

THE PRECURSOR

Missionary Information Magazine

July-August, 1973, Ville de Laval, Vol. XXX – No. 10



HAÏTI

GUATEMALA



BOLIVIE

ZAMBIE





Photo: Fides

VATICAN: The John XXIII Peace Prize being awarded to Mother Teresa Boyaxhiu, Foundress and Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity of Calcutta (India). This ceremony took place in the Clementine Hall, in the presence of the college of cardinals, of the diplomatic corps, and of representatives of various religious and missionary institutes, among whom several members of Mother Teresa's congregation and of her own family. Photograph taken as Pope Paul VI presented the amount of the prize, \$25,000.00 (U.S.). (Fides)

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INDIA

MOTHER TERESA

Flame of love
in a world
of darkness



Mother Teresa chose as the habit of her Congregation a white sari with a blue border. Her warm smile reflects the deepfelt joy of the Missionaries of Charity, servants of the poorest of the poor.

TEXT: Madeline Maillet, M.I.C.

PHOTOS: FIDES

1971
January 6

On this date, for the first time, Pope Paul VI awarded the prize for world peace. This prize, instituted in memory of Pope John XXIII, was presented to Mother Teresa who has been a missionary in Calcutta for the past forty years.

WHO IS MOTHER TERESA?

She was born of Albanian parents, at Skopje, Yugoslavia, in 1910.

When she was twelve years old, she first heard an inner Voice calling her to religious life. At eighteen, she left for Loreto Abbey in Dublin, Ireland. After taking her vows, Agnes, now Mother Teresa, taught

for nine years at the Loreto convent school in Calcutta where girls of the higher castes were educated. For a while, she was appointed Principal of the school.

Outside her hours of teaching, she occasionally visited some of Calcutta's worst slum areas. Something like a magnet drew her to this spot. What she saw of the stark misery of the poor made her realize that here was her field of apostolate. It was at this time that took place the second shattering event in her life—the call within a call.

1946 September 10

September 10, 1946 was a day of decision for the young Loreto nun. She requested permission from ecclesiastical authority to live outside her convent in order to serve Calcutta's outcasts. At first she met with refusal. Taken to Rome, her request was granted by Pope Pius XII.

1948 April 12

She laid aside the habit of Loreto, and clothed herself in a cheap white sari with blue border and cross on the shoulder. So as to be able to relieve the sick, she went through several months of intensive formation in nursing.

While people living in comfortable circumstances expatiated on the country's wretched social conditions, Mother Teresa, with Christian love shining about her, went to work relieving what suffering she could.

She was prepared to follow her Lord, and to find him in every outcast left to die on the streets. She had a warm place in her heart for all those who suffered. The poor seeing her, were drawn to Christ. The sick and suffering found in her an angel of consolation. She was often heard to say, "It is not things that the poor need most . . . Being unwanted is the worst disease any human being can experience . . .

The greatest evil is the lack of love, the cold indifference towards one's neighbour who lives at the roadside, assaulted by exploitation, poverty, and disease." This evil she vowed to remedy with Christian love.

The going was not easy. Upon her departure from Loreto, she wrote, "Our Lord wants me to be a free nun covered with the poverty of the Cross . . . Looking for a house I walked until my whole body ached. I thought how much the poor must suffer in body and in soul trying to make a living."

Mother Teresa's first work was the opening of a Home for the Dying. She went to the Municipality and asked for a place where she might shelter the unfortunates cast out upon the streets to die. A disaffected part of a temple dedicated to the goddess Kali was placed at her disposal. This became the Home for the Dying. Only those who had absolutely no one to care for them and whom no hospital would accept were admitted.

The first thing she did was to make them feel wanted as children of God, to prove that there were people who really loved them and were ready to care tenderly for them in their distress. Since its inception, over twenty-three thousand have found a refuge within its walls. Of these, about fifty per cent have died. The rest have been nursed back to health and placed in homes where they can spend at least a few years in happiness and relative comfort.

Next on the list of her works of mercy were schools for the children of the needy, often left to fare for themselves, unwanted and unloved. She began by practical lessons in hygiene, showing them how to keep clean. Then she taught the basics. Soon, a group of teachers from Calcutta joined her and the work grew. Children were brought to her from hospitals where they had been left by their parents; others from jails. None were refused. "There is always one more bed for one more child," seems to be Mother Teresa's slogan.

A few years later, the tireless missionary nun initiated the work of the lepers. Rejected by their families, these unfortunates had no alternative but to turn to begging. Thanks to Mother Teresa, they were cared for, given expert treatment, rehabilitated, and at times enabled to live an ordinary citizen's life.

1950 October 7

In order to carry on these tremendous undertakings, Mother Teresa needed helpers. Shubashini, one of her former pupils at Loreto, joined her in March 1949. Others followed her example. Soon the little band numbered twelve.

The Archbishop of Calcutta approved the new Congregation of the Missionaries of Charity on October 7, 1950. Its members mostly came from middle-class families and were well educated. Some came from the higher and wealthier castes. These generous girls wanted to give their very best to God. They achieved fulfillment in their own lives by serving Christ in the person of the destitute.

1963 March 25

The Archbishop of Calcutta blessed the beginnings of a new branch, the Missionary Brothers of Charity. They care for boys in the schools and men in the Home for the Dying. At present, there are ninety-two members. They follow the same rule as the Sisters.

The spirit of the Congregation is one of total, cheerful surrender to God for the service of the poor, regardless of caste and religion. Members take the usual three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience besides a fourth vow of wholehearted service to the destitute.

Special emphasis is placed on the vow of poverty which is very strict because, as Mother Teresa says, "To be able to love the poor and to understand their problems, we must be poor ourselves." The



Cardinal Conway, of Ireland, and Mother Teresa, foundress of the Missionaries of Charity, at the Callighat Temple Refuge where are welcomed the aged and the dying who have no one to care for them.



Mother Teresa's daughters dispense tender loving care to children suffering from malnutrition.



The Missionaries of Charity seldom enjoy the treat of distributing gifts to children. They appreciate it all the better. Founded in Calcutta on December 21, 1949, the first aim of their Congregation is to assist the incurable, the unwanted, the dying.

Cardinal Conway of Ireland visits the *Shishu Rhaven* (children's home) conducted by Mother Teresa in Calcutta.

The young girls who enter Mother Teresa's Congregation take a fourth vow—a vow of charity—to serve Christ in the person of the sick and destitute. This disposition enables them to put up cheerfully with difficulties and hardships.





fourth vow taken by the Missionaries of Charity means that they cannot work for the rich, neither can they accept money for the work they do. Theirs is a free service to the poor.

Mother Teresa explains, "Our work to be fruitful must be based on faith, faith in Christ who said 'I was hungry, I was naked, I was sick, I was homeless, and you helped me out'."

Besides these two religious Congregations, Mother Teresa has also initiated a lay international association called "Co-Workers of Mother Teresa". It consists of men, women, young people, and children of all religions and denominations, throughout the world, who seek to love their God in their fellowmen, through wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor of all castes and creeds. "Co-Workers of Mother Teresa" make available to the Missionaries of Charity whatever time and material help are within their power to provide.

A day with the Missionary of Charity

The day of a Missionary of Charity begins with prayer and meditation at 4:30 a.m., followed by Mass. After Mass, washing and other chores are performed. