

THE PRECURSOR

Missionary Information Magazine

January-February, 1973, Ville de Laval — Vol. XXX, No. 7

Sampaguita

Student Camp

S as in Salud

Chilema

Ecumenism



Music in Malawi



Malawi — After six months of audition, the first concert was a success.
A heartfelt "Thank You" to all those who have made the "Merry Band" what it is today.

The Precursor

No 7 — January-February 1973 — Vol. XXX

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MZUZU, MALAWI

MUSIC

HAS CHARMS FOR

MARYMOUNT

by Sister Denise Duhamel, M.I.C.





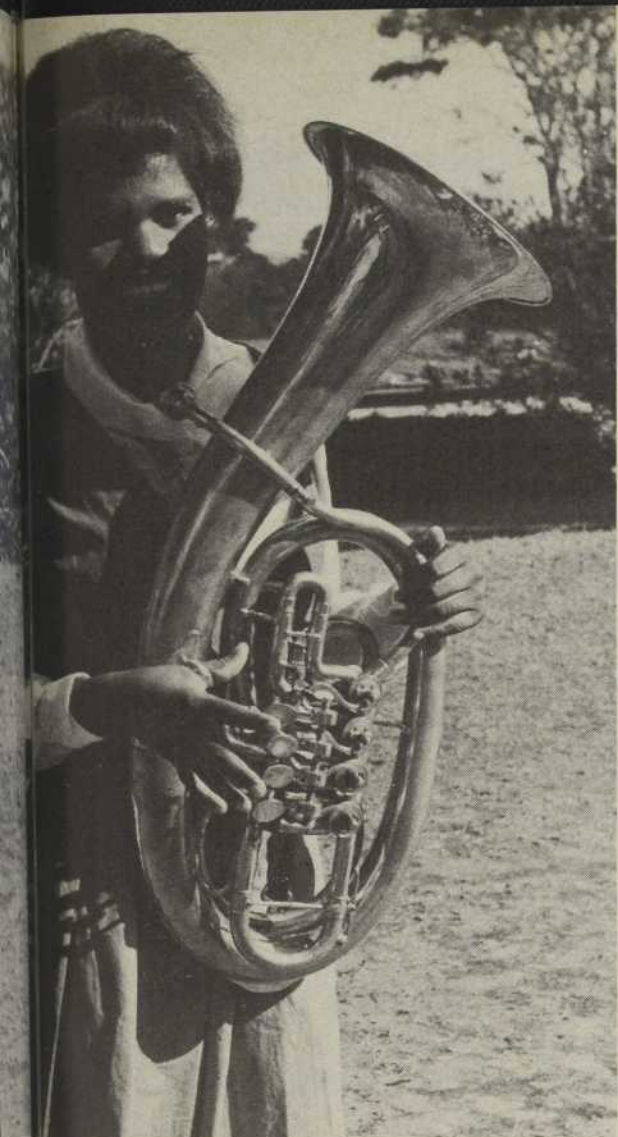
The "Merry Band" is Marymount Secondary School's very own band. It got under way six years ago when I first came to Mzuzu.

I was told that the school carried on many extracurricular activities or clubs aiming at enriching the students' cultural background. There were Red Cross, photography, table-tennis, knitting, folk dancing clubs, and so forth. As I was not attached to the teaching staff, I decided to organize a music club. This might prove an interesting mode of contact with the young. I had had good basic training in music. At home, we had formed a family band which enjoyed a certain amount of popularity in our neighbourhood. But the only instruments available at Marymount were my father's trumpet and my own, a dozen flutes, and an accordion. I made up my mind to use these as a beginning and to invite students who were interested in music to join in the project.

After six months of tentative efforts and re-

These budding musicians make sweet melody on saxophone, tuba, and accordion, under the vigilant eye of Sister Denise Duhamel.

hearsals, we presented our first modest programme. The audience was sympathetic and encouraging. Our music club was really launched when, some time later, we were invited to a meeting at the Kachebere Major Seminary. Participants were asked to present numbers for an evening of entertainment. Christmas being close at hand, I played a few Christmas carols on the trumpet. An African Father in charge of the seminarians and who, moreover, represented educational institutions at the Ministry of Education



inquired whether I taught music at Marymount. I told him about the music club, adding that we had only a few instruments. Imagine my surprise when, three months later, thanks to Father's intervention we received as gifts from the German ambassador to Malawi, two trumpets, and one alto saxophone. What an important acquisition! The following year we received through the same friendly intervention a tenor saxophone. (Grateful thanks to His Excellency Ambassador Bernhard Heichbach.)

The "Merry Band" can now boast of two trombones, three clarinets, three other trumpets, one mellophone, and one drum. These latter instruments were the gifts of one of my companions, dear Sister Jacqueline Bastien. A lover of good music, she is eager to share her gift with young Africans. While on home leave she and her brother, Father Raymond Bastien, O.M.I., made the rounds of music stores and friends. They were presented with a number of violins, guitars, and banjos. Knowing my intention of

playing band music, Sister Jacqueline exchanged these instruments for others more suitable to my purpose. She further took the trouble of packing them so well that they safely reached Marymount and its music lovers. The "Merry Band" owes much of its actual success to Sister Jacqueline. Thank you, dear Sister, for your thoughtful kindness.

Etched in my memory is the Minister of Education's first visit to Marymount. Members of the band outdid themselves in his honour and were warmly congratulated. The following year, they performed in rousing welcome to the Likuni school students who also possess an orchestra with instruments received from Germany. On this occasion, members of the "Merry Band" wore for the first time a smart bright red vest over their white uniform blouse and royal blue skirt.

My criteria for admission as band performers are openmindedness, cheerfulness, and brains. Such conditions may at first seem strange. However, experience has proved that to accept any student who asks just because she feels like it may prove to her detriment. It did not take me long to discover that enlisted slow learners failed to pass their Junior Certificate exams. Conse-

quently, they had to leave secondary school after only two years and the "Merry Band" always fell back to scratch.

Here is how I now select members: I wait until the results of the first semester exams are out; I jot down the names of the smartest in the class; I contact each selected student to make sure she is interested in music. Another major requirement is punctual attendance at daily rehearsals.

Until they are through with the secondary, members of the "Merry Band" are not allowed to join any other club. Thus, within four years, they acquire a neat sum of musical knowledge. All feel sorry when time comes to leave the band. In the beginning, they find the programme rather difficult to cope with. At the end of the year, however, when they are able to perform easily enough, they are pleased and proud to belong to the "Merry Band".

Keen competition exists between our budding musicians and those of Nkata Bay Secondary School for boys. We have combined rehearsals and we perform together once in a while. The Nkata Bay School, conducted by American Marianist Brothers, has a complete set of instru-



Members of the "Merry Band" enjoy playing trombones and trumpets.



ments obtained from a band which had decided to renew its equipment. I cannot help envying their large sousaphone. . . Perhaps, I will be able to get other instruments when I return to Canada on furlough. If I had more, I could organize a Junior Band from which Senior Band members might be selected. The same problem crops up over and over again. Graduates have to be replaced, but I have to wait until after their departure to pass on instruments to beginners. I really need more than I have at present.

When do we perform in public? The "Merry Band" is expected to play on almost too many occasions. When visitors come to Mzuzu from the North, members are asked to play in their honour. Ecumenical meetings, Remembrance Day, Mothers' Day, Martyrs' Day, Republic Day, all call for special concerts.

You are perhaps wondering how I came to favour band music. Before entering the convent, I belonged to a music trio known as the "Denyse Trio"; one member played the piano, another the drum, and I played the trumpet. Every evening, we were kept busy playing for neighbourhood clubs. On weekends, we played at the *Vieux Moulin*, a dance hall conducted by my father, on

the Granby-Waterloo roadway. I then performed in papa's orchestra. He himself played the trumpet.

One fine day, the call to the missions sounded in my heart, louder than a trumpet call! I left my instruments behind as others had once left their nets. Shortly before taking perpetual vows, as we were preparing the Saint Jean Baptiste parade, I asked leave to have my trumpet sent back to me so I could play on this occasion. Afterwards, I was allowed to keep it as it might come in handy in the African missions to which I had been assigned. For me music is an excellent means of apostolate. I thank the good Lord every day for having given me the hundredfold in return for the beloved "Trio Denyse" I gave up for love of Him when I was twenty.

In religious and missionary life, I have found happy fulfillment. Never have I regretted my decision. The structures of religious life may change, but He to whom I gave my faith is changeless. My community remains the best one on earth for me. This I like to proclaim with my trumpet and otherwise.



SAMPAGUITA

PHILIPPINES

Photo: Asia Maga

by Veronica Misa

The national flower of the Philippines is the *sampaguita* of legendary fame.

