

THE PRECURSOR

September — October 1967



CHRISTIAN PAVILION PRAYER

*Lord Jesus Christ,
Light shining in the darkness,
You have shared the life of man in his world.*

*Faithful to your prayer for unity,
We, Your disciples and Your brothers,
By the grace of Your spirit,
Wish to give to the world Your message of hope.*

*By Your coming and Your presence
You have created a new world
Into which You have called us to live.*

*May our pavilion proclaim this good news
And guide men in their search for God.*

OUR COVER :

Colourful spot on Expo grounds close to
Pavilions of Monaco, Haiti, and France.

Photo : Sister Gisèle Villemure, M.I.C.

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Intellectual and artistic life

Under its theme *Terre des Hommes* (Man and his World), taken from the title of a book by the French author and aviator Antoine de Saint Exupéry, Expo 67 presents a dynamic illustration of tourism on a gigantic scale. Between April 28 and October 27, 1967, millions of tourists will pour into our fair city of Montreal, lured by Canada's spectacular world's exhibition. What a unique occasion for Canadians of every faith and origin to enter into dialogue, first with one another, then with the people of the 70 nations they will welcome to Expo 67!

The year 1967 will also be highlighted by another theme as International Tourist Year (designated by the United Nations General Assembly). "Over 115 million tourists, 180 million air passengers in 110 countries..." These figures published by the Unesco Courier for the year 1965 manifest the increasing importance assumed by international tourism.

Thanks to the availability of cheaper transportation fares and to the appearance of faster and more

convenient means of transport, tourism is no longer the prerogative of a small minority, at least as far as countries with a high standard of living are concerned. According to recent travelling agencies' statistics, it is increasing by about 15 per cent in relation with a 10 per cent increase in family income.

This phenomenon gives rise to certain reactions registering surprise, admiration, interest, indifference, snobism, or criticism. To us, Christians, the rise of tourism opens up new vistas of apostolic possibilities, new means of working at the achievement of Christian unity.

Migratory instinct or spiritual quest?

Casting a backward glance at the history of mankind through the ages, we find that in all civilizations and at all historical epochs, vagrant souls lived who knew the mysterious torment of a call to explore the unknown. The great migrations of mankind have peopled the planet; dispersions and deportations have blended the divers elements of human society.

Who knows? The touristic phenomenon of our times may be the reawakening of the old migratory instinct... But, a sounder appreciation seems to be that offered by Rev. F. de Dainville, S.J. in *Tourisme et Pastorale*, "The movement which launches masses upon the roads today is more than anything else, perhaps, a quest for the Infinite." Claudel, for his part, saw in the millions of tourists swarming to holiday resorts everywhere "pilgrims unawares" who pray to God in the desert or who sing a sort of wordless psalm, in the depths of their soul, before a glorious sunset, or an enchanting landscape."

Tourism can surely be a "sign" reminding man that life, here below, is a journey to the Father's House. It helps him remember that he is essentially a *viator*, a wayfarer. Can it not, moreover, preserve him from the temptation of clinging to this world's goods as to an ultimate reality?

Acting as a leaven

In an allocution delivered to participants in the first assembly of the International Office of Social Tourism, Pope Paul VI underlined the benefits derived from tourism: "The first fruit of these multiple relations among men of all countries is the discovery of what is common to all in the midst of diversity... By drawing peoples and classes closer together, tourism manifests the rich diversity of the family of man. It is therefore an irreplaceable means of culture and of humanism. While abating prejudices, it enables us to respect one another, to discover our mutual riches."

APOSTOLIC ASPECTS OF TOURISM

The desire of the Good Shepherd is to search until His sheep have been found... Such also is the attitude of the Church who, never taken by surprise, serenely searches for new ways in the new world called forth by tourism. Such also should be the attitude of the tourist.

Mgr. Etchegaray





Photo : Montreal Municipal Office of Tourism

Montreal hems in the cathedral.

If Saint Paul were living today, would he not find that tourism is a "door" opened to facilitate the carrying of the Message? After all, the first seeding of the Christian faith was done chiefly by travellers, humble men and women who spread the Glad Tidings as they trudged along Roman routes overland from Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, to Greece and to Rome.

According to the teaching of Vatican II "each individual layman must stand before the world as

a witness to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus and as a sign that God lives. As a body and individually the laity must do their part to nourish the world with spiritual fruits... In a word, what the soul is to the body let Christians be to the world" (Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, no. 38).

As Christians of modern times, our own concern must be, as we travel from one place to another, to carry everywhere the fragrance of Christ. How-



Filipina tourist. Montral University in the background.

ever, a certain preparation is required if our ignorance of and our indifference to mentalities other than those with which we are familiar are to be transmuted into warmhearted consideration and affectionate interest.

In a delightful little book, *Les Chemins de l'homme*, Claire Lucques remarks that "the indispensable preparation for every kind of tourism is delicacy of feeling, uprightness of mind, and perception of judgment enabling us to adapt ourselves to men, things, events, and human institutions, all of which are transitory figures of divine Providence." Another modern author avers: "We must take the time and the trouble to really and truly meet others, to accept them as brothers, to share with them the Bread of Truth. Thus will the miracle wrought of yore on the road to Emmaus be renewed at each touristic halting-place" (Mgr. R. Etchegaray in *Tourisme et Pastorale*).

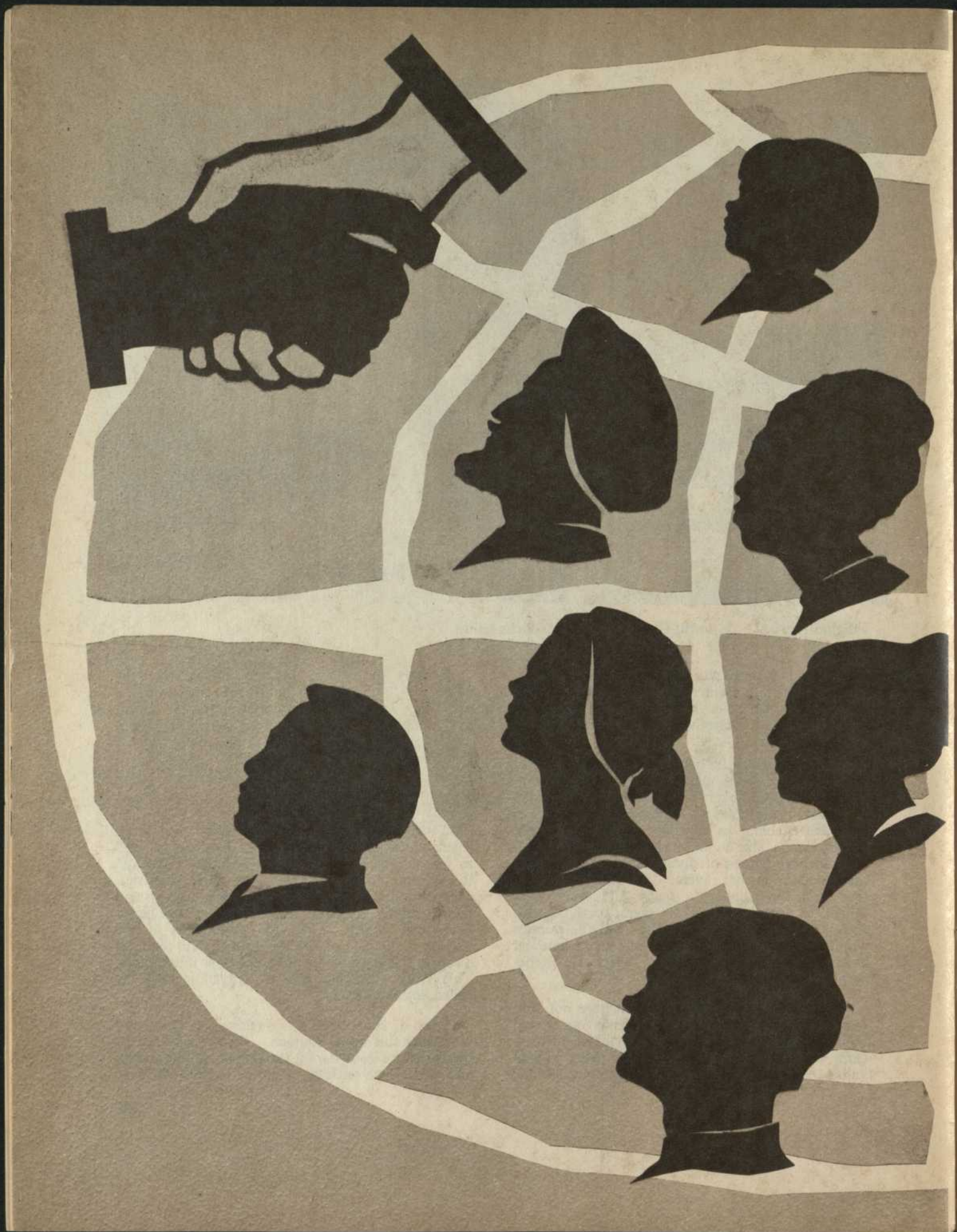
The countries visited by tourists are not museums. They are the homes of men living within their boundaries, deeply rooted in their history. Ours to discover and appreciate their human values, to enter into friendly communication.

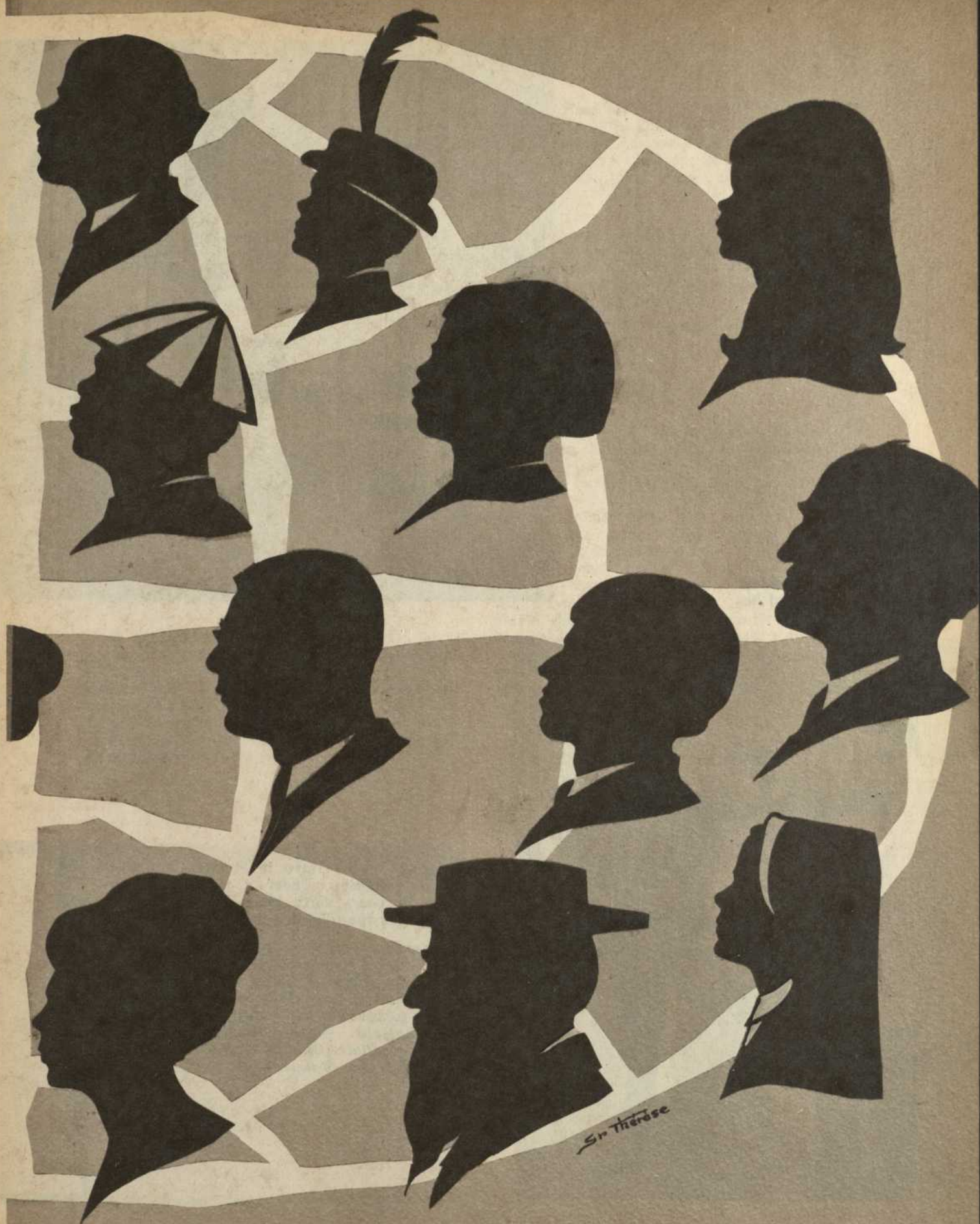
Respect for others, genuine interest in their pattern of living constitute a highly enriching experience. Are we not too often prone to forget the human solidarity and comprehension which creates the brotherhood of men, all children of the same heavenly Father?

Educational value

Tourism should be considered more as a privileged educational medium for individuals as well as for nations than as a mere pastime. Through it we come to know other men, their countries, their customs, their civilizations, their history and their manner of living which differ according to lands and climes. Even the panoramas of the various countries we travel through will help us discover the spirit which animates their inhabitants. This truly Christian way of travelling may be called social tourism.

Expo 67 constitutes a marvelous opportunity of practising this social tourism. Besides offering to thousands of tourists the attraction of diversified and wholesome entertainment, it enables them to





Universal brotherhood
marks "Man and his
world".



Photograph of the Mayor of Montreal's original card of greetings. Under a transparent medallion, it bears earth taken from Expo site and carries the following message :

This is earth taken from the two islands where seventy-five nations are united in the 1967 world exhibition. The theme of Expo 67, "Man and his World", is an affirmation of our faith in universal brotherhood based on goodwill and love. May these islands bring joy to all peoples. And may this token of friendship become a good luck charm for those who will keep it and for those dear to them.

effect discoveries of more than one kind. In order to make the most of this opportunity, we must endeavour to discern the total significance of the event, to transcend its immediate and individual interest, to explore new vistas, to welcome men and events as they are.

Montreal will, for a short while, be the rendez-vous of universal culture. In each of the 16 Theme pavilions we will be able to enjoy dramatic visual presentations of the effects of environment on man and of his efforts to change that environment in order to realize his aspirations. While admiring the resources placed at our disposal by an all wise Providence we should recall that "as men, we are the precious gems around which everything is disposed."

Within the Christian Pavilion will be found quiet spots conducive to serene contemplation for those who aspire to commune with their Father and Creator. For, as the eminent author Alexis Carrel once said, "man feels that this world, no matter how magnificent, is powerless to satisfy his secret yearnings. Within its boundaries he will forever be as a stranger in a foreign land."

Tourism and peace

In his address to participants in the United Nations Conference on tourism — August 31, 1963, His Holiness Pope Paul VI made an interesting allusion to the role tourism might play in our troubled world: "In an ancient chronicle of the time when knighthood was in flower, we read that two knights once engaged in a duel over the hand of a young damsel who was the horrified witness of their furious

struggle. Unable to stand this sight any longer, she mounted one of the knights' horses and took flight. This is somehow the symbol of civilization which flees, while those who want to woo her engage in pitched battle. War causes civilization to take flight.

"But what happened when the struggling knights noticed that the girl had gone? They interrupted their duel and, suddenly reconciled in noble knightly fashion, rode off together on the same horse to catch up with the fleeing one.

"The horse which all may ride as good friends is tourism..."

Lady of the Way

Among Rome's Marian shrines, there is one which bears the significant name of Our Lady of the Way. We may at times be tempted to think of Mary, the humble Virgin Mother, as living a sheltered life, without ever getting involved in the burning issues of her times. The contrary is true. She was truly Lady of the Way from the day of the Visitation when she hastened over the hills of Judea, living tabernacle, carrying Christ to the family of Zachary. Later, she trudged over the long road from Nazareth to Bethlehem. From the city of David, she carried her divine Son into the motley confusion of Egypt. After her return from exile, we find her joining the yearly Passover caravans making their way to Jerusalem and its Temple. During Christ's public life, she followed him in his peregrinations throughout Palestine.

After her Son's ascension into heaven, Mary took the road again this time in company with John. Both were headed for exile in distant Ephesus. Wherever she went, Our Lady of the Way brought Christ, for her mission was and is to be the greatest Christ-bearer of all times.

It is not difficult to apply this mission of Mary to the role of tourists in the modern world. They also are called upon to be Christ-bearers. How many thousands hope for something that will fill the emptiness of their souls! This something the Christian tourist can give by the testimony of a life, bearing the stamp of Christ-like behaviour.

Sister Marie de la Redemption, M.I.C.





by Sister Aline Dumas, M.I.C.

PAX ROMANA ASIAN SEMINAR

In this modern world always in quest of unity, each form of international collaboration takes on added importance. Pax Romana the first to recognize, 46 years ago, the Church's possibilities of action, made good every opportunity to promote them. This community which remains undivided by racial problems, by national prestige, by political social, or economic disagreements, is closely united in one and the same concept of the world and of life, through faith, hope, and love of Christ.

The third Pax Romana Asian Seminar was held in Hong Kong, from February 12 to 16. Main theme of Seminar discussions was, "Contribution of Asian Christians to nation building." During five days, met and fraternized in Hong Kong delegates from: India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, South VietNam, Taiwan, and Thailand. Together they discussed their problems and exchanged their views on various subjects such as cultural integration, civic awareness and commitment, political interests of Christians in Asia... Even the acknowledgment of certain differences became a means of rapprochement between delegates.

The main theme selected for the seminar called for deep and serious study, involving the responsibility of Pax Romana members and the future behaviour of participants desirous of entering wholeheartedly into the spirit of Vatican II.

Presiding the opening of the seminar, Bishop L. Bianchi said that the aspirations of peoples

everywhere were clearly expressed in the social doctrine of the Church whose basic principles were laid by Christ Jesus. These principles, he added, have been developed and adapted to modern conditions of living. Bishop Bianchi emphasized his declarations by frequent quotations from *Pacem in Terris*, *Mater et Magistra*, and *Gaudium et Spes*.

Mr. G. Strasser, Pax Romana Secretary General, then outlined the programme and themes to be developed during the seminar. A brief and significant introduction launched the intensive activities of the various groups. The dialogue between participants proved valuable from several points of view.

Present at the seminar as guest participant, I made the following resume for your intentions, dear readers of *The Precursor*.

Adaptation was a pivot term that kept recurring in all discussions. As the majority of delegates pointed out, Christianity in Asia is still too often considered as a Western religion. There is a real need



Photos : Catholic Press Bureau, Hong Kong

for Christian adaptation to Eastern culture. Christianity must be presented in terms common to the people of a region. To this effect, an autochthonous clergy certainly carries weighty influence.

As regards the solution to the difficulties of spreading faith in countries where Christians are a minority, the delegates were of the opinion that the Church should not wait for the people to come to

her, but that she should integrate herself in the life of the people. Christians should get rid of their minority feeling and prove willing to persist and to suffer.

Every individual should ask himself how far he is committed to society, one of the lecturers suggested. Christianity is not a way of life; it is life. Each Christian should take to heart to translate



Participants in Pax Romana Seminar.

the gospels into his actions, to reflect Christ in his community. Although meaningless or harmful customs ought to be discarded, wholesome values should be carefully preserved and nurtured.

Participants observed, after a number of discussions, that certain major difficulties and problems were the same everywhere. For instance, students of Indonesia and of Thailand are noted for their dynamism. Thai students are studying their native culture so as to render their faith incarnate within its bounds and help their people truly understand Christianity. In contrast, most Hong Kong students are reported to be busy more particularly in saving their own soul! Many have no idea of a social Church. Moreover, Hong Kong students are apparently only slightly concerned about other religions.

Much time was given to a close study of the Asian educational system. Catholic schools are, in general, highly appreciated in Asian communities. In addition to providing high academic standards, they place stronger emphasis on morality than do the public schools. However, the indifference of the students regarding religious principles as taught in these institutions is to be deplored.

The question of standardisation of school fees also came in for animated discussion. Given the financial situation of many Christian educational establishments, the danger exists that they may cater to the upper and middle classes of society and neglect the masses. Tied down by regulations, curricula, lack of resources, they are liable to lose sight of their initial aims and to succumb to the myth of high standards. The Ceylonese delegate suggested that school fees be collected jointly and equally distributed in order to avoid class distinction.

Emphasis was laid on the fact that the Church requires much from Asian intellectuals whose preparation opens up vast possibilities for the lay apostolate. It is the duty of Asian Christian graduates to diffuse the Christian spirit in the realm of ideas and culture, and in the professions. In the face of existing social and economic conditions in the greater part of Asia, they must make it their duty to contribute according to their capabilities to the amelioration of these conditions in a spirit of pure Christian charity. Those who are competent to take a more active part in politics should be en-

couraged to do so, not to win prestige and honour, but in the right idea of service.

Another important aspect of the role of the Catholic in Asia is ecumenical activity understood as an effort to enter into dialogue with other Christians, a dialogue which until now, has taken place mainly at the level of the clergy. This is understandable, dialogue involving primarily theological matters beyond the competence of the ordinary layman. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to promote exchanges at the level of the laity. Dialogue with non-Christians is as important as ecumenical activity, particularly in the Asian context where the majority of the population is non-Christian. The approach ought to be not one of proselytisation but of genuine Christian witness. In the spirit of Vatican II, it is necessary to study other religions so as to understand them better.

It is essential, in the light of the status given to the laity as an integral part of the people of God, that clergy and laity work together. The priest should relinquish secondary functions as soon as the situation warrants it. There exists a need for a dialogue wherein clergy and laity appreciate and respect each other's functions. The presence of fervent, competent believers should intensify the Christian vitality of their respective milieu. Asian Christians have as fundamental task to bear witness to Christ in an approach understandable to the Asian mind. A prerequisite of the type of witness demanded is a sound formation, doctrinal, professional, and apostolic, by study, reflection, and action. Hence, on the one hand, there is a need for courses in theology of the Church in the modern world, in comparative religion, in indigenous culture, in social sciences, and in leadership; on the other hand exists the necessity of involvement in intellectual, cultural, and professional activities, social service, and civic and political affairs.

A thanksgiving Mass for the third Pax Romana Asian Seminar was celebrated at the cathedral by Reverend P. Morris, S.J., spiritual adviser to the Hong Kong Pax Romana Catholic Graduate Society. He was assisted by Reverend J. Kasyr, a delegate from Japan, and Reverend Augustine Rah from Korea, and Reverend Pham Van Hoi from VietNam. This in itself was an inspiring symbol of unity.

MAKING CONTACTS in JAPAN

by Sister Michelle-du-Sacré-Cœur, M.I.C.

