss Tétreault experienced the same inner struggle. She wrote, "I was by no means prepared to give up worldly amusements which held keen allurements. On the one hand, God drew me to Himself and this filled me with unutterable happiness, on the other, the world continued to beckon..." She craved for happiness with all the ardour of her passionate nature, but she felt that she could never be satisfied with mere worldly joys. She loved her dear ones, felt secure in their affection. Nevertheless, she finally gave up everything in order to follow the voice of God. Thanks to her generosity in answering the divine call, the first Canadian missionary society for women came into being.

How did she go about this work? Well, for all her eagerness to carry the Gospel message far and wide, she serenely walked the ways of God, waiting for His hour, content to watch His design unfold slowly, like a rare, exotic flower. For a while, she even considered reaching her goal of procuring the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls by entering a cloistered convent... She wanted one thing — to do His will no matter at what cost. Listen how disinterested she was, "As for the work so dear to my heart, if You want it to prosper and procure Your glory, grant that it may be established in the manner and time You shall see fit and by whosoever You want."

She was the one chosen by the Master Missioner. You can easily guess that in the foundation of her Society she was up against plenty. First, she had to submit her plans or rather the plans of the Holy Spirit to ecclesiastical authorities. This she did, simply and tactfully, but with the courageous audacity of a Saint Francis Xavier. Just think! At the beginning of the century, the idea of foreign missions smacked of the chimerical. Priests were too scarce to cope even with Canada's own religious situation. How could its missionaries be sent abroad? The founding Mother knew through personal experience the social problems of her own milieu but she saw, far beyond, the needs of human

beings everywhere. She was truly "a citizen of the world", concerned with worldwide sufferings and ignorance. Canada had to do its share. God who is never outdone in generosity would send it vocations in increasing numbers if it picked up the challenge of foreign apostolate. Of this, Délia was firmly convinced.

But, as she wanted to make sure of avoiding illusions, she had recourse to the counsels of a prudent director. None better than she, knew that prudence is called for in the exercise of one's liberty.

When the hour of God struck at last, she set to work resolutely. Nothing could make her flinch. She relied upon His bountiful Providence with childlike trust. Never did she doubt of the outcome, once He had manifested His will. What a precious instrument she proved in the hands of the Lord of the vineyard!

And when, at last, the work was firmly established she quietly retired into the shadow.

In failure as well as in success, she sang her *Magnificat*, happy to do what God wanted her to do.

The spirit of thankfulness is the hallmark of her Society. Did she not go so far as to assert, "Even if we were not missionaries, our Society would still have reason for its existence... Every moment of our life should be a vibrant 'Thank You' to God."

True, her spirit was instilled in our Society over half-a-century ago; but, because she saw far beyond her times her community remains young and up-to-date.

What do you think of all this? That Délia Tétreault is a living example of what a person can do, aided by God's grace, with the possibilities within her? In the glad dawn of her day, she offered herself to the Triune God. Ever conscious of her engagement, she won victory over self and progressed in the way of holiness.

For you also the full success of your life depends on your faithful response to God's grace. What will your life be? What you will make it with divine assistance. The wellsprings of joy are fully tapped only when life is surrendered into His hands.

by Sister Bridget, Novice,

THANKS TO MOTHER MARY OF THE THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR

Favours Received

Thanks to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit through whose intercession I obtained a good position and the strength to face up to its obligations.
Mrs. J.E.B., Hull

Through the intercession of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit, I obtained the favour of a cure for a very dear friend who had undergone serious brain surgery.

Mr. de la P., Miami

Having made a bad investment we wanted to clear the affair without incurring too serious financial losses. Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit helped us out.

I promised to make her known and to pray for her beatification. Please send one hundred pictures. Thanks to divine Providence for favour granted.
Mr. E.E.D.

Grateful thanks for success of serious brain surgery. I had entrusted this case to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit.

Mrs. L.B., Kenogami

Thanks to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit for favours obtained through her intercession.

Mrs. G.M., Rosemont

Grateful thanks to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit for safe delivery.

Mrs. C.B., Lanoraie

During a retreat made at your Saint Johns Retreat House, I felt inclined to ask Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit to intercede in favour of a sick daughter. She heard my request.

I am sending \$5.00 to have a thanksgiving Mass offered.

Mrs. O.R., St. Johns

Sincere gratitude to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit for two important favours obtained through her intercession.

Mr. F., Montreal

I prayed to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit in order to obtain the cure of a ten-year-old niece seriously ill with T.B. She has since been completely cured.

On another occasion I have felt the protection of your Mother Foundress. She enabled me, a foreign doctor, to pass successfully a difficult English examination which allows me to practise medicine in American hospitals.

I pray to her daily that she may obtain the liberation of my dear homeland from the yoke of Communism.

A.M.P., Hampton, Virginia

Prayer for the beatification of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit

Almighty and eternal God, who didst will to make use of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit in the extension here below of Thy kingdom and that of the Immaculate Virgin, we trustingly ask Thee to glorify Thy faithful servant by granting us through her intercession, if such be Thy holy will, this grace, this cure, etc..., and may this favour incline us to follow the examples and imitate the virtues of her whose memory we revere.

Ave Maria. — O Mary, conceived without sin.

With the authorization of the Ordinary of Montreal, April 10, 1962. No 509

Persons who obtain favours after prayers offered for the glorification of the servant of God are requested to inform the Motherhouse of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, 2900 Saint Catherine Road, Cote des Neiges, Montreal (26).

Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

CANADA

MOTHERHOUSE, 2900 St. Catherine Road,
Cote des Neiges, Montreal 26
NOVITIATE, Pont Viau, Montreal 40
OUTREMONT, 314 St. Catherine Road, Montreal 8
CHINESE HOSPITAL, 112 Lagauchetière St., West, Montreal 1
NOMININGUE, Labelle County, P. Q.
RIMOUSKI, P. Q., 85 St. Germain Street
JOLIETTE P. Q., 750 St. Louis Street
QUEBEC, 1073, St. Cyrille Street West
VANCOUVER, Oriental Hospital, 236 Campbell St.
VANCOUVER, Mount St. Joseph's Hospital,
3080 Prince Edward Street
TROIS RIVIERES, P. Q., 1325 de la Terriere Street
GRANBY, P. Q., 235 Dufferin Street
GRANBY, P. Q., 50 St. Joseph Street
CHICOUTIMI, P. Q., 766 Cenacle Street
SAINTE MARIE, Box 358, Beauce County, P. Q.
SAINT JOHNS, P. Q., 430 Champlain Street
OTTAWA, 30, Goulburn Avenue
PERTH, N. B., P. B. 259
EDMUNDSTON, N. B., 85 Victoria Street

UNITED STATES

MARLBORO, Mass., 207 Pleasant Street

HONG KONG

TAK SUN SCHOOL,
103 Austin Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong
MOUNT GOOD HOPE SCHOOL,
Clear Water Bay Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong

TAIWAN

KUANHSI, 83 Cheng I Lu, Hsinshu Hsien,
Taiwan, Republic of China
SHIH KUANG TSE, Hsinchu Hsien,
Taiwan, Republic of China
TAIPEI, 363, An Tung Chieh, Taiwan, Republic of China
SUAO, 36 Chung Cheng Rd., Suao Ilan Hsien,
Taiwan, Republic of China
HSINCHU CITY, Cheng Mou Yuen, Choei Yuen chiai no 49,
Koang Fou Li

JAPAN

KORIYAMA, 96 Toramaru, Koriyama shi, Fukushima ken
WAKAMATSU, 480, Sakae machi, Aizu Wakamatsu
TOKYO, 108-4 cho me, Fukazawa cho, Setagaya ku

ITALY

ROME, via Giacinto Carini, 8

MADAGASCAR

MORONDAVA, Madagascar
AMBOHIBARY, Sambaina, Madagascar
ANTSIRABE, St. Thérèse's Mahazoarivo Parish
TANANARIVO, Tsaramasay
MAHABO, via Morondava

PERU

PUCALLPA.
LIMA, Escuela Maria de la Providencia
Napo y Centenario, Azcona (Brena)

GUATEMALA

TOTONICAPAN, Colegio P. Betancourt, Guatemala, A.C.

BOLIVIA

SANTA CRUZ, Cardinal Cushing Business College,
Calle Lemoine, Casilla 70
COCHABAMBA, Academia Comercia, Calle Oruro No. 3403,
Casilla 1667
IRUPANA, Hospital Nuestra Senora de la Providencia,
Irupana, Sud Yungas
LA PAZ, Academia Santa Rita,
Calles Juan Granier y Entre Rios, casilla 769

CHILE

ANCUD, Colegio Inmaculada Concepcion, Calle Errazuriz

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

MANILA, Immaculate Conception Anglo Chinese Academy,
General Luna St., Intramuros
MANILA, 2212 S. del Rosario St., Tondo
SAN JUAN, Little Baguio, Rizal
LAS PINAS, Rizal
MATI, Davao Province
DAVAO City, Our Lady of Good Counsel Hall, Florentino Torres St.
PADADA, Davao Province
BAGUIO City, 11, Paedal, Box 83

WEST INDIES

LES CAYES, Haiti
LES COTEAUX, Haiti
ROCHE A BATEAU, Haiti
PORT SALUT, Haiti
CAMP PERRIN, Haiti
MIREBALAIS, Haiti
LIMBE, Haiti
CAP HAITIEN, Haiti
CHANTAL, Haiti
TROU DU NORD, Haiti
PORT AU PRINCE, Orphanage, Cité No. 2, Haiti
PORT AU PRINCE, Novitiate, Cité No. 2, Haiti
CROIX DES BOUQUETS, Haiti
DESCHAPELLES, Albert Schweitzer Hospital
P. B. No. 4, Saint Marc, Haiti
LA BOULE, Haiti
HINCHE, Haiti

COLON, Province of Matanzas, Cuba

AFRICA

KATETE, St. Theresa's Parish, Champira P. O., Malawi, C. Africa
MZAMBAZI, St. John's Parish, Eutini P. O., Malawi, C. Africa
RUMPI, St. Patrick's Parish, Rumpi P. O., Malawi, C. Africa
KARONGA, St. Mary's Parish, Karonga P. O., Malawi, C. Africa
KASEYE, St. Michael's Parish, Fort Hill, P. O. Box 99, Malawi,
Central Africa
NKATA BAY, Nkata Bay, P. O. Box 9, Malawi, C. Africa
MZUZU, Mzuzu P. O. Box 24, Malawi, C. Africa
FORT JAMESON, P. O. Box 107, Zambia, C. Africa
KANYANGA, Lundazi, P. O., Zambia, C. Africa
NYIMBA, Sacred Heart Hospital, Zambia, C. Africa
CIKUNGU, Kazimuli, P. O., Zambia, C. Africa