At the time when the Spaniards arrived to enforce their rule on the islands, the story goes that Liwayway (Dawn), the beautiful daughter of a chieftain, wandered into the forest to gather fruit and flowers. She soon lost her way in the tangled underbrush and fell into a deep ravine. When she recovered consciousness she saw a handsome young man, the son of a neighboring chieftain, solicitously bending over her. It was love at first sight. However, as he was respectful and she was modest, neither spoke of the love in their hearts. The young man led her safely to the edge of the forest. But, when they were about to part, Liwayway felt powerless to stifle a sigh of regret. At once, her admirer fondly embraced her. Flowers and trees shared their happiness.

Eventually, the young man was summoned to defend his country against the white invader. Before parting, the lovers promised never to forget each other — *sumpa kita*, I promise.

The brave young warrior was subsequently killed in battle. Liwayway did not long survive. She sickened and died, the name of her lover on her lips. Soon, people noticed that her grave was covered with shrubs bearing fragrant white flowers. They concluded that the girl's love had blossomed in her new life after death. It became the custom for young lovers to exchange these flowers as tokens of a pure and faithful love while they whispered *sumpa kita*, I promise. In time, this term became corrupted into *sampaguita*, the name of this lovely flower.

The contemporary story of the *sampaguita* is based on the town of San Pedro, 31 kilometres south of Manila. Here the cultivation of the flower is the main occupation.

It was still dark when we turned off the highway into San Pedro, in the province of Laguna, to observe the harvesting of the *sampaguita*. We were told that work in the fields started at 5:00 a.m.

Our guide, Mr. David Amante, wore a khaki shirt and a curious combination of red socks and slippers. "At this time of the year," he said, "the sun comes up late. We wait until the rays of the sun have touched the plants before we pick the buds, for the *sampaguita* follows the sun." In the morning the buds come forth. As the sun climbs higher, the buds open up. By the time the sun has retired for the night, the bud has become a sweetly-scented flower. On a good day, 10,000 buds may be harvested.

Mr. Amante told us how he started the town's *sampaguita* business. In 1945 as he was jobless the idea came to him to sell garlands of *sampaguitas* to the American troops. "They were still in tents," he said. "I went to them and asked, 'Do you like this flower? It has a good smell.' I sold each strand for five centavos (two-and-a-half US cents at that time). Through this occupation, I was able to send my seven children to school. One is a commerce graduate, another a seminarian, and five have finished high school."

Mr. Amante took us around the town to show us back-yards and odd squares of land planted with *sampaguitas*. Then he brought us to his home, a wooden house with a bamboo floor. Hung on the wall were diplomas, certificates, and photos showing where the *sampaguita* harvests went. We were greeted and entertained by Mrs. Amante, a handsome woman, who entertained us while her husband prepared a breakfast of coffee and bread-and-butter.

Mrs. Amante recalled: "We started our business without capital. Everything was on the installment plan. Every morning I would borrow money and at the end of the day I would pay it back. I would peddle flowers at various shrines where people congregated. A vendor can't sit down, he has to keep walking. I had to sell all my flowers to be able to pay back the money I borrowed in the morning.

"There was one woman who consistently failed to pay us for her flowers. I found out that on the money she owed us she was sending her children to school. She was living on my money, while I was exhausted.

"No matter how high the floods, how strong the wind, how violent the thunder, I would be out selling flowers. People laughed at us and said, 'What future is there in the *sampaguita*?' But we persevered. As long as you use your wits you are bound to succeed.

"We suffered great hardship. If there had been grass on the streets along which I walked it would have died. If I had been in a sled pulled by a carabao, the carabao would have died."

But now the hard days are over. "We no longer peddle flowers," Mrs. Amante said. "We sell them wholesale. On good days, we make about US \$3.00 and on bad days half that amount. Our children are all working except for the youngest and the seminarian. There is a saying, 'All the days of the week are yours, save one which you must give to the Lord.' Of our seven children there is one for the Lord."

excerpt from
"Asia Magazine"

BOLIVIA

S as in SALUD

Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

In an earlier issue of the "Precursor", I spoke about medical services in Chile. The situation in Bolivia is slightly different, but here also the authorities do all in their power to serve their people in this field. Third largest country in South America, Bolivia is one of the poorest in economic resources. A great many people are therefore deprived of adequate medical assistance. Moreover, instability of governments, which succeed one another too rapidly, may account to a certain extent for this state of affairs.

Three universities, those of La Paz, Sucre, and Cochabamba, award diplomas in medicine, later ratified by the Ministry of Health. After obtention of their credentials, the young physicians must agree to practise for one whole year in remote provinces. During this one year, the government pays them a salary of about \$100.00 a month. At the end of this year, those who wish to study a special disease have to obtain foreign scholarships. The temptation is great to abandon all thought of returning home. Well these men know that, in Bolivia, they could hardly hope to obtain a salary allowing them to live up to their social situation.

This explains why a hundred young doctors remain



without work in the capital, while out-of-the-way country places are without any health services at all. These doctors keep on hoping they will be able to earn enough to provide for the needs of a growing family.

Except in large centres, the individual practice of medicine is not a lucrative business. Miners earn a mere \$30.00 a month; *campesinas* live from hand to mouth. Such poor people can hardly be expected to pay high medical fees in case of illness.

What about a Sister-doctor who, thanks to her social status (she has no dependents), can afford the luxury of caring for the sick poor? As a foreigner, her task is far from easy. She must first secure authorization to pass examinations before a local medical board.

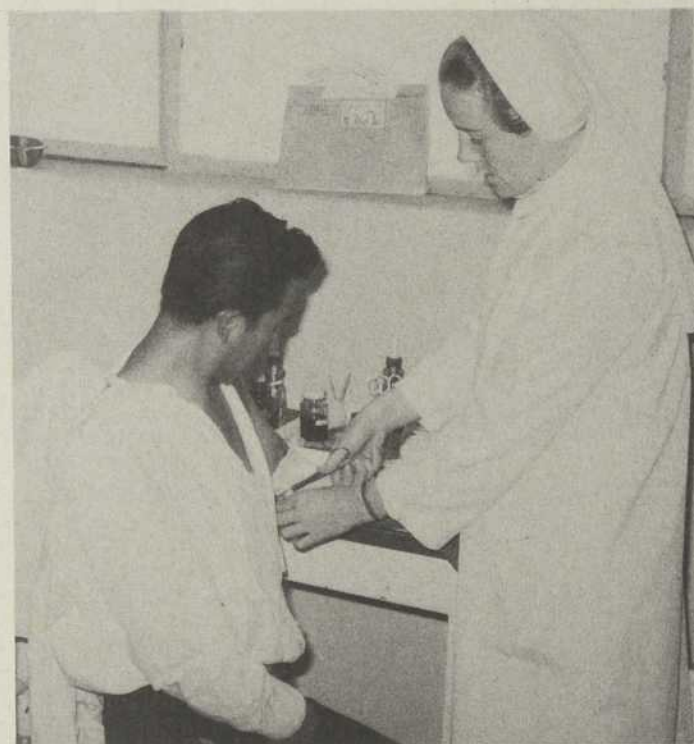
This entails a good deal of red tape. Once her exams have been passed and a diploma awarded, however, she may freely exercise her profession anywhere.

This is how it happens that I am practising medicine in a small mining village, about sixty miles from Oruro, the nearest city. The mining camp with its Catavi headquarters, its Siglo XX tin mine (the largest in the world), and Llallagua Village has a population of about 60,000 people. Half of this number are the mining company's employees. Their families are entitled to the medical services of the company's hospital at Catavi. Until now, no medical assistance of any kind has been provided for the other half, living mostly in Llallagua. The same holds good for the 250,000 *campesinos* scattered



A hospital with a capacity for 30 beds was opened last February. There is dearth of personnel, equipment, anaesthetizing facilities, plasma, etc. Abundance exists only as far as the number of patients is concerned.

Lately, COPOSA, a health coop, has been organized in Llalagua. It can cope only with more urgent cases.





throughout the neighbouring rural area, north of Potosi.

Lately, a health coop has been organized in Llallagua. COPOSA (Cooperative Popular de Salud) is the first of its kind to have obtained a juridical charter. A hospital with a capacity of 30 beds was inaugurated last February. Problems crop up every day. Coop associates contribute \$5.00 a year for a family unit. Such a small sum is far from sufficient to cope with all the requirements of the small hospital. Due to the great poverty of the people, more cannot be asked. The Ministry of Health willingly lends a helping hand, but its budget is limited. There is a dearth of personnel, equipment, anaesthetizing facilities, blood bank. Abundance exists only as far as the number of patients is concerned.