The torrid weather of the summer months had subsided. September was here again in a glory of crimson hued maple leaves and feathery *susuki*. It was time for me to return to my Japanese language classes. As I waited for the big beige-and-red Tokyo Eki bus, one fine autumn morning, I envied the groups of secondary and high school students their facility in speaking that most difficult of languages, at least to us Westerners.

At every stop, people kept on pouring into the bus, until we were as packed as peas in a pod. A high school student unintentionally bumped against me, as she tried to keep her balance while holding on to her bulging school bag. Seeing her predicament, I offered to take the bag upon my knees. She bowed and shyly murmured "*Arigato gosaimasu*, Thank you", as I relieved her of her burden. I would have liked to engage a conversation, but a crowded bus was not the place to try my halting Japanese. We had not exchanged a word when the bus jolted to a stop and both of us alighted. Again the girl bowed her thanks, Japanese fashion, then vanished into the groups of milling students.

Was it mere coincidence? In the days that followed, it often happened that the girl and I rode the same bus. She stood there, casting furtive glances at me as I offered to carry her bag. These repeated contacts wove tenuous, intangible links between us.

Some time later, at one of our evening recreations, Sister Marie Annunciata who was making preparations for the kindergarten annual bazar offered me a few tickets to be distributed a-

mong my acquaintances. Immediately, my thoughts turned to my young fellow passenger on the bus. Maybe she would appreciate having a ticket... I hesitated, however. After all, I knew precious little about her, since all this time we had merely





exchanged courtesies. Finally I decided that the best thing to do was to write her a note of explanation, slip it into an envelope with the ticket, and place it in her hands when next I met her. I took my finest Japanese brushes and wrote the following note in simple Japanese characters:

You are perhaps wondering who this Sister is who takes the bus at the same time as you do every day... Allow me to introduce myself. I am a Catholic missionary. We are having a bazar at our house next Sunday. Would you like to come?

The next morning, when my friend boarded the bus, I held out my hand for her schoolbag as usual and gave her the note. She slit open the envelope, rapidly cast an eye over the contents, then bowing low acknowledged my invitation with a murmured, "Osore irimasu, much obliged."

On Sunday afternoon, she came to the convent bearing an envelope addressed to my name. Its contents were as follows:

Thank you for your kind note. How happy I was when you gave it to me! When I first met you, I was puzzled because I felt so happy, although you did not speak to me. Now I know that the obliging Sister I meet every

morning on my way to school is like a sunbeam of the gods on my way. My name is Machiko Aogi. I would like to meet you more directly and to learn about the God who sent you to Japan as a missionary. I feel sure He sent you. Am I mistaken?

My heart overflowed with happiness as I read these lines. Surely the grace of Our Lord was beginning to illuminate the heart of this young girl. Since then, Machiko has come to our house every Sunday for a doctrine lesson.

This little incident showed me how true were the words of Professor Suzuki, a non-Christian research assistant in Religion, regarding the reaction of Japanese students to Christianity: "The extremely high number of those who have favourable feelings — or at least neutral ones — towards Christianity is most encouraging... It means that at least 80 per cent of Japan's students of high school... are intellectually and emotionally prepared to have a further look at Christianity should the occasion arise, say through contact with a Christian, or a priest..."

Dear readers, please help us through your prayerful co-operation hasten the day when this "before long" will be realized for the greater glory of our dear Saviour.

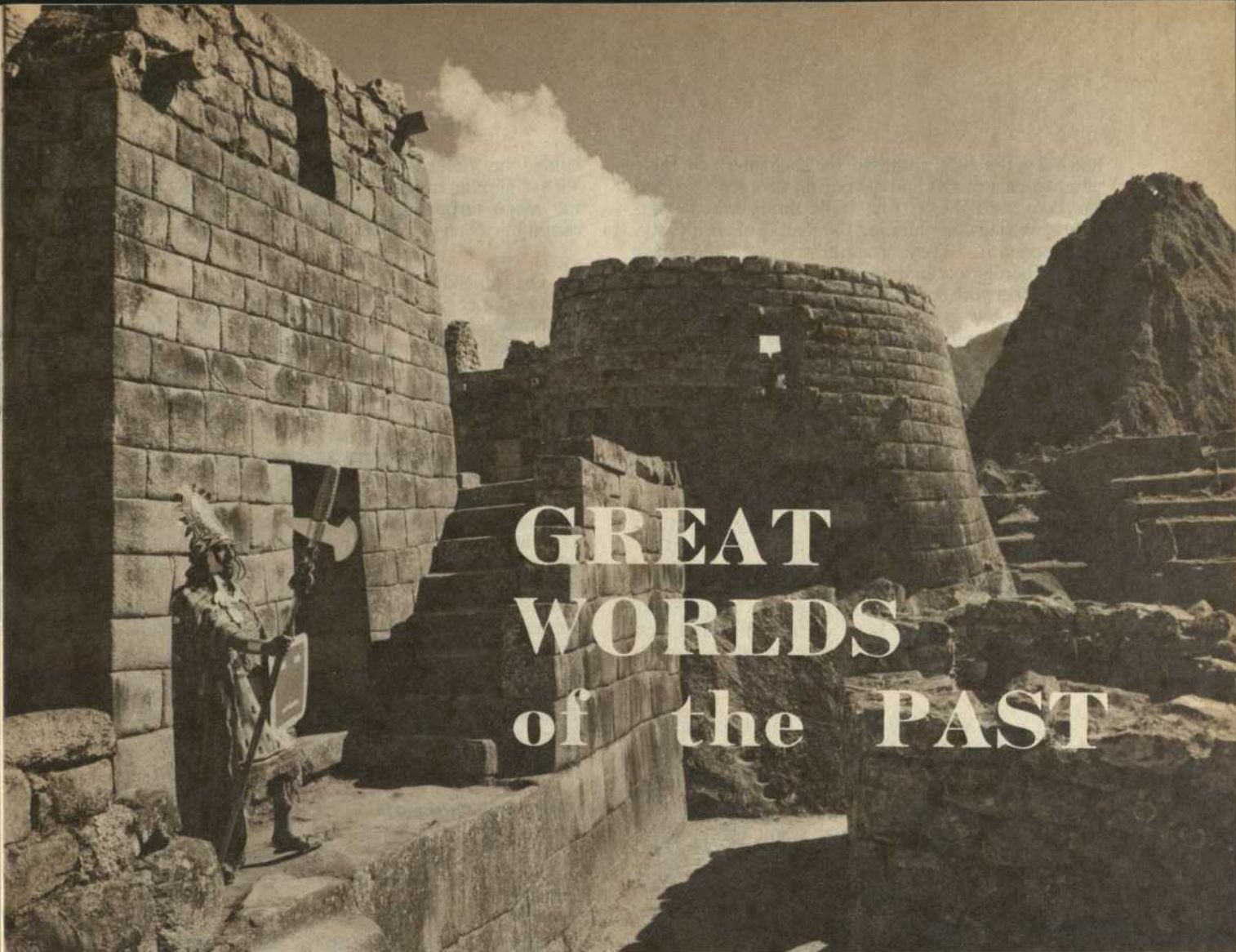


Photo : Canadian Pacific

by Sister Gabrielle Ouimet, M.I.C.

Among the various peoples who elaborated the great pre-Columbian civilizations, the two most worthy of mention are the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in Peru.

These great worlds of the past have left traces of mysterious beauty, of splendour and of shadow towards which none can remain indifferent. Einstein once wrote that "no beauty can surpass the beauty of the mysterious."

In this article, I will simply draw a few unlooked-for analogies between these two Indian nations, so distant one from the other. Surprisingly enough,

their form of life and the manifestations of their character disclose an astounding unity, a unity which may partly be explained if we recall that they developed in a similar environment and at a similar epoch.

Space and time

Coming from the vast northern deserts, at the outset of the thirteenth century, a hardy tribe appeared in what is now Mexican territory. These nomad hunters later called the Aztecs, settled down in the heart of the central valley, on the small islands dotting Lake Texcoco. In this desolate region they

had seen the sign promised by their god: an eagle perched on a cactus and devouring a serpent. Upon the lake, the tribe at first built flimsy wattle-and-daub dwellings surrounding the temple of their deity, Uitzilopochtli. They gradually augmented their lands, thanks to *chinampa* agriculture, a process of large wickerwork, oval baskets anchored with staves to the shallow bottom of the lake and filled with earth. Within fifty years, they had thus built up their famed capital city of Tenochtitlan. Thanks to a shrewd play of alliances, marriages, and conquests, the tribe grew in power and in prestige. Such was the origin, at once humble and wonderful, of one of the greatest civilizations of the New World.

When Cortes, upon his arrival in Mexico, visited the city as a guest accompanied by Emperor Montezuma, he admired its splendid proportions, its avenues broad enough for eight horsemen to ride abreast, its sumptuous palaces, and its magnificent temples. How hard it is for us to understand how the conqueror of Mexico could have allowed such splendour to be wantonly destroyed in 1521!

Ten years after the conquest and the annihilation of Tenochtitlan, the stupendous Inca empire collapsed in its turn under the attacks of another band of Spanish adventurers. However, these pre-Columbian civilizations were too advanced and too deeply rooted to be easily swept away. Just as Central Mexico still bears the stamp of Aztec culture, modern Peru aspires to a future on a scale with its glorious past.

That such a grandiose civilization could have evolved and developed in Peru seems less surprising than that the Aztec culture could have flourished on the upper Mexican plateau. Nonetheless, through a kind of paradox, this last culture is better known to us than that of Peru. As the Incas possessed no system of writing, not even the Aztec pictorial, their history can be recalled only upon the faith of Spanish relations and of the enigmatic vestiges which remain.

While the Aztecs explained the foundation of their city by a unique legend, the Incas enhanced the story of their origins by numerous fables. One Indian version relates that some bearded men in white apparel appeared on an island situated on Lake Titicaca. Eventually, these men became the leaders of a tribe, thus founding the dynasty of the Incas. In his book, *The Conquest of Peru*, Prescott observes that this legend resembles that of the Aztec deity Quetzalcoatl, also white and bearded, who

landed on the eastern coast of Mexico, invested with a similar mission. Such a convergence is all the more surprising that there was no means of communication between the two nations.

The official history of the Inca began with Manco-Capac, in the picturesque valley of the Urubamba, near Cuzco, towards A. D. 1000. Manco Capac had as successor, according to the Indian chronology, Sinchi Roca. Capable and energetic leaders followed who pursued conquests in such a way that with Huayna Capac (1485-1525), the Inca empire reached its finest flower. Then tragedy struck. Pizarro, taking advantage of the rivalities existing between the two brothers Hascar and Atahualpa, heirs to Emperor Huayna Capac, swooped down upon the country and effected its conquest. This feat of arms was in a sense less remarkable than the conquest of Mexico, for Pizarro had learnt the manoeuvres of war at first hand from his leader, Cortes, and most of the time did but follow his tactics. Nevertheless, even after four centuries past, we still wonder how a handful of Spaniards, e.g., 164 men, could have overthrown the most powerful Andean civilization. This is another historical paradox which gives Spanish war chronicles of the epoch the appearance of a saga.

Man and habitat

It is impossible to consider the Andean Indian outside of his environment which is one of awesome grandeur.

Picture a narrow strip of land hemmed in through its whole extent by a range of colossal mountains which advances from the Strait of Magellan reaching its highest elevation about the seventeenth degree south, and after crossing the line gradually dwindles into low rolling hills as it enters the Isthmus of Panama. This is the habitat of the Indian.

The parallel Cordilleras are linked to each other by chains or knots less considerable in height, forming natural frontiers between them. The greatest of these is Lake Titicaca, set within a ring of snowy peaks. Cuzco, heart of the Inca empire, lies at an altitude of 11,007 feet, in the median zone.

Mexico, centre of Aztec civilization is also situated in the median zone. The most remarkable feature in the topography of the land is the great chain of the Rocky Mountains, continuation of the South American Cordillera, which forms vast eleva-

ted plateaux. In the vicinity of the twentieth degree of latitude, stretches the region of the lakes where the Aztecs hand-fashioned their fabulous city of Tenochtitlan.

Courageous and patient in the face of hardships, these two Indian peoples presented certain analogous physical traits: olive-brown skin, broad head (broader among the Incas) thick-set limbs, dark eyes lidded with the epicanthic fold, and abundant coarse black hair. A hooked nose rendered Aztec features still more prominent. The men of both nations were relatively beardless, face hair being deemed objectionable. They could assume a fierce mien or again an air of great dignity, an expression they carried into battle or at the council board.

Rhythm of life

Meals in Peru and in Mexico were usually very frugal, maize being the base food. In addition, a certain number of cultivated plants, fruit, poultry, frogs, edible worms gave variety to the menu. The favourite beverage was the *chicha*, a light beer prepared from corn. In all families, from the noblest to the poorest, the culinary day began and ended with corn. Perhaps no other single plant in history played such a prominent role in the development of culture.

DRESS.—Mexican and Peruvian garments for the common man differed but little. Men wore the loincloth, a kind of sash passed between the legs and brought about the waist, its two ends hanging in front and back, and the mantle, a rectangular piece of cloth tied over one shoulder. These were made from the coarse fibres of the maguey. Woman's dress, among the common people, consisted of an underskirt of ankle length, often superbly embroidered with various designs. Over this she wore, when abroad, a rectangular poncho-like dress. The wearing of apparel or of jewelry was restricted to the upper classes; a man of the common who assumed dress or ornaments used by nobles incurred the death penalty.

On the Andean plateau, the cut and colour of the garments was much the same for men as for women. Men wore trousers, a sort of sleeveless shirt resembling a sack with holes cut for the head and for the arms, and a brown cape knotted in front. Women dressed in an ankle-length tunic and a grey mantle, held in front with a large pin.

People were forbidden to effect any change in their clothing without the authorization of hierarchical superiors. The Incas dressed more elaborately, according as tradition demanded.

HOUSING.—Like everything else, housing was a communal affair. The type of house built depended on what the man was and where he was. Mexicans used adobe bricks for the walls and thatch for the roof. Furnishings consisted in mats, chests, and a few crude chairs or benches. Twice a year, in Peru, governmental officials inspected the simple dwellings of the common people. These dwellings were windowless, and their one opening was so low, that it looked like an oven door. While the Peruvian house admitted of no decoration, not even exterior, the Mexican house was surrounded by gardens full of flowers. The Mexicans lived mostly outside, in the warm sunshine. Their city dazzled the conquistadores who saw it as a vision of fresh verdure, sparkling water, and fragrant flowers.

MARRIAGE.—Marriage customs in the Andes were, in pre-Columbian times, chiefly governed by economic factors. The marriage ceremony itself was purely administrative. Under the influence of the imperial system, endogamy—marriage within one's group or tribe, replaced exogamy or marriage between members of different clans or tribes. The supreme Inca married his own sister, in order to secure an heir of his own pure heaven-born race. Besides, he entertained a host of concubines. Nobles were allowed to have many wives, but never in as great number as the Inca.

No subject of the Inca was free to select a wife outside of his own clan, and the consent of the parents was required for the validity of the marriage. The preference of the parties was also to be taken into account but, considering the barriers imposed, this must have been within rather whimsical limits. Regarding the interference of the Inca government with regard to the most intimate aspects of domestic life, Prescott remarks: "No Peruvian was too low for the fostering vigilance of the government. None was so high that he was not made to feel his dependence upon it in every act of his life... His hopes, his joys, his sorrows, the tenderest sympathies of his nature which would most naturally shrink from observation, were all to be regulated by law. He was not allowed even to be happy in his own way. The government of the Incas was the mildest but the most searching of despotisms." Once contracted, marriage was held



Archeological teams have unearthed ruins which allow us a glimpse into the great worlds of the past. Photos :





Canadian Pacific



to be binding. Repudiation applied merely to concubines; adultery incurred capital punishment.

The Mexican matrimonial system, less rigid than the Peruvian, was a sort of compromise between monogamy and polygamy. Contrary to what was practised in Peru, marriage in Mexico was outside the clan, for all clan members were considered to be of the same blood. It was symbolized by the tying together of the edges of the cloaks of bride and groom. There was practically no question of divorce in Aztec lands although tribunals authorized it as a rule. In this society, there was no prohibition against bachelors as there was among the Inca.

EDUCATION.—The attitude of the Inca government towards popular education is best expressed by a favourite maxim of Tupac Inca Yupanqui, one of the most renowned of Peruvian sovereigns. "Science," he said, "is not intended for the common people, but for those of noble blood. Persons of low degree are only puffed up by it and rendered vain and arrogant." Only the children born of noble families enjoyed the benefits of education. They were placed under the direction of *amautas*, or "wise men" who taught them to speak the beautiful Quechua dialect with purity and elegance, to make use of the mysterious science of the *quipus*, to perform the peculiar rites of their religion, to penetrate the laws and principles of administration.

In ancient Mexico, schooling was usually dispensed at the clan house for boys, each clan maintaining a number of schools under the supervision of a teacher. At fifteen, the sons and daughters of Mexican nobles entered the *calmecac* or temple school, while the children of the common people attended a kind of college. In these schools the children learned their own mytho-histories, rituals, glyph writing, geography, rudimental botany... It is worthy of note that in pre-Columbian Mexico, education was compulsory for all.

Nahuatl was the language of the Aztecs, a language which they had borrowed from the Toltecs and the Chichimecs. Clear, plastic, and harmonious, it possessed an extensive vocabulary. Quechua was the dominant language of the Incas who compelled all conquered tribes to speak it in addition to their own tongues. Its vocabulary was rich and abundant.

Like all early writing, Aztec writing was pictographic. Naturally, there was no alphabet to

this system, although the Aztecs did combine series of pictorial elements to convey more or less complicated meanings. The Incas did not possess a proper system of writing, but transmitted their knowledge of geography and of history thanks to relief maps and sketches. Moreover, they used the *quipu* or knots, a contrivance for arithmetical purposes and a sort of mnemonic device to register important facts and events.

The Aztecs used the quinary system of numeration, involving five variables. Surprisingly enough, this nation which considered trade as sacrosanct, remained moneyless, bartering cotton, cloth, obsidian, and copper mirrors, herbs, vegetable salt, etc., against feathers, precious stones, chocolate, rubber... In Peru there never was much exchange of merchandise. Peruvian measures and balances, however, were much more exact than the Mexican.

In the development of craftsmanship the Aztecs, although still living in the stone age, surpassed the Mayas, but were slightly inferior to the Incas. The Peruvian artist, for his part, knew how to solder silver, and how to inlay this metal into other material such as, for instance, shells of various hues.

The only regions where construction reached a high architectural level were Mexico and Peru. Inca technique manifests genuine superiority. In the two countries could be found the same rectangular shape and the same stupendous walls of granite. However, Inca buildings are not as vehemently alive with sculptured figures as those of Mayas. The chief characteristic of Inca architecture was its colossal scale. In both Aztec and Inca cultures, sculpture was closely linked to architecture. Moreover, all their art was purposeful and belonged to religion.

Despite their tyrannical religion, the fifteenth century Aztecs, says Jacques Soustelle, were sensitive to the beauty of flowers, birds, precious stones. Played throughout the Andes, the mournful music of the flute still tells of resigned suffering and of blasted hopes. Baudin remarks that "the rhythmic but unrhymed songs and ditties which the Indians sang at festivals were simple, naive, at times poetical, sometimes martial, often religious. These songs are sung by Andean Indians to this day, and not a harsh note mars their beauty."

Administration

There exists structural concordance between the Mexican and the Peruvian social organization



The Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of Peru pitted their strength against domineering nature and won.

of this period. The Mexican *calpulli* and the Peruvian *ayllu* were the basic cells of administration, chiefs and elders representing the initial form of territorial organization among the Aztecs and the Incas.

Indian housewives were kept busy with cooking, weaving, gardening. Because of the frequency of Aztec conquests, all able-bodied men were subject to instant war call; during the rare intervals of peace, they were often required for communal service. This state of alertness contributed in making them industrious, honest, and dependable. There existed a similar attribution of tasks in Inca society. Were exempted from communal work only the *Yanacuna*, servants of nobles, and the *Acllacuna*, virgins of the sun.

Mexico as well as Peru employed state couriers, running in relays, to transmit messages from the government to the people. In his books on Peru and Mexico, the historian Prescott notes with surprise the identity of this communication system between two nations, so far apart and so different

In the Inca empire, while the masses worked for the community at large, authority was exercised through a highly bureaucratic administration. There was nothing left for the common man to decide, to desire, to foresee. With his council of nobles the Inca was the head, the moving power of an immense collective personality. His government was a communism joined to an aristocratic monarchy. But once the elite of the nation was practically annihilated, at the epoch of the Spanish conquest, the whole splendid structure of the empire collapsed. The Indian was left alone, like a useless part of a dismantled machine.

At the outset, the social organization of the Mexican tribe had been simple and essentially equalitarian. But what a change the sixteenth century was to bring! Mexican society then became intricate, hierarchical. The population was divided into divers categories exercising distinctive functions; on the ruins of the old tribal system rose a mighty city-state with satellite towns. Dominating this splendid edifice was the *tlaloani*, emperor, surrounded by his councillors and high officials. This outline of Mexican hierarchy evokes

the administrative system of the Inca empire. The life of both Mexicans and Peruvians, in its social and material framework, was governed by a powerful ideology dictating duties to be fulfilled, regulating days and nights, year after year, from birth to decease.

While the Aztecs usually treated prisoners in an atrocious fashion, the Incas avoided, on the whole, useless bloodshed and cruelty. With their utilitarian outlook, they preferred lengthy negotiations to immediate declaration of warfare. Why exasperate a people that will have to be reorganized, destroy a country whose resources may be turned to best account, they reasoned... Nothing would have seemed more incomprehensible to their way of thinking than modern warfare with its massive destruction and the systematic annihilation of whole nations.

Religious life

The life of the Aztecs and of the Incas was penetrated by religion from birth to death. From their tenderest years, the paramount importance of the rite was impressed upon them. Religion possessed them entirely, heart and soul.

There was considerable confusion in the list of Aztec gods, as the same divinity could be worshipped under several names by different tribes. However, two divine personalities emerged in importance from the mass of lesser figures: *Uitzilopochtli*, the great tribal god of Mexico, and *Quetzalcoatl*, the god of life and of fertility.

The service of these divinities, the compilation of calendrics, the scrupulous observation of ritual, required a class of specialists who, on certain occasions, practised ceremonial cannibalism. No other aspect of Mexican civilization is as shocking as this, and yet human sacrifice did not appear barbarous in the eyes of the Aztecs. In *L'Amérique précolombienne*, Dorsingang-Smets notes: "Bloody ritual was but the logical consequence of preliminary ideas about man's relations with divinity; at the dawn of creation, the sacrifice of the gods produced the birth of the world... Man's duty was to nourish, in his turn, the gods with his own life. The Aztecs believed that nothing came to life, that nothing endured, save through the blood of sacrificial victims." Of a certainty, the mystique of blood played a more important role in Central America than in Peru.



Granddaughter of the Incas.

Numerous were the gods peopling the Cuzco pantheon. As nearly all American religions, the Inca religion possessed a civilizing hero, Huiracocha, who had some resemblance with the Mexican *Quetzalcoatl*. He was at once creator and sun god.

Aztecs and Mexicans attempted to attain to a certain deism and to propose reverence for an invisible god. In Mexico, the attempt of *Nezahualcoyoll* to bring this enterprise to a head was short-lived: in Peru, that of *Pachacuti* lasted longer but



: Canadian Pacific

finally led to the superposition of a religion of the elite to that of the common people. "The difference between Mexicans and Peruvians lies above all in the fact that a different religious philosophy underlay their solar cult. The Aztecs lived in a passionate worship of a god on whose perennation depended the existence of the world; the Peruvians' cult proceeded from a reasoned institution on which the social order was based." However this may be, among the Aztecs as well as among the Incas, religion was the indispensable framework of the social order and of its various aspects.

Conclusion

In this article, two civilizations and the same eternal problems have been confronted: the mysteries of nature, the enigma of man's origin, the anguish of his destiny. Similar preoccupations have doubtless influenced the convergences noted here. Nevertheless, each kept its own characteristics, hence so many differences.

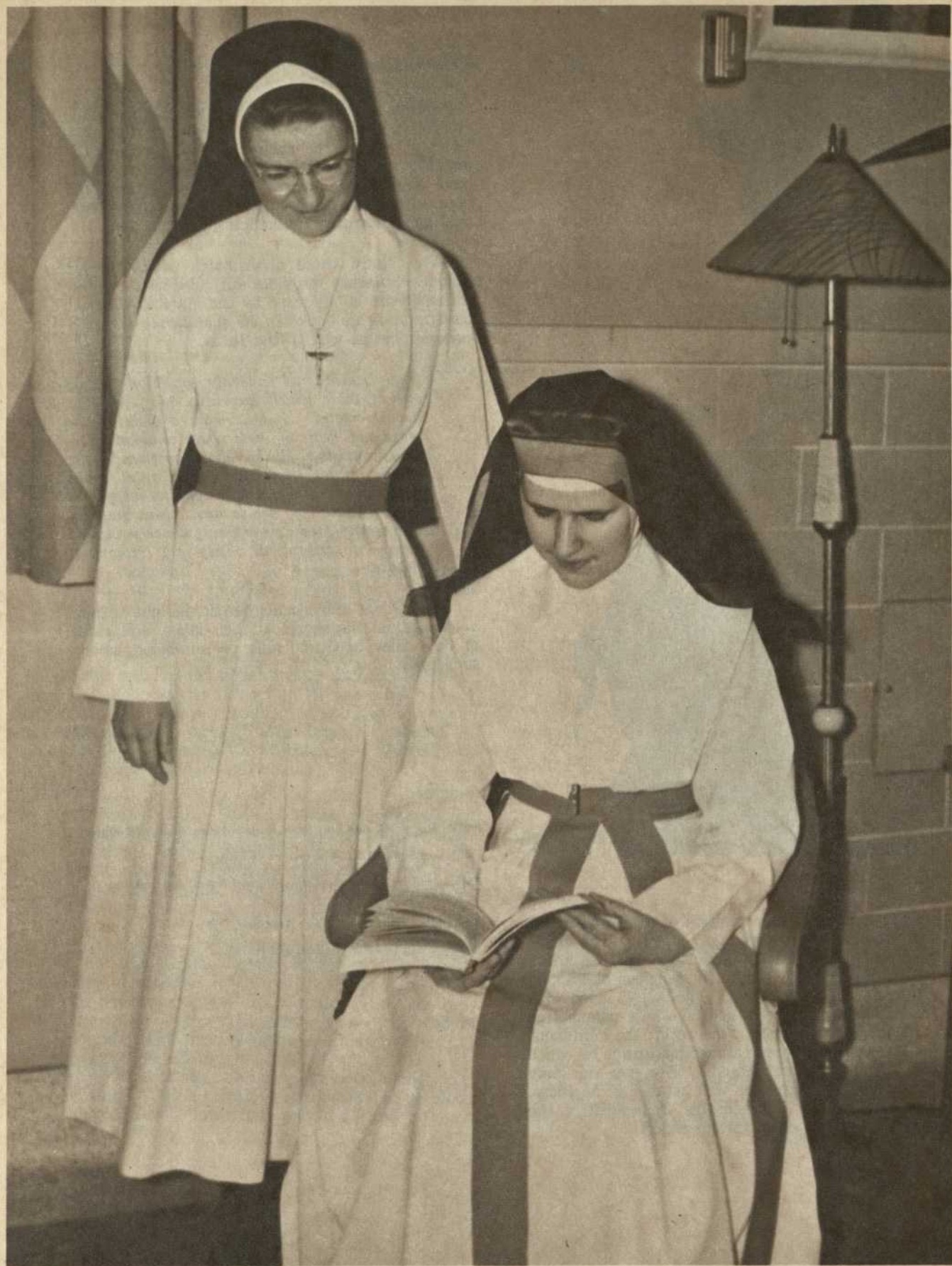
Why study these civilizations of the past? Jacques Soustelle provides an adequate answer. Although he is referring to the Aztecs, the last paragraph of his book, *La vie quotidienne des Aztèques*, applies as well to the Incas.

Their culture, so suddenly annihilated, was one of those which humanity may boast of having created. It must have a place in the mind and heart of those whose common patrimony consists of all the values conceived by our species, in all times and climes; it must take place among our treasures, all the more precious because they are so rare... Men gathered into society produce something which is beyond them — a civilization. They are creators of culture.

The Indians of Tenochtitlan, at the foot of their volcanoes, on the shores of their lakes, and those of the valley of Cuzco may be numbered among such men.

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AGGIORNAMENTO



Dear friends,

Do you recognize, in their "New Look", the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception whom you have so often welcomed into your homes? In the light of Vatican II, they have obeyed the call to adapt their habit to the exigencies of the times in which we live. Pope Paul VI has expressed the wish that, thanks to its simplicity and modesty, the religious habit should ever remain, in compliance with the age-old tradition of the Church, the visible sign of the "total consecration of one's own life to the Lord."

The Precursor therefore, presents you with the «aggiornamento» of the habit of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception so that you may recognize them at a glance when next they call on you. Their habit has been modified — not their role in the mission of the Church. They continue to bear the Glad Tidings to the ends of the earth.

The Editor

ENTRAIDE

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Lately, the Major Superiors of several teaching communities assembled for a convention in Cochabamba, expressed the desire of their respective communities to hold out a helping hand to the cloistered Sisters living in this city.

Acquainted with this project, the 175 students of our commercial college gave it enthusiastic approval. Straightway, they began devising means of providing the material assistance required.

The first thing to do was to contact the cloistered communities themselves in order to make discreet and practical inquiries. Sisters Saint Martial, Jacqueline Abgral, and I took this duty upon ourselves.

Our initial visit was for the Carmelite Monastery which at present houses 13 Bolivian nuns, aged between 20 and 80. They follow the Little Way advocated by Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus.

Next on our list, was the Convent of the Poor Clares whose life bears some resemblance to that of the Carmelites. In Bolivia for a century, this community now numbers 18 Bolivian and 4 Columbian nuns. Although no postulants had made application during the last 12 years, the Sisters were lately overjoyed by the entrance of 6 aspirants who are at present white-veiled novices.

We came at last to the monastery of the Capuchin Sisters who received us in a tiny denuded parlour. A heavy black curtain hid them from view. They showed themselves deeply touched by our offer, and mentioned their current needs in all simplicity. Twenty-two nuns are living in the monastery, 18 Bolivians and 4 Spanish. Their order, which is extremely austere, was founded in the thirteenth century by two Poor Clares who aspired to greater austerity. Members of the Order rise early,

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have only one daily recreation, fast every day, wear hairshirts, and get up every night to sing the Divine Office. Poverty reigns supreme in their houses. Theirs is a life of constant self-denial, but they are happy and contented as the Mother Abbess assured us.

Back we went home to map out our programme according to the inquiries made. Sister Saint Martial's graduating students adopted the Poor Clares; Sister Jacqueline Agbral's girls decided to help the Carmelites, my class pledged assistance to the Capuchin nuns.

This project raised numerous questions on religious vocations, as well as on the profound meaning

Sisters St. Martial and Marguerite de l'Enfant-Jesus visit Capuchin nuns in Cochabamba.



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On the way to the city's three monasteries.

Sister Jacqueline Ag-
bral and her students,
all cheerful givers.

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of the contemplative life. Our students admitted that they knew, in their heart of hearts, of what great value to the Church were these Sisters living in their cloisters. They even quoted words of Pope Paul VI to the effect that the Church needs these prayerful souls today more than ever before in a world gone mad in the quest for science, and for material prosperity. They are like « burned out incense » rising before the Lord of all, making amends for those who forget their Creator.

A committee of students was formed to handle the practical end of the project. All agreed that the required articles should be found and taken to the various monasteries at the beginning of October, the patronal feast of the Carmelites falling on October 3, and that of the Poor Clares and of the Capuchin nuns on October 4.

Regularly, the class president wrote on the blackboard: today,

we need flour, sugar, matches, vitamin pills, etc; tomorrow, bring thread, pins, soap, white linen, etc. Every day, several bulky parcels were made. On the eve of the proposed visit to the monasteries, a request went out for sweets and wrapping paper. It was touching to see how thoughtful these young girls could be. Finally, they had enough parcels to fill 12 big baskets.

The parents themselves were delighted with the generous response of their children. « Why didn't you start this before? » they asked.

Such was the popularity of Operation Helping Hand that we intend to launch it in all our classes, next year. Thus, not one student will leave the school without having learned the important lesson of Christian solidarity.

S. Marguerite de l'E.-J., M.I.C.



ZAMBIA

THE LAST WORD

In the Africa of today is woman considered to be the inferior or the equal of man? This is a complex but deeply interesting question which I presume putting to you, my dear Zambian sister. What do you think about it? I know that your country jealously guards precious secrets of its past from the curious gaze of strangers. But I have learned to know you well during the many years of my sojourn among you, and I am convinced that yours is no inferior position.

How could you ever be considered inferior, you dear *Agogo* (grandmother) who hold undisputed sway over your clan? Guardian of ancestral values, your decisions are respected by members of the younger generations. Faithful vehicle of tradition and bond which holds the family together, your influence is still to be reckoned with. Even

African women, what do you think?