Many among the miners suffer from silicosis, a disease caused by prolonged inhalation of microscopic particles of silicon or quartz dust. A good number also suffer from tuberculosis. Insanitary conditions in the mines do not favour the health of the miners in general. What is to be done? Funds are lacking to undertake a massive campaign against such evils.

In Canada and other countries, the progress of tuberculosis, for instance, has been halted thanks to adequate treatment and sanatoria. Preventive measures protect the health of non-affected people. In Bolivia, preventive medicine is nonexistent. Moreover, the lack of elementary hygiene and child welfare are responsible for the death of a great number of Bolivian infants.

"Why go to the trouble of trying to cure an Indian child?" is a question that is often put to me. It makes me feel sad. Seeing my distress the speaker goes on to explain, "No matter what you do for him, he will never have anything else to eat than potatoes and misery all his life."

However this may be, the missionary medical team COPOSA hopes to achieve notable improvement, thanks to the cooperation of foreign agencies such as the Canadian Agency for International Development, OXFAM, Overseas Canadian University Service, and UNICEF. Thanks also to the spiritual help and the sympathetic interest of Canadian friends. God is always with us in all our needs.

Suffering and illness give a man time to reflect. Laid low on a bed of pain, he remembers his Creator, the why and wherefore of his life here below. The fact that kind persons are ready to care for him, to alleviate his pain, to assist him in his hour of need moves him deeply. He feels that such conduct can only be inspired by the God of love. Christ Jesus whom he meets on his personal way of the Cross encourages him to follow in his footsteps.

Whether or not he recovers, the patient leaves the hospital with a renewal of spiritual health and happiness.

Joy drawn from a deepening knowledge of Christ was the theme presented by the organizers.



STUDENT CAMP IN TAIWAN



Indian dances are appreciated even by the youth of Taiwan.



Some time ago, I attended a student camp organized by the club of Catholic students enrolled at the National University College of Medicine. Were present about forty-five students from the following faculties: medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, nursing, rehabilitation, medical technology, philosophy.



Organized by two medical students, a man and woman, the camp has known great success. Two thirds of the participants were non-Christians. The others were Catholics except one who was a Methodist. Joy, drawn from a deepening knowledge of Christ Jesus, was the theme presented by the organizers. Together we pored over the texts of the New Testament, shared the spiritual riches of the liturgy, gathered around the altar for the daily Eucharistic celebration. In short, we lived a truly fraternal life, one which provided us with worthwhile experience.

The various sessions were conducted by Father Jean Lefebvre, spiritual animator of the student club, and by a Spanish priest attached to the Hsinchu Social Centre. Father Lefebvre, who studied Chinese philosophy at the Peking University, was forced to leave the mainland when the government changed hands several years ago.

We were only two Sisters present at this camp. My

by Huguetta Chapdelaine, M.I.C.

young companion, Sister Huang, a fourth-year philosophy student at Fu Jen, is a member of the religious Society of Mercedes. Ever since she entered religious life, Sister has been animator of Catholic movements among university students.

Before breaking up camp, we launched a last invitation to all those who might wish to keep up their doctrinal instruction. Ten members of my Nursing Class I responded to this invitation. Except two, all were non-Christians.



- 4 — They should be prepared to cope with the exigencies implied in the intellectual evolution with regard to philosophy, religions, human sciences, etc.
- 5 — They should have benefited by a solid and up-to-date formation in religious sciences. Most of the inquiries made by prospective converts relate to: the sense of life, faith, the Church, religion. (The sex problem exists, here as elsewhere, but it is not considered the most important).



It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

Several points quickened my interest. I found that, in general, the students were true to themselves. They trusted one another, willingly shared team life, expressed their convictions, their hopes, and their fears with simplicity in the presence of the group. All this contributed to a spirit of comprehension and of mutual help.

Catholics enjoyed sharing the homily during the Eucharistic Sacrifice and the prayers of thanksgiving after Communion. For them, this was a sacred rendezvous which facilitated sharing their life with others less fortunate.

To the young missionaries who are preparing to leave for China, I send this fraternal message:

- 1 — They should have a desire to come. They must love the Chinese people.
- 2 — They should take time to observe.
- 3 — They should be convinced that the work of the Church at present is not necessarily material nor even social. The work of the Church is above all a service of the faith, a pre-evangelization followed by evangelization proper, and assistance to the Christians.

- 6 — They should nourish unshakable faith in the future and in God.

The challenge issued to the 1972 missionaries differs from the one so generously accepted by our senior Sisters who left the homeland forever in order to spread the Good News far and wide. They served in founding homes, in leprosariums, in large orphanages like the missionary heroines they were. Today's missionaries need the same dose of courage but the tasks proposed are different. They are faced with a rapidly evolving culture to which they must adapt if their apostolate is to be successful. But Christ Jesus remains the "Lord of the Impossible" as Charles de Foucauld was fond of saying. There are no limits to His power. Their own faith must measure up to it.

I urge you who want to be missionaries in China, to make the most of the formation you receive. Slow maturation alone will ensure a fruitful apostolate.

Welcome to all those who want to come.

Welcome to all those who cannot hope to come but who ardently desire to assist the Chinese mission through prayer. "They also serve who only stand and wait."

THE MAN WHO GOT INVOLVED

Louis Lambert Conrardy was born at Liege, Belgium, on July 12, 1841. He made his ecclesiastical studies under the Jesuits, and was ordained to the priesthood in his native city on June 15, 1866. From his earliest years he had nursed a burning zeal for the mission field afar. Before he could reach that cherished goal, however, he was called upon to serve as curate of a small parish in his own country.

Having subsequently been appointed a pastor, he promptly substituted French for Latin in the chanting of Vespers, advising his bishop that people got bored listening to a language they did not understand. Alas! The bishop held other views on the matter. He wondered what to do with this strange, difficult, and sometimes embarrassing priest. It was with considerable relief that he heard of Father Conrardy's aspirations to join the Paris Foreign Mission Society. His impetuous candidacy prompted caution on the part of the Society's superiors. He was finally admitted not as a member but as an associate.

In 1871 he arrived in Pondicherry, India. Assigned to the leprosarium, he brought in droves of lepers with no thought of consequent chaos. Eventually, his unceasing labours and the exposure to which he had subjected himself brought him low with pneumonia. As soon as he was able to travel, he was sent home to Belgium where, it was hoped, he would gain in health if not in prudence.

His next mission field was in North America where he worked among Indian tribes for several years. Then he heard the call of Father Damian, the heroic leper priest of Molokai, to whom he wrote, "Do you want me, my dear fellow countryman? I can still work for at least twenty years." This offer having been joyfully accepted, Father Conrardy left for the Hawaii Islands. He was then forty-seven years old. After Father Damian's death, he stayed on until the continuation of the work was assured.

While in Hawaii, he learned about the sad fate of lepers in China and made up his mind to bring them

assistance. Arriving in Canton in 1895, he found lepers living in cemeteries by day and foraging for food by night. He immediately made his formal plea to Peking for permission to build a leprosarium. The reply, long deferred, was that China had no need of Catholic priests. As for foreign doctors who were incidentally Catholic priests, no objections would be raised to their coming. Determined to end the misery of the lepers, Father Conrardy left for the United States where he began his medical studies at the Portland Medical School. He was sixty when he finally obtained his degree, and travelled to Belgium for graduate studies in tropical diseases.

Afterwards, although he was in poor health, the doctor-priest undertook a tour of begging for his beloved mission. He begged in the palaces of the great and at the door of peasant cottages, in large cities and small towns. Once, he was arrested and jailed as a swindler. He finally returned to China in May 1908, and began to gather lepers on Shek Lung Island, opposite Canton, where he erected large barracks. Soon there were five hundred patients.

When his funds ran out, he begged from door to door in Canton. "Like a saint from another age," one witness described him. But many were those who thought he was a fool. Weakened by the hot muggy climate and by overwork, his health rapidly deteriorated. When he was told that four Canadian Sisters were coming to the rescue and that the Paris Foreign Mission Society would take over the administration after his death, Father Conrardy calmly announced that his work was done.

Taken to Saint Paul's Hospital in Hong Kong, he died on August 24, 1914, a Chinese dictionary in one hand and a crucifix in the other. Rich in merit before God, he was deeply regretted by his helpers, priests, and religious as well as by his great family of seven hundred lepers. For this impetuous, zealous, enigmatic priest-doctor, involvement was never an empty word. It was a way of life.

LIGHT AND SALT

**Let me live in
a house by
the side of the
road and be a
friend to man.
S. W. Foss**

**by Nicole Joly,
M.I.C.**



Walking along the streets of our cities, intent on sowing the good seed broadcast, I have often longed to stop and share with you, dear readers, the treasures I find in my daily readings of the Gospel.

One of the favourite texts is that of Saint Matthew: "You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world" (5:13-14).

What a heavy responsibility this entails for us all! Unless we are the "salt" that flavours, the "light" that brightens and guides, we fall short of our duty as Christians. It takes only a slender wire and a switch to produce light, but contact must first be made.

On the spiritual plane also, if we fail to establish contacts, souls remain in the dark. Even those who are engulfed in the waves of gross materialism and secularism feel a secret yearning for God, the Absolute.

- You who teach the young generation know that our youth need God no matter how much they may deny it.
- You who are the idol of adolescents perceive that they are really straining after an ideal.
- You who are leaders feel that human values are more precious than material goods.
- You who are no longer young and active want to share with the rising generation the treasures of your wisdom and experience, to foster their growth and progress.

Contacts must be made. A little more patience, a little more love for all, less reminiscing of the past, brave looking forward to the future with more faith in one another, and our race will be ripe for a great burst of light and life.

But some of your questions puzzle me at times. You do not seem to understand the role Sisters can play in our modern society. Perhaps you think us outmoded. Well, you

should know that we are human beings, not so very different from you all in our aspirations. For us, however, love, comprehension, service, assume a universal dimension, since we are totally dedicated to the spread of God's kingdom.

Everyday you pray in the "Our Father" that God's kingdom may come. But, what do you do about it? It should mean everything to us. It gives me the courage to develop to the full my potentialities as a woman. I am convinced that I am engaged in a tremendous work which requires to be accomplished with a great heart.

God showed me that he alone matters, this is the reason why I opted for the missionary life. God loves the cheerful giver. Every little thing I do, I try to do with love, in view of the Kingdom. My goal in life is to scatter joy, delicate attentions, warm comprehension.

Every true religious is convinced that because of her total oblation to God she must live up to the "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Christ Jesus wants all Christians to be perfect. Faith in an all-seeing and personal God, elevates the soul, sustains human dignity, and lends nobility and holiness to the commonest state, condition, and manner of life.

Religious life is a marriage of the soul to Someone. Thanks to him in whom I believe, I can help others to reach out to him, I can uphold them by prayer, I can thank him in their name for his bountiful mercies. All these things we come to understand through the Light that illumines our hearts and our minds.

The Gospel also mentions salt as an important ingredient of holiness. It flavours things that are by nature insipid and gives zest to everyday living. In his epistle to the Colossians (4:6), Saint Paul says to his disciples, "Let your speech be always gracious, seasoned with salt."

Lately, I met Sister Alice Carrier, M.I.C., who surely possesses this evangelical "salty" flavour. Born in Worcester, Mass., Sister Alice entered our Pont Vieu Novitiate in 1933. She left in 1948 for the Philippine Islands where she devoted herself



to apostolic tasks until 1971. I interviewed her the other day. Here is the result.

- Sister Alice, what has spending all those years on the mission field meant to you?
- Those years were filled with the deep joy of service and of gratitude to the Lord. My adopted country is very dear to me. I felt at home among my beloved Filipino people so gentle, so gay, so openhearted. They really and truly became my people.
- Could you tell me something about your activities over there?
- I was in charge of the library at our San Juan School which has a roster of one thousand five hundred and sixty pupils. How I enjoyed serving the smiling, eager students! Even the boys who performed chores were unfailingly courteous and ready to oblige.
- Sister Alice, would you like to go back?
- Indeed I would. Anytime my superiors see fit to assign me anew, I will gladly leave for the Philippines.
- Now, Sister dear, would you be willing to share with me your impressions upon your return to Montreal?
- Willingly. I was agreeably struck by the warm welcome extended me by our young Sisters. Their affection, their warmth, and their gaiety went straight to my heart. They can certainly be numbered among the "cheerful givers" whom the Lord loves so well.
- Thank you Sister Alice. I do hope you will find among us some who will go to the Philippines to live the missionary life as joyfully as you have lived it.

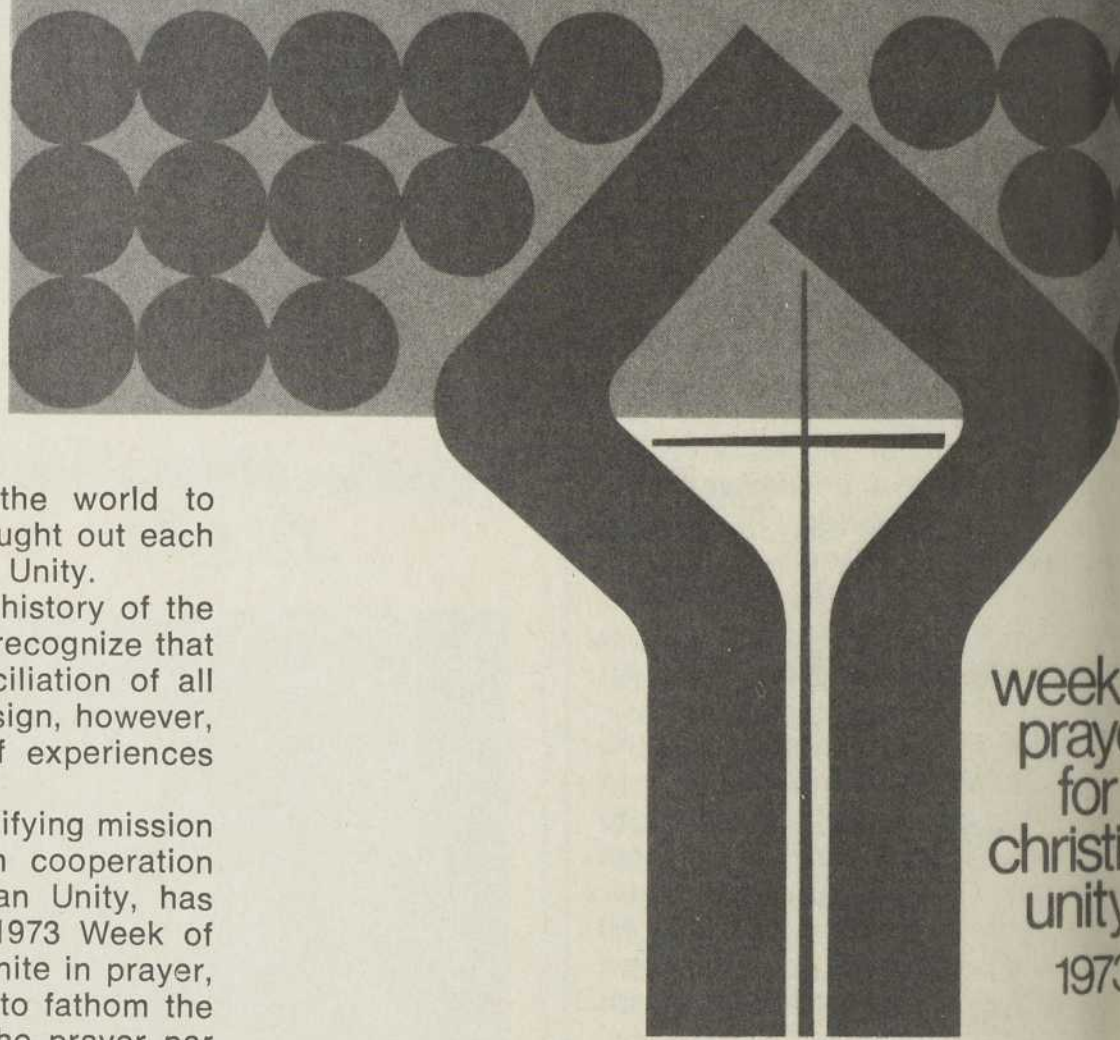
Thank you also, dear readers, for your indulgence in sharing these few moments of reflection with me. I like to repeat this ancient Indian prayer:

O God help me to walk in the boots of the miner, the shoes of the trader, the moccasins of the trapper, and the sandals of Jesus, the Master.

Yours joyfully in the love of Christ,

Nicole Joly, M.I.C.

lord, teach us to pray



week of
prayer
for
christian
unity
1973

The desire of Christians all over the world to achieve the unity that Christ wills, is brought out each year by the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

This is the age of ecumenism in the history of the Church. It is an age in which Christians recognize that the Church is a sign of the final reconciliation of all men with each other and with God. This sign, however, is blurred as long as the Church itself experiences divisions.

It is with this vision of the Church's unifying mission that the World Council of Churches, in cooperation with the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity, has chosen "prayer" as the theme for the 1973 Week of Prayer. The spirit of Christ urges us to unite in prayer, and to coordinate our energies in order to fathom the deep significance of the "Our Father", the prayer *par excellence*.