IS SERVICE

by Sister Françoise Pageau, M.I.C.

seasoned business men whose English is flawless bow before your refusals to sanction such and such a contract. They gravely explain, "*Iyai! Waku-kana, Agogo! Agogo is against it!*"

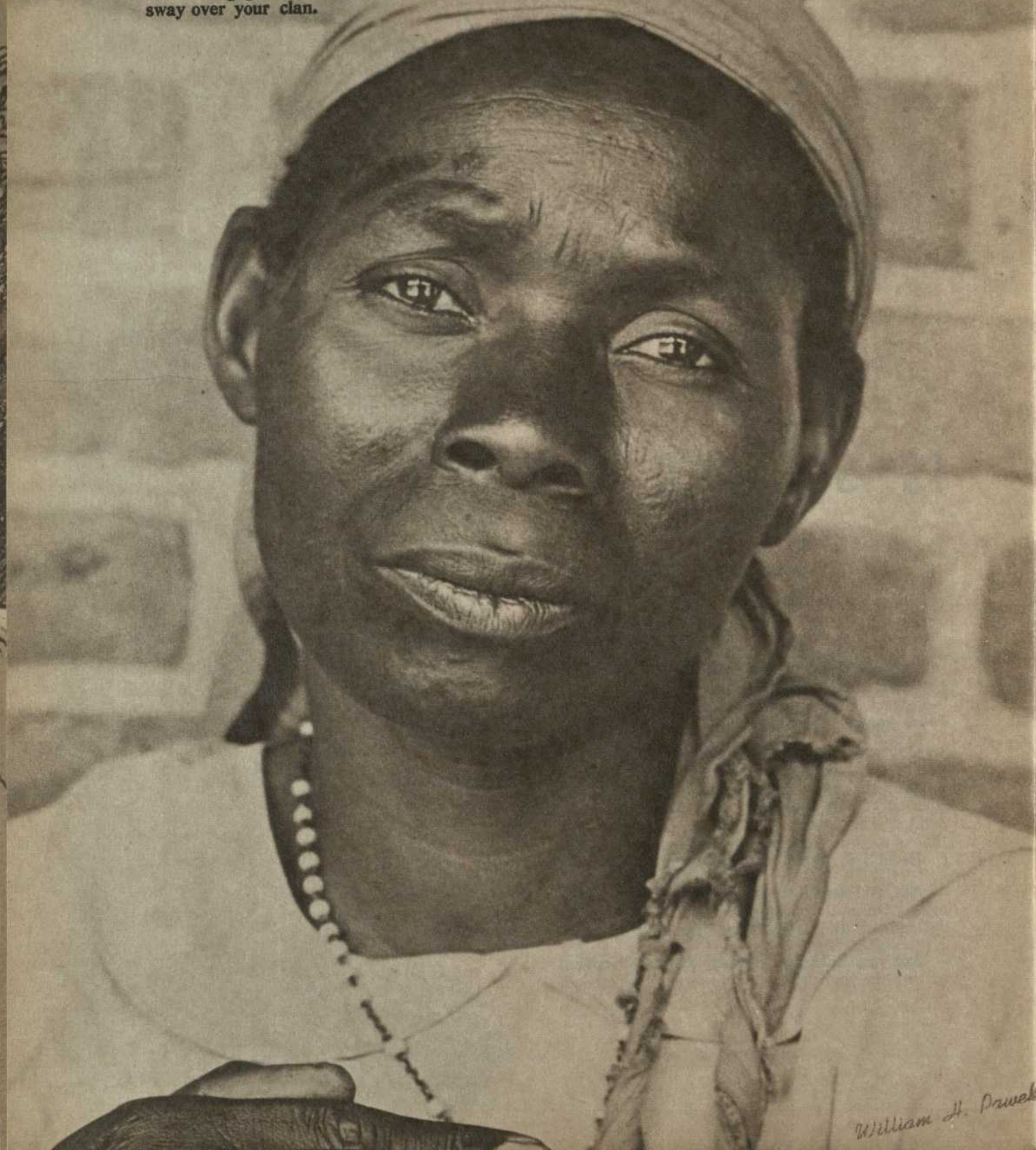
On the other hand, the young people know that if they can have you on their side, they have all but won the day. You settle in their favour more than one family squabble. Isn't Mirika a case in point? This determined young lady obtained, thanks to your support, to attend the school of her choice in spite of the family council's opposition.

Yes, you remain the beloved and revered grandmother, even if sophisticated youth colours your out-and-out traditionalism with smiling indulgence.

And you, Rakaela, "mother of Mikael", crowned with the young glory of your recent motherhood,



Dear "Agogo", you hold undisputed
sway over your clan.



William H. Dawkins

how could you be inferior? You now have your honoured place among clan adults; you feel equal to any task without for that losing any of your gentle womanliness.

Up to now, you lived timid and demure, in your husband's shadow. For his part, he had nothing of the tyrant about him, but treated you with frank cordiality. When you diligently followed our courses in domestic science, he never refused to provide the money you needed to buy wherewith to prepare a special menu or to make a new garment. In a word, he treated you affectionately, but you stayed tangled up in a sort of inferiority complex until you were liberated on the birth of Mikael, your first glory.

And you, Ethel, about to be married, would you tell us something of the bridal dowry? Must I believe that your betrothed acquires a wife at the cost of certain gifts in kind?

The custom which Europeans incorrectly call "paying a dowry" originated as a basic custom of primitive ethnic groups and varied with different localities. In Zambia, the young girls or young matrons I have known belong to several different tribes among which customs regarding marriage and dowries differ greatly. Care must therefore be taken in reading this essay to avoid generalizing; otherwise false impressions might easily be created.

The bride price system is still in general usage nearly everywhere in Africa. At the outset, it consisted merely in the exchange of more or less valuable gifts between the two contracting families, as a guarantee of the stability of marriage. In case of divorce, the gifts would have to be refunded.

Today, this custom often brings about opposite results, working against the stability of the conjugal union, and of the most elementary ethics. It can be a temptation, alas, for the head of a family to give his daughter to the highest bidder or to break off a legitimate union in order to get a higher bride price.

Will this custom eventually be abolished? Nearly all African women hope so. There are some, however, who consider the bride price as a guarantee against eventual desertion of their partner.

To what extent does the family clan hamper the liberty of choice for girls who have reached marriageable age?

Recently, Catholic African women from several Central African areas, assembled for a seminar, deplored the persistence of pressure exercised on young girls. They firmly requested in their name the right to choose their own partner. This they did although they realized that by such a demand they were attacking the structure of society, for African wisdom had always arranged marriages in order to strengthen the existence of the tribal group, at times representing as many as four generations.

Cultural bonds such as these are not easily broken. On the other hand, rising nationalism while aiming at unification, provides a salutary counterpart to ancient customs which are gradually growing depreciated.

As regards polygamy, it certainly played an important role in ancient African family life where-in it functioned with a view to the common good. At the present time, it seems to be on the wane, at least in these regions. Unfortunately, there exists an infiltration of another sort of less honourable and more noxious polygamy, encouraged by certain Oriental conceptions regarding divorce and free love.

African culture contains several elements which constitute essential values and which continue to play a considerable part in the honest and robust society they have engendered as a challenge to modern civilization. Far from deserving to be discarded, these values ought to be carefully preserved.

You, Rosemary, understand what I mean. I know how deeply you revere a past still present, at least in part. You even find ingenious means of discovering the full strength and value of wholesome traditions. Willingly you listen to the advice of your *walala*, elders, convinced as you are of their wry, humorous wisdom, of their logical conformity to the plain circumstances of life. Courteous towards them you, nevertheless, quietly assert your liberty, you refuse to accept that your future should be settled without your consent. Your mind opened to worldwide horizons, endows your youthful personality with courageous daring. Your healthy optimism, your unfailing kindness, your gentle pliability will help you to win your rights as a woman. You will marry the man of your choice, according to your faith and aspirations, and you will take your rightful place in the family.

Do you remember the day when we were the guests of Edith, in her pleasant home? Gracious



hostess that she was, she sat right down at table with her husband and her guests. Did she feel somehow embarrassed at having thus disregarded the ancient custom forbidding the wife to sit at a meal with her husband? Apparently not. She and her husband, both teachers, deemed it right to adopt western ways on this occasion.

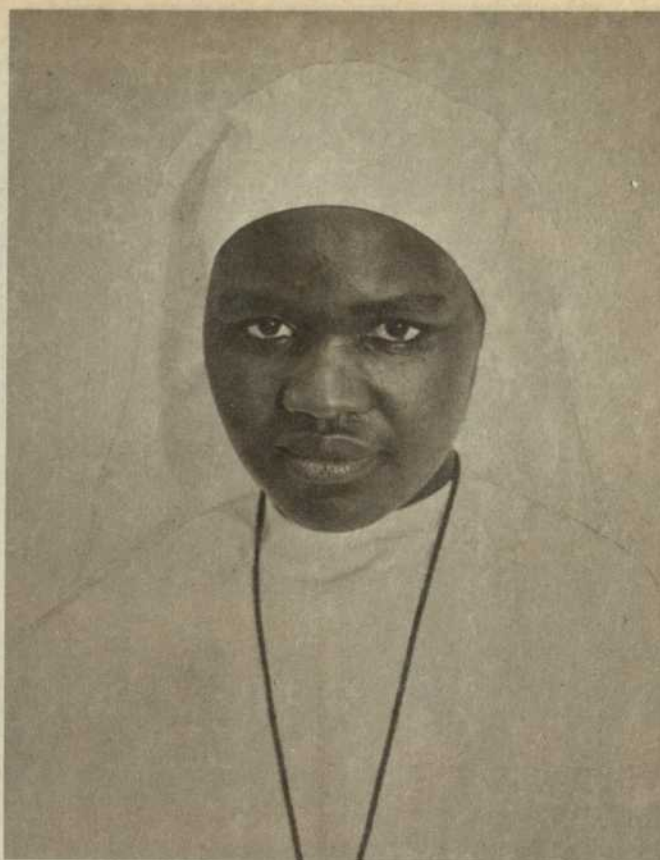
It would be hard to imagine, you, Rosemary, playing the part of a dumb shadow, serving your husband and his guests, and then surreptitiously withdrawing into your kitchen. I know perfectly well that you yourself will shop for the family requirements, that no uncle however respected will claim authority over your children as the tribal law admits. Husband and wife, father and mother, you will assume your full responsibility as Christian parents.

Integrated in the social life of your country you will state your opinions, and you will be respectfully listened to. You will, in short, be the mate united to your mate by a bond of complementarity, on the social as well as on the familial level.

The condition of woman in Zambia is being improved in the true sense. Why, then, talk about inferiority or equality when we consider her in relation with her partner, in wedded life? Her promotion, not on the level of equality but rather on that of personality according to her functions, springs from a more dynamic phenomenon. During the two last decades her evolution has progressed at a rapid pace, a pace such as other women effected only after a thousand years of effort. In the secret of her enigmatic personality, African woman aspires to fulfillment through the surrender of self in favour of the noble causes of her generation. She feels within her soul a new responsibility to be translated into availability in the service of others.

A moral portrait of the African sisterhood will bring this essay to a fitting culmination. Thanks to the powerful impulsion of God's grace, African girls have dared the perils of going against a mentality which until then had proved irresistible, a mentality rooted in the depths of their nation and their country. By dedicating their virginity to Christ, they have received the gift of a higher liberty. Cheerful and totally committed, they cooperate

Zambian woman's promotion is effected not so much on the level of equality as on that of personality.



Cheerful and totally committed, African Sisters cooperate with undeniable efficiency in the advancement of their nation.

with their whole heart and with undeniable efficiency in the spiritual and material development of their people.

Today, a dynamic government and able national leaders lay stress on the free and compulsory education of both sexes. This broadens the way opened in the educational field by the missionaries during the past 50 years. Thus is women's promotion effectively fostered. Is this the equivalent of equality with man?

At the worldwide Congress of the Union of Feminine Catholic Organizations held at Lome (July 1958), a Dahomean priest, Reverend Father Sastre, observed with regard to the delicate dilemma inferiority-equality, "The most feminine word whose meaning our modern world is trying to rediscover, is the simple word which ennoble whoever understands it and puts it into practice, the word which comes naturally to the lips of woman restored to her pristine purity — Service."

Like our Lady, behind the scenes at Cana, the good woman makes no fanfare, but works at the wellbeing of others, quietly and efficiently. Therein she finds her greatest glory and fulfillment.