"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY" (Luke 11-1).

Who better than our Lord, can teach us the true significance of prayer? The first disciples who were privileged to watch their Master at prayer, discovered that this intimate relationship of the Son with the Father was at the very core of his human life.

The disciples did not say, "Teach us to preach." Instead, they asked to be shown how to intercede fruitfully and effectively. There was something about Jesus, when he prayed, that impressed them deeply, awakening in them a sense of their own inadequacy and a keen desire to be like Jesus in this special ministry of

intercession. In answer to their request, he taught them the "Our Father". Christians of today, is it not our common responsibility to rediscover the depths of riches contained in this unifying prayer?

BIBLE MEDITATION

"Lord, teach us to pray." How badly we need to make this request in earnest. It is not natural for sinful man to pray. We pray the "our Father" every day, but

have we ever stopped to plumb the depths of every word? In order to do so, we need the help of our Saviour. "As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me" (Jn 15:5). Christ himself prays within the living body of his Church.

How ardently Jesus desired to bring about unity among Christians! "Keep those you have given me true to your name, so that they may be one like us" (Jn 17:11). Again, during his Passion, he declared, "And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself" (Jn 12:32). In his letter to the Romans, Saint Paul reminds them, "The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words..." (Rm 8:26). Such a prayer will deliver us from our prideful self, and enable us to perceive God's will. Our points of view and our conduct will be transfigured. We will become servants as eager as Samuel to know what God wants us to do, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears you."

The fact that we can pray in this manner is a sign of Christ's victory. "God wanted all perfection to be found in him and all things to be reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, when he made peace by his death on the cross" (Col 1: 19-20). This victory will be fully manifested when the One sitting upon the throne will say, "Now, I am making the whole of creation new" (Rv 21: 1-5). This is why we can be sure that God the Father listens to our prayer. "Everything you ask and pray for, believe that you have it already, and it will be yours" (Mk 11:24). We can now make bold to pray together since such a prayer springs from the oneness which binds all those who live in Christ "If two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them" (Mt 18: 19-20). Such a prayer strengthens the bonds of unity. It makes us go out in love to the whole of creation and to all men. "God's plan, which he will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head" (Ep 1: 8-10). Thus shall we share in the work of Christ Jesus offering the world to his Father.

CHOICE OF BIBLE READINGS

- 1) Our Father in heaven.

Ps 100 — Ep 3: 14-21 — Lk 11: 1-13

In Christ all men can call God "Father".

- 2) May your name be held holy.

Gn 11: 1-9 — Ac 2: 1-11 — Jn 17: 1-8; 17:26

Healing divisions springing from pride, the Spirit bids us praise together the name of the Father revealed by the Son.

- 3) Your kingdom come.

Ho 40: 3-11 — Rm 8: 14-34 — Mk 1; 14:15; 32:39

The Spirit prays the Father to complete the work of the Son and to liberate all creation.

- 4) Your will be done.

Ezk 36: 22-28 — Rm 12: 1-12 — Mt 26: 36-42

Thanks to the new heart given unto us, our prayer becomes a communion of love with the Son who accepts the will of God and gives up his life for his brothers.

- 5) Give us today our daily bread.

1 K 19: 1-8 — 1 Co 11: 17-26 — Lk 12: 22-34

The gifts of the Father anticipate the prayer of those who trust in him and who willingly share with their brothers.

- 6) Forgive us our debts.

1 S 24: 1-20 — Col 3: 12-17 — Mt 5: 21-24

If we believe as children, God will behave as a Father.

- 7) Do not put us to the test.

Ps 13 — 1 P 5: 6-11 — Lk 22: 24-32

We are poor servants who expect their salvation from the Lord.

- 8) For yours is the power and kingdom now and forever.

Zc 9: 9-10 — Rv 5: 11-14 — Lk 10: 17-34

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Let us pray:

Mercifully fill your Christian people with the spirit of unity. Grant that we may cast aside our differences and serve you worthily in union with the true shepherd of your Church. Let us pray.

R: O Lord, listen to our prayer.

Save us, O Lord, and gather us from among all nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in praising you. Let us pray.

R: O Lord, listen to our prayer.

Grant us to be of one mind towards one another; that one, in spirit, we may with one mouth glorify our God. Let us pray.

R: O Lord, listen to our prayer.

That the holy Church of God reflect on earth the eternal union of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Let us pray.

R: O Lord, listen to our prayer.

That the holy Church of God make a great effort through everyone of us to attain that oneness in love which the Lord demanded. Let us pray.

R: O Lord, listen to our prayer.

That we may be one with him who dwells in us and one with all our brothers that we may thus build up the Mystical Body of Christ which with him gives glory to the Father. Let us pray.

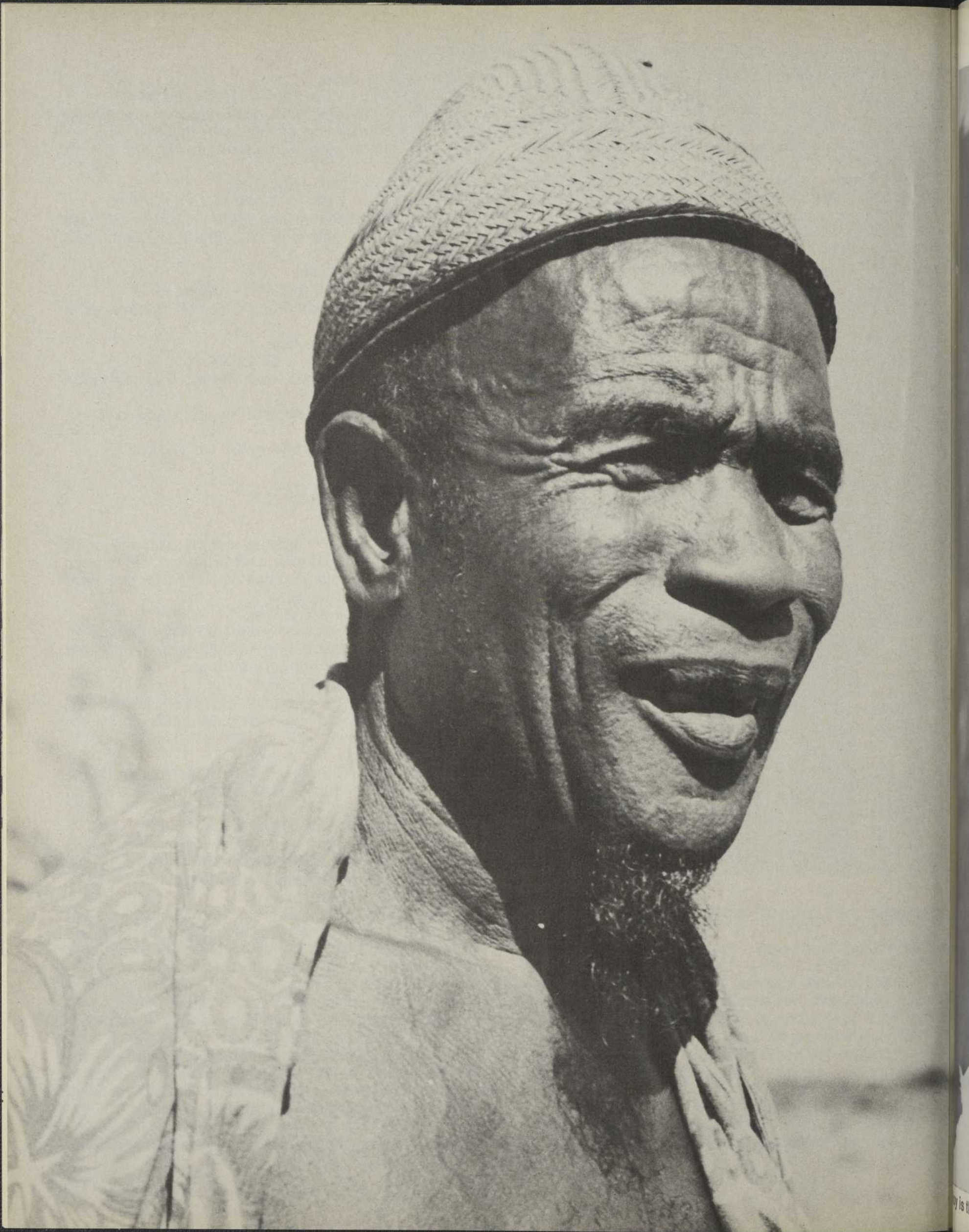
R: O Lord, listen to our prayer.

That the holy Church of God be ever strong to do what she must to keep peace in oneness. Let us pray.