Eight o'clock went past, then nine, then ten, and still the bus failed to show up. A treat of bananas helped the waiting girls to forget, momentarily, their restlessness. Finally, joyful shouts announced that the bus was coming. The thirty students hastily boarded it and all were on the way to the Chombe Tea Estate. Their enthusiasm expressed itself in the lusty singing of their favourite song, "We are the girls of Maria Goretti School." Willingly we joined in the chorus.

After one half hour of driving, the bus jolted to an unexpected halt. What could be the matter? Chombe was still a good three miles ahead. Recent heavy rains had rendered the rest of the road impassable to the bus, the chauffeur declared. Noth-

ing was left to do but to walk the remaining three miles to the estate.

For the girls, this was something of a lark; as for us, Sisters, we had fortunately brought our bicycles along. We had gone a short way, when my companion casually remarked, with a quizzical glance at me, "We have only 17 bridges to cross, after all!" I looked aghast.

"Don't worry" she hastened to add, "None of them are as long as the Jacques Cartier, back in Montreal!"

I breathed a sigh of relief, then clutched the handlebar as I prepared to cross the first of the

MALAWI

A VISIT TO CHOMBE TEA ESTATE



said bridges, about 20 feet long. My eyes were glued to the cracks between the ten-inch wide planks. "I do hope I won't make a false move," I breathed as I pedalled ahead. At long last, we safely crossed the last of the 17 bridges. Ahead loomed a large modern building; the Chombe Tea Estate in all its glory! An African guide came out to bid us a courteous welcome. "I will be pleased to show you around," he said. While waiting for the pupils who had not yet arrived, we admired the fine trees, the green lawns, and the beautiful surroundings.

When all the pupils had reached destination, we found ourselves ushered into a spacious, well lighted room. The girls took out their notebooks

and started jotting notes while the guide explained the history of tea.

The precious shrub originated from south-western China and northern Viet Nam. Cultivated on a large scale in numerous Asian countries, Japan, Ceylan, Java, the Philippines, it was later introduced into other lands. In eastern Africa, its cultivation dates from the beginning of the twentieth century. Tea was first planted in Malawi in the year 1878. Most of Malawi's tea output is grown in the Cholo and Mlanje districts, in the southern area, and also near Nkhata Bay.

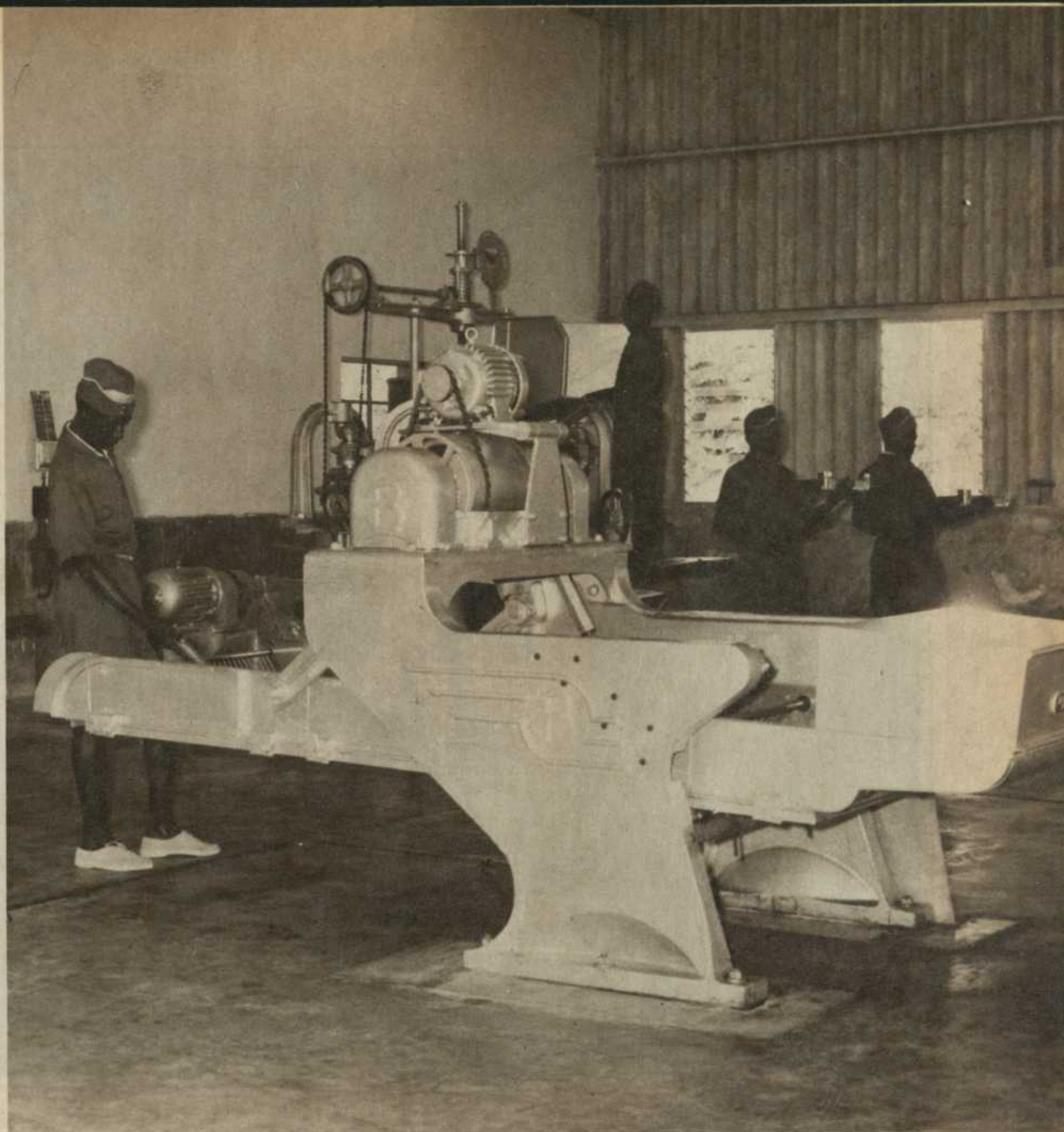
After this introduction, our guide had us visit the gardens and nursery beds. The Chombe Tea Estate employs about 200 men to take care of its plantation of 100 acres.



Tea, with its shiny sawedged leaves and white flowers which change into woolly seed pods, belongs to the *Camellia Sinensis* family. A tea plant is ready for the picker when about four years old. Carrying a basket slung from their shoulders, the pickers go from tree to tree, taking only a few buds and the young tender leaves from each. The plant goes on growing through the warm rainy season and the picking is done from day to day as new leaves come out.

Our guide showed us how the tea leaves were processed. Brought in from the garden, they are dumped into a machine where they are rolled; then, they are spread on trays and allowed to lose their moisture. Next, a machine breaks up the cells in the leaves to free the juice. Finally, they are left to ferment for about ten days. During fermentation, the leaves change colour until they become a bright copper shade, and their flavour develops. This process produces what is called

An African guide gives us a courteous welcome and shows us through the tea estate.



black tea. There are, besides, different varieties of green tea, the leaves being torrefied as soon as harvested.

We moved on to the second department where we watched the tea being divided into different grades and packed ready for export. The bulk of Malawi's tea crop is exported by rail to the port of Beira and thence to the United Kingdom.

Thus was brought to an end our visit to Malawi's Chombe estate. This audio-visual presen-

tation of the sixth chapter of the Malawi Geography text book will remain forever inscribed in the memory of our 30 students. Who can blame them if, now, their earnest desire is that final geography examinations will fall on the production of tea in Malawi!

Sister Yvonne Ayotte, M.I.C.

HAITI



SISAL—MAGICAL FIBRE

by Sister Cecile Frappier, M.I.C.



Conveyed from the fields to the processing plant...

Sisal is a strong and useful fibre whose botanical name is agave. Long before the advent of the Spanish explorers, the Aztecs and the Mayas had put this plant to various purposes such as the making of ropes, twines, clothing, etc. Columbus was supposedly the first European to see it when he landed on the island of Guanahani, in the Bahamas, where it grows in great quantities.

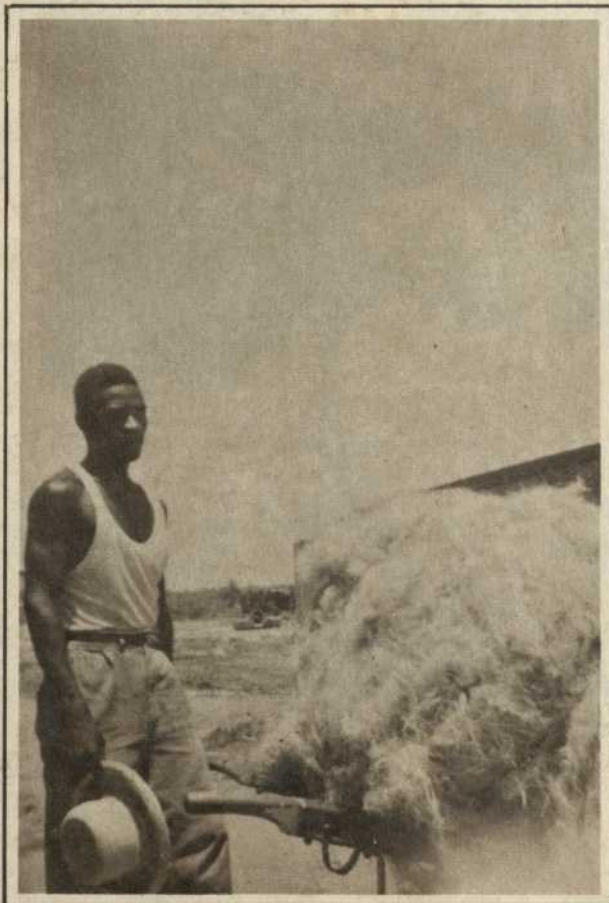
There are numerous varieties of sisal. Over 532 species have been classified and grouped into three classes according to the characteristics of their flowers. The plant is named after a small Yucatan port whence it used to be shipped to many ports of the world.

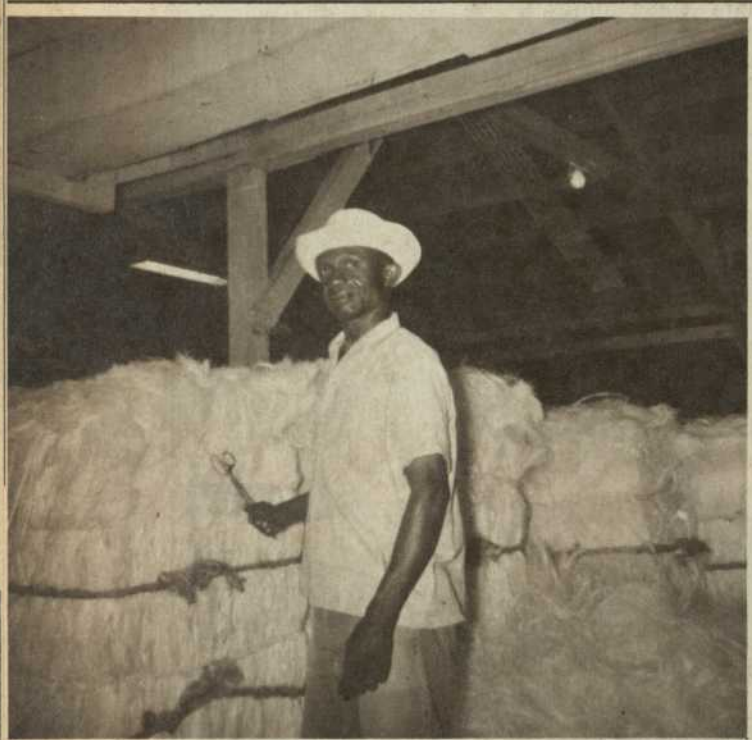
The Aztecs and the Mayas used sisal fibre especially in the making of ropes and clothing. From its juice they distilled an intoxicating beverage called the *pulque* and certain medicines. In short, the agave was almost as useful to the Aztecs as the coconut is to the inhabitants of the Pacific Islands.