R: O Lord, listen to our prayer.

We praise you, O Lord, our God, for the gift of your Son, Christ Jesus, who wants us to be one as he is one with you and the Spirit. Grant that our oneness with you be the sign of unity among all men.

Adapted from **Osservatore Romano**



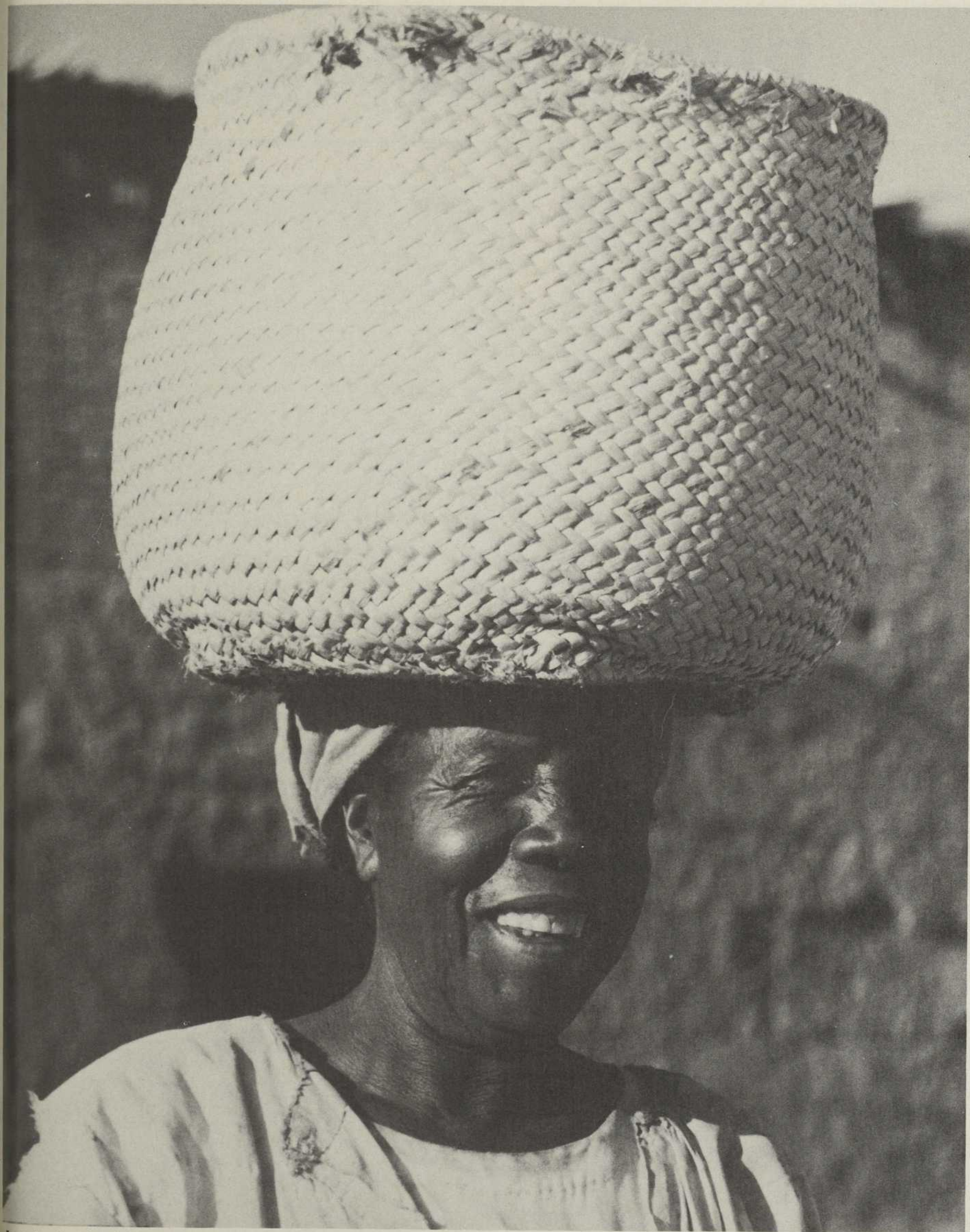


Photo: Express Photo-Tananarivo

Joy is the heritage of innocent hearts. In Madagascar life is not complicated.

PHOTO/REPORT

by Sister Rita Blais, M.I.C.



Marry in haste, repent at leisure seemed to be the rule for many Japanese young people of the postwar generation. Today, the marriage arranged by parents practically without consultation of parties concerned is seldom admitted. Young couples want to make their own choice of a life partner. In many cases, however, the traditional *nakodo* (middlemen) are still consulted.

During the last decade, girls with the most advanced ideas have unexpectedly turned out to be the strictest of mothers. In 1966, for instance, 80 per cent of the mothers opposed the marriage of their children arranged without consulting their family council. Even the young agree that it is safer to consult their elders in such an important affair as marriage.

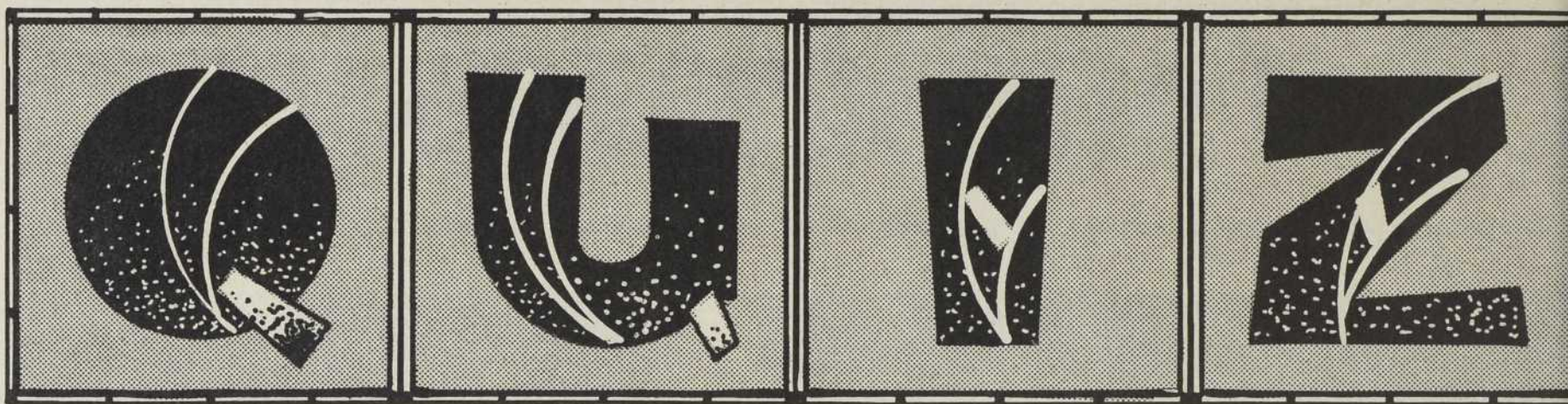
- 1 — Miss Takayo came from Kyoto to our Tokyo hostel for University girl students. We appreciated her sterling character and her brilliant mind. After successfully studying law, she graduated from Nihon University, an institution with a roster of thirty thousand students. She married a classmate, Mr. Kiyoshi Okada. Their marriage was blessed by a Japanese Franciscan, Father Maekawa.
- 2 — Modern Japanese girls may wear both foreign dress and Japanese kimono at their wedding. Here the young couple smilingly presides over the banquet. The table is laden with delicacies of various kinds: slices of raw sea bream, steamed lily roots, tender bamboo shoots, choice cuts of meat seasoned with shoyu sauce, liquor, rice cakes, etc.
- 3 — The graceful kimono is coming back into its own after years of the craze for foreign dress. During the banquet, Takayo exchanged her white dress for the formal kimono and coiffure of traditional Japanese brides even to the *tsunokakushi*, the white ceremonial headband which was meant to conceal the symbolical "horns of jealousy."
- 4 — At the author's departure from Japan, last year, Takayo, now a happy mother, came

WEDDING IN JAPAN



to see her off at Haneda airport. Left to right: Rev. M. Blais, C.S.R.R., Sister's cousin, also a missionary in Japan; Takayo and her little son; the author.

5 — Takayo's little son offers Sister a farewell bouquet at the airport. His mother is rightly proud of him, and dreams a bright future for her offspring.



WHO WAS MARGARET BOURGEOYS?

Blessed Margaret Bourgeoys ranks among North America's greatest missionary figures. A valiant, unassuming woman, she was gifted with a well-balanced mind, great force of character, unshakable faith, and a burning love of God and neighbour. She was the foundress of the first establishment of non-cloistered teaching women in Canada. She worked against incredible odds to spread the kingdom of God in what was then known as New France. Following in the steps of the Saviour, she finally offered up her own life to prolong that of another.

1

Margaret Bourgeoys was born on April 17, 1620, in:

Amsterdam, Holland
Brighton, England
Troyes, France

2

Her parents were:

destitute
wealthy
moderately well-off

3

Her mother died when Margaret was:
twelve
five
twenty

4

In her girlhood Margaret liked:
dowdy clothes
finery
dull colours

5

As her heart became more closely united to God
she made up her mind to enter the:
Carmelite Order
Ursuline Order



Benedictine Order
Visitation Order

6

Margaret first met the founder of Montreal, Paul
Chomedey de Maisonneuve, at Troyes in the year:
1653
1644
1650

7

When her project became known it met with:
applause
fierce opposition
indifference
ridicule

8

Margaret left France for Canada aboard the "Saint
Nicholas" on:
July 20, 1653
June 3, 1654
July 1, 1653

9

She accompanied Maisonneuve and his company
of soldiers to Montreal where they arrived on:
September 1, 1652
March 6, 1653
November 16, 1653

10

As no French children were then old enough to be
taught, those born in Montreal having nearly all
died in infancy, Margaret spent her days in:
solitude and prayer
writing
travelling
temporal works of mercy

11

For Margaret, the most interesting event of the
year 1657 was:
the opening of her first school
the building of a chapel
the death of the first Iroquois nun
the nomination of Father Souart as pastor

12

Margaret returned to France three times in order
to:
rest
find new recruits
collect money

13

Margaret would not allow her community to:
be cloistered
care for the sick
live as recluses

14

The first Indian girls to be admitted as members of the Congregation were:
Marie Barbe Attontinon
Catherine Takakwitha
Françoise Thoronhiongo
Marie Thérèse Ganensagouas

15

The first girl born of French parents in Montreal to join Mother Bourgeoys' Congregation was:
Catherine Bony
Catherine Charly
Françoise Lemoyne
Marie Barbier

16

One of Mother Bourgeoys' last journeys was made to:
Troyes
Champlain
Quebec
Batiscan

17

Mother Bourgeoys was relieved of her position as superior in:
1689
1663
1693

18

Mother Bourgeoys offered her life to restore to health a:
dying child
one of her own Sisters at the point of death
a wounded soldier
an ailing priest

19

What was to be the characteristic and distinctive virtue of the Congregation founded by Mother Bourgeoys?
charity
humility
prudence

20

Mother Bourgeoys was beatified:
March 16, 1949
November 12, 1950
May 20, 1930

ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

1

Troyes was no mean city. It was in existence before the conquest of Gaul by the Romans who called it Augustobona. Warriors and poets were born in the quaint old town with its narrow winding streets, wooden houses, and splendid churches. Urban IV, the pope whose chief title to honour is the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi, claimed Troyes as his birthplace.

2

Abraham Bourgeoys and Guillemette Garnier were but moderately endowed with worldly goods. The father was an honest, hardworking tradesman; the mother was a gentle, loving woman, a good wife and a devoted mother. Their home was peaceful and happy.

3

Margaret was only twelve when her mother died. She then assumed the responsibility of keeping house for her father and a younger brother and sister. She not only cheerfully performed household chores but became a diligent little teacher for her brother and sister as well as for neighbourhood children.

4

She liked to be as well-dressed as other young girls of her age. This fondness for dress even kept her for a while from becoming a Sodalist. But, by a special grace of Our Lady, she was so touched and transformed that she decided to dedicate her whole life to God. Vanity and love of dress lost their appeal. She joined the Sodality and was soon chosen President.

5

In her desire to serve God more perfectly, Margaret determined to become a Carmelite. Although grieved and surprised at her decision, her father finally gave his assent. But when she made application to enter the novitiate, her request was kindly but firmly refused. The Lord had other plans for her future. Her father died a few years later and she was then completely free to give herself to God.

6

Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve, known as Our Lady's Knight because of his devotion to Mary, called on his sisters who were cloistered nuns living in Troyes, in the early days of 1653. A group of these nuns ardently desired to go with the founder as missionaries to Canada. Maisonneuve told them that for the time being a cloistered convent was out of question. Then Margaret Bourgeoys was introduced. Like the great captain he was, Maisonneuve at once recognized the rare qualities that underlay the modest appearance of the young woman before him. Abruptly he asked her, "Would you be willing to go to Montreal to open a school?" Margaret agreed, after consulting ecclesiastical authorities and pondering the matter in earnest prayer.

7

At first, her relatives and friends thought she was only jesting. They listened with indulgent smiles at her disclosures. When they realized that she was serious, they tried to change her purpose by reasoning, pleading, entreating, but all to no avail. A storm of opposition broke out. Margaret weathered the storm and remained unshaken in her purpose.

8

De Maisonneuve and his companions left for Canada on July 20, 1653. It is hard for us to imagine what it meant to cross the Atlantic some three hundred years ago. The wretched old vessel on which Margaret travelled offered only misery and discomfort to passengers. A contagious fever, probably the result of bad water and unsanitary quarters, broke out on board. Margaret toiled unceasingly, nursing the unfortunate victims of whom

eight died at sea. With true missionary zeal she delighted in teaching the catechism to soldiers and sailors. After sixty-three days, Quebec was sighted.

9

De Lauzon, governor of New France, was sorely in need of soldiers. He did all in his power to detain the newly arrived company in Quebec. October was far advanced when the travellers were finally free to leave for Montreal. What is now a pleasant trip of a few hours, then proved to be a hazardous journey of a fortnight.

10

As she was unable to assume at once her duties as educator, her zeal found an outlet in other temporal works of mercy. In the quaint words of one of her first biographers, she was "a common mother, the eye of the blind, the foot of the lame, the consolation of the afflicted, making herself all things to all men, in order to win them all to Christ."



As far as Margaret Bourgeoys was concerned, the most interesting event of the year 1657 was the opening of her first school in a stone stable. Here she laid the basis of a Community destined to spread all over the country and abroad. Margaret Picaud was her only companion. They took possession of their new home on the feast of Saint Catherine.

As the population of Montreal increased, Margaret realized that if her mission was to be continued she needed companions willing to share her labours. Three times she undertook the arduous journey to France to recruit members for her Congregation, as the time was not yet ripe for Canadians to enroll. Upon her return to Montreal, she took up again the burden of work. Where everyone in the colony was poor and had to work for a living, Margaret wanted her Sisters to be poorer than all. In the words of an old Chronicler, "they toiled day and night at sewing in order to dress the women and clothe the natives, teaching in the school at the same time."

In educating the young, Margaret's aim was to prepare good Christian families, a sound Christian society, and finally a great Christian country. Therefore, she refused to allow her Congregation to be cloistered. If she and her Sisters were cloistered, how could they go out to assist the people in their spiritual and temporal needs? Moreover, she foresaw that a freer manner of living and teaching would be more suitable to a young country.

Perhaps the fairest blossoms culled in the Mountain Mission by Mother Bourgeoys were two Indian girls, Marie Barbe Attontinon and Marie Thérèse Gannensagouas. After being baptized, they were taught by Margaret and were both admitted to the Congregation. They became zealous apostles among their compatriots.

Marie Barbier was the first girl of French descent born in Montreal to join the Congregation. One year later, six more Canadians followed her example. All had been trained by Mother Bourgeoys from their earliest years. By 1681, the Community consisted of eighteen members.

In early spring of 1689, Mother Bourgeoys was called to Quebec by the bishop. It was too early for navigation to be resumed, yet too late for vehicles to venture upon shifting ice. The foundress was then sixty-nine years old, and was moreover worn out by her arduous missionary labours. Regardless of all this, she set out, alone and on foot, to travel the 180 miles from Montreal to Quebec.

Several times Mother Bourgeoys had asked to be relieved of her duties as superior. In September 1693, her wish was finally granted. During her remaining years, while living almost constantly in the infirmary, she never lost her interest in the welfare of her Congregation and in the salvation of souls.

In December 1699, Sister Catherine Charly, Novice Mistress, became so ill that she was beyond human help. Mother Bourgeoys was told of the approaching end. She herself was recovering from a serious illness. Claspings her hands in prayer, she begged God to take her own life in exchange for that of Sister Charly. Her prayer was granted. The Novice Mistress recovered against all expectation while she had a fatal relapse. Mother Bourgeoys died on January 12, 1700, at the age of 80.

The very soul of the Congregation founded by Mother Bourgeoys was to be charity. From childhood it had been the guiding principle of her own life. In the practice of the highest degree of charity — zeal for souls — the Sisters' model was to be Our Lady in union with whom all its works were to be performed. "The double commandment of charity to God and our neighbour must be the beginning, the progress, the end of all our actions," the venerable Foundress often said.