Sisal which thrives in a hot climate, is cultivated in several regions of Haiti, more especially in the northern part of the Republic, where semi-arid plains offer an ideal soil. Over two thousand labourers find regular employment at the Dauphin sisal processing factory established in Phaeton more than twenty-five years ago.

The sisal plant may be grown from suckers, but it has another means of reproduction. When it matures, which it does in fifteen years or more, it throws out a spike from its centre, some twelve or fifteen feet high. This "pole" bears hundreds of plantlets or bulbils which grow into full-sized plants, four or five years after they are planted out.

The fibre is first put into skeins, then wound into neat bundles.





Sisal undergoes an initial transformation.





In Haiti, the leaves ready for processing are cut off at the base with a long knife called *machete*. Trucks or carts haul them away to the factories where they are passed through powerful crushers, operating under a stream of water, which separates and removes the green, acrid juices. At first, the decortication of the fibres used to be done by hand, with huge mallets crushing them on large wooden blocks. The labour was tedious and exhausting.

According to G. W. Lock, Caron, a Franciscan monk living in Mexico at the beginning of the nineteenth century, sympathised so deeply with the labourers that he devised a power driven machine called the Raspador which lightened the labour of the poor serfs. This occurred in 1839. Several years later, Manuel Cecilio Villamor invented another machine worked by horses or oxen. Ever since, decortication machinery has been undergoing many improvements.

At the Phaeton factory, the fibres are first of all decorticated and washed in salty water. Then the fibres are rinsed and passed through crushers which press out fifty per cent of the moisture con-



tained in them. Conveyor belts next carry them to four separate rooms having varying degrees of temperature. Finally, the fibres reach a fifth open chamber where they cool off. The drying operation lasts only about twenty to thirty minutes so that from five hundred to eight hundred kilos of fibres may be dried within an hour.

After its being brushed and beaten to remove dust and impurities, the fibre is graded and baled hydraulically to facilitate and cheapen the transport. It is then ready for shipment to many countries that use it for ropes, twines, sacks, carpets, mats kraft paper, and several other purposes.

In Haiti, sisal fibre commonly called *pîte* is fashioned into stout ropes and twine. Moreover, dyed in bright colours, it is woven into table mats, hats, handbags, slippers, etc. Women, young and old, excel in weaving original hats in various patterns on which colourful scenes are painted or perhaps embroidered. Schoolgirls use the dyed fibre with agile fingers to make dolls' trousseaus or knickknacks which they delight in presenting to their teachers.

PHILIPPINES

**Stepping Stones
to
Higher Things**

Naguilian is a little town of the Ilocos region with a population of about 30,000. The ruins of a church built over a century ago testify that the seed of faith was sown here, long ago, by zealous missionaries. That it does not flourish today as it once did is doubtless due to the shortage of priests in the Island. There is only one pastor to minister to the needs of the entire population. The country is too poor to subsidize its own Catholic schools. Besides, no organized catechetical instruction being given in public schools, the young grow up ignorant of Catholic doctrine.

As it is impossible for the one priest in the area to be everywhere at once, many are those who die without the consolation of receiving the sacraments. To make up, in a certain manner, on the occasion of a person's decease, relatives and neigh-

bours keep vigil beside the dead in prayerful and reverential silence. Only the old women, upon arriving, give vent to *dung-ao*, loud cries of lamentation. Ordinary conversations are carried on in subdued tones.

At such times, the offering of alms is a general custom, a plate being placed for this purpose at the foot of the bier. On a sheet of paper is noted the donor's name so that the family may know to whom acknowledgment should be made.

After prayers for the dead have been recited at the cemetery, the coffin is lowered into the ground while dismal *dung-ao* fill the air. Once the grave has been filled, members of the family walk across it, throwing handfuls of earth, in the superstitious hope that the departed will not return to haunt their premises.

A rooster singed upon arrival home from funeral is believed to speed the entrance of the departed soul into heaven.





FUNERAL

Joints of the arms and hands are rubbed with a mixture of liquor and earth taken from grave.



Oil restores bodily vigour.

RITES

Back home from the funeral, the family has a rooster killed. The good folk of this region believe that it will bear the dead on its wings and crow for entrance at the heavenly gate!

On the following day, relatives go down to bathe in the river. *Golgol* or the washing of the head, more especially, is a *must* in order to do away with all languor of mind and body. Afterwards, elderly women relatives anoint the hair of every member of the family. Refreshed and strengthened, all are then ready to resume the course of their life.

The spiritual needs of the departed are not overlooked. On this same day starts a novena consisting of part of the Rosary followed by long prayers. Every evening, until the close of the novena, a plate of food is served at the empty place of the departed family member. In order to allow as many villagers as possible to join in these prayers, they are always held late in the evening. As the ordinary Ilocano house cannot accommodate all participants, many follow the prayers from outside, crouching on logs, on benches, or even on the stairs.

Obviously, many superstitious practices have blended with what was originally meant to be a purely religious ceremony. Not infrequently, money is spent on band music and drinks which ought to be made profitable to the dead by having Masses said for the repose of their soul.

Such practices, however, do contain wholesome and positive elements. Kneeling close together to say the Rosary at these family reunions, men and women, young and old attest their faith. Thanks to these novenas for the dead, prayers learned in childhood are remembered. Perhaps religious observance would have died out entirely in certain remote districts were it not for such gatherings. They can be used by missionaries as stepping stones to higher things, leading the people of these remote regions from the natural to the supernatural; from the pain of losing a dear one to the pain of eternal damnation; from the laying aside of food for the dead to the only "food" that will be of avail to the soul—Masses offered, prayers said, sacraments that heal and purify; from the comforting fraternal sympathy of a temporal community, to the blessed fraternity of the saints in the eternal City.

*Sister Pierre Joseph, M.I.C.
(Bibiana Flora, Philippines)*

Men, women, and children queue for ritual bath.

A SUBSCRIBER WRITES

Ottawa, October 10, 1967

The Precursor
Cote Saint Catherine Road
Montreal

Reverend Sister,

As we were absent from home when your Sisters called for renewal of subscriptions to your magazine, I am sending you a cheque for \$2.50 for a two year subscription.

Congratulations on your magazine which I find interesting and up-to-date. I always read attentively all the news of your Sisters at work in the mission field afar.

Last July, at 43 years of age, I suffered an attack of coronary thrombosis which has left me in bad shape physically. Married and the father of eight, I turned in my anxiety about the future, to your revered Mother Foundress with whom I engaged a dialogue (dialogue which I have kept up ever since) asking her to help me recover and take up again without too much difficulty my regular employment. She has heard my prayer. Although I am not as fit as I used to be, I feel that your dear Mother is assisting me in a visible manner, and I want to express my deepfelt gratitude to her. Being a man of many foibles, alas, I rely also on the prayers of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (whom I have admired since early childhood) in order to hold my own, not an easy thing for someone in my condition.

Allow me to add, in closing, that our world is better because you, Sisters, stand fast on all fronts.

Yours respectfully,

R. M.

RESULTS OF DRIVE

1st prize : carpet of llama wool
(Bolivia)

won by : Mrs. Amanda Mulaire
Saint Pierre Jolys
Manitoba

2nd prize : man's dressing gown of handsome
Chinese silk (Hong Kong)

won by : Miss Edna Authier
1227 Saint Elizabeth Street
Montreal

3rd prize : small inlaid tray
(Japan)

won by : Mrs. Lucienne Marcoux
320 Sainte Marie Street
Dorval, P. Q.

We sincerely thank all those who took part in this drive to raise the number of our subscribers. God bless and love you everyone!

Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

CANADA

OUTREMONT, 314 St. Catherine Road, Montreal 8
MOTHERHOUSE, 2900 St. Catherine Road,
Cote des Neiges, Montreal 26
PROVINCIAL HOUSE, 5550 Louis Colin Street, Montreal 26
NOVITIATE, Pont Viau, Laval City
CHINESE HOSPITAL, 355 Faillon St., East, Montreal 10
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
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

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TAK SUN SCHOOL,
103 Austin Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong
MOUNT GOOD HOPE SCHOOL,
Clear Water Bay Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong
NOVITIATE, 125 Waterloo 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, Suao, Republic of China
SUAO, 36 Chung Cheng Rd., Suao, Republic of China
HSINCHU CITY, 49, Shui Yuan Street, Kuang Fu Li,
Taiwan, Republic of China

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WAKAMATSU, 1-49, Nishi Sakae machi, Aizu Wakamatsu,
Fukushima ken
TOKYO, 108-4 cho me, Fukazawa cho, Setagaya ku

ITALY

ROMA 0881, 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 1124, Azcona (Brena)

GUATEMALA

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

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SANTA CRUZ de la Sierra, Cardinal Cushing Business College,
Calle Lemoine, Casilla 70
COCHABAMBA, Academia Comercia, Calle Oruro No. 3403,
Casilla 1667
IRUPANA, Hospital Nuestra Senora de la Providencia,
postal address: La Paz, casilla 2893
LA PAZ, Academia Santa Rita, casilla 2893
CATAVI, postal address: Oruro, casilla 434

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ANCUD, Colegio Inmaculada Concepcion, Calle Errazuriz,
Casilla 82

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Intramuros
MANILA, 2212 del Rosario St., Tondo
SAN JUAN, Provincial House, P.O. 3400, Manila
LAS PINAS, Rizal
MATI, Davao Province
DAVAO City, Our Lady of Good Counsel Hall, Florentino Torres St.
PADADA, Davao Province
BAGUIO City, 73, Pacdal, 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, C. P. 1085 Haiti
PORT AU PRINCE, Novitiate, Cité No. 2, C. P. 1085 Haiti
CROIX DES BOUQUETS, C. P. 1291 Haiti
DESCHAPPELLES, Albert Schweitzer Hospital,
Boite postale 2213, B. Port au Prince, Haiti
LA BOULE, C. P. 1085, Haiti
HINCHE, Haiti

COLON, apartado 21, Province of Matanzas, Cuba

CENTRAL AFRICA

KATETE, St. Teresa's Parish, Champira P.O., Malawi
MZAMBAZI, St. John's Parish, Eutini P.O., Malawi
RUMPI, St. Patrick's Parish, Rumpi P.O., Malawi
KARONGA, St. Mary's Parish, Karonga P.O., Malawi
KASEYE, St. Michael's Parish, Chitipa P.O. Box 100, Malawi
NKATA BAY, Nkata Bay P.O. Box 9, Malawi
MZUZU, Mzuzu P.O. Box 24, Malawi
MZIMBA, St. Paul's Parish, Mzimba P.O., Malawi
FORT JAMESON, P.O. Box 107, Zambia
KANYANGA, Lundazi P.O., Zambia
NYIMBA, Sacred Heart Hospital, Nyimba P.O., Zambia
CIKUNGU, Kazimuli P.O., Zambia

The tourist feels drawn to this section of Man and his World where the flags of United Nations have been raised.



Photo : Sr. G. Villemure, m.i.c.