This valiant missionary woman was declared Blessed on November 12, 1950. Canada, Montreal more especially, rejoiced in the honour thus paid to one of its greatest pioneers and apostles. The historian Francis Parkman remarks that "in Margaret Bourgeoys was realized that fair ideal of Christian womanhood, a flower of earth expanding in the rays of Heaven, which soothed with gentle influence the wildness of a barbarous age."

CHILEMA

Malawi Ecumenical Formation Centre



by Evelyn O'Neil, M.I.C.



Chilema, a lay centre of ecumenical formation, is situated seventeen miles north of Zomba, Malawi. It was initially fostered by the Synod of the Central Africa Presbyterian Church and the Malawi Anglican Church. The first buildings were placed at the disposal of participants in 1965.



Development is a crying need on the communal and national level.

The centre's chief purpose remains what it was from the start: the formation of lay men and women who will carry on ecclesial and community work. Every year, series of lectures and courses are given either by Centre personnel or by various organizations. As opportunities offer, members of the teaching personnel conduct sessions in villages or other centres of formation.

Since 1965, over 5,000 persons have attended 270 courses. This gives an idea of the scope and variety of the programme elaborated by the centre. The programme undergoes transformations in proportion as new needs make themselves felt and traditional techniques are replaced by modern ones.

During the first three years, a group of evangelists belonging to the Presbyterian Church followed a course of catechetics together with catechists of the Anglican persuasion. The teachers in charge of the

programme have kept pleasant memories of this period. For their part, the trainees like to recall the happy time they spent together praying, singing, studying, and sharing. All left the centre with a clearer vision of unity in their milieu.

In 1968, an ecumenical meeting was held on the level of the formation and role of catechists. The following points were agreed upon:

- 1 — The necessity of pursuing the formation of catechists, not only at the centre, but also in their own environment as well as in the villages.
- 2 — The urgent need of deepening the formation of catechists in a familiar context, without neglecting the ecumenical aspect.
- 3 — The primary task of Malawi Christians which should consist in development on the communal and national level.

Evidently, Chilema intends to assume the responsibility of helping leaders discover the more abundant life free from misery, ignorance, and sickness.

Resolutions taken at the closing session led to the elaboration of the "Community Living Programme." This project inaugurated by the Malawi Churches tends to stimulate people to develop their own personal way of life, thus contributing to the progress of the nation. During the last two years, over 250 persons, all sponsored by ecclesiastical authorities, have benefited by a course of basic formation. The majority have no special trade or profession, but spend their days working small family plots.

Before the opening of each session, the director visits participants in their family environment. Between sessions, he also visits those whose formation has been completed in order to observe what progress has been achieved. However, results are not always of the tangible sort. The chief purpose of the centre is to change the attitude of the population, to awaken people to the necessity of creating more humane conditions of living, and to persuade them that progress is an essentially Christian responsibility.

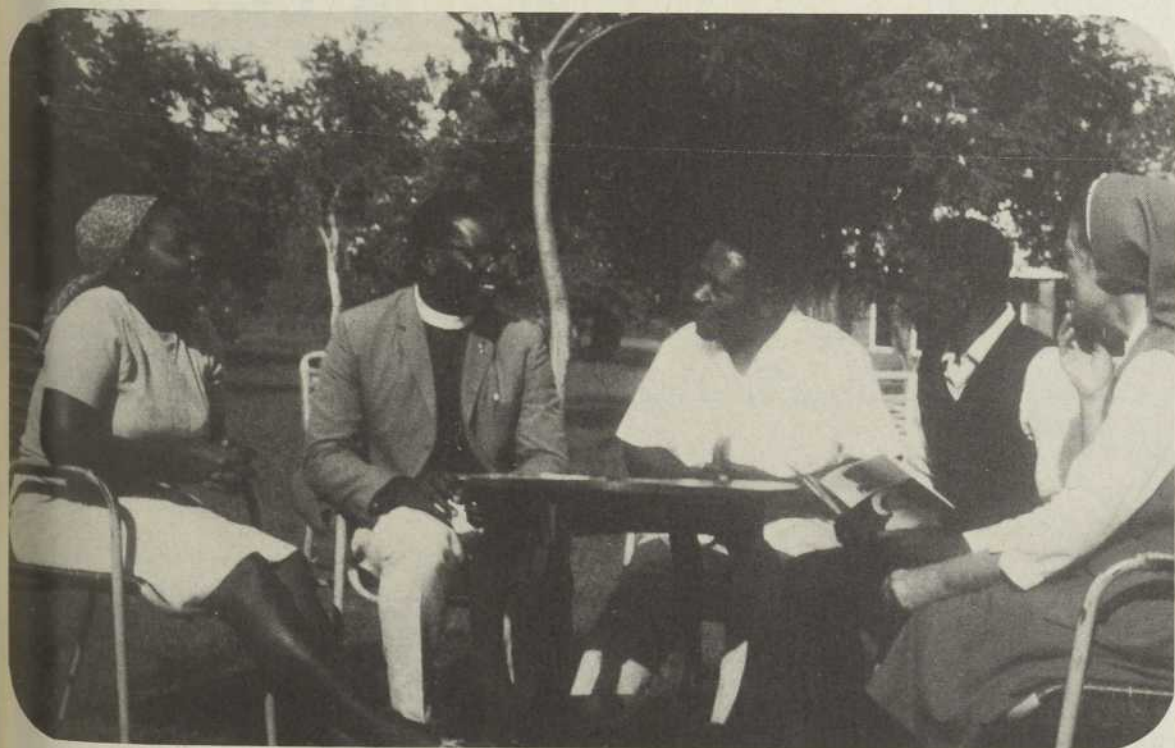
This formation session usually starts with a biblical study of the Creation so as to draw people's attention to the love of God for his creatures. From the meditation of this text stems the obligation for everyone to collaborate in the evolution of Creation. The centre provides means to this end. Hope is restored in the hearts of those who hitherto tended to adopt a defeatist attitude with regard to poverty and sickness. They are encouraged to join in the various community projects

launched in their town or village. Moreover, they become convinced that the improvement of the fate of mankind transcends divergencies of creeds. All the Churches are called upon to do their share. Participants in these sessions learn how to express their opinions with greater ease and freedom. They thereby experience the liberation brought to mankind by Jesus Christ.

This ecumenical venture launched in Chilema, several years ago, has had remarkable results. Slowly but surely, it carries on the good work initiated.

At the close of the sessions, auditors are required to present a résumé and to give their appreciation. Their remarks can, at times, be startling. The one most frequently expressed is, "We have come to know that members of other Churches are genuine Christians." These sessions apparently help eradicate strongly rooted prejudices, and create positive links between members of various persuasions. Some Catholics used to think that Protestants were not sons of God! They are now convinced that the Holy Spirit abides in them also. Others praise Catholic worship, and Anglican catechetics for the young.

The personnel of Chilema know that while ecumenism tends to unity, the diversity of tradition, language, and custom, must be safeguarded. Students leave Chilema with a similar message to be transmitted to respective places and peoples. If the time has not yet come to unite all Christians in a unique Church, worthwhile teamwork can at least be achieved for the improvement of society as a whole.



. . . making contact between members of various persuasions.

TAIPEI – TAIWAN

61 YEARS A MISSIONARY

Born in Laval (France) in 1886, Brother Xavier Coupe, S.J., died here at the age of 85. Sixty-one years of his long life were spent in the service of the Chinese. He passed away peacefully at Peipu, Hsinchu Hsien, where he had laboured ever since his expulsion from the mainland.

Brother Coupe arrived in Shanghai in 1910. During 42 years he spent himself caring for orphaned children at the famous Tu-sa-wei Orphanage where he trained a great number of boys as printers, craftsmen in wood and metal, and even sculptors. He was always warmly interested in the personal problems of the lads under his charge. The Tu-sa-wei alumni keep him in grateful memory.

After his expulsion from the mainland by the Communists, Brother Coupe went directly to Taiwan without returning to France, his homeland. In Taiwan, he organized a small technical school where he trained about 200 young apprentices. He also helped the missionaries of the region, drawing up blueprints for building their churches and advising them on their construction projects.

Brother Coupe's funeral was held at the Jesuit Church of Peipu. It was presided by Msgr. Pierre Tou, bishop of Hsinchu, assisted by 25 celebrants, in the presence of 25 priests, over 20 sisters and fifteen brothers. He was laid to rest in the cemetery of Chutung, Hsinchu Hsien.

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NIHIL OBSTAT:

October 12, 1972

Rev. Jean-Charles Valin

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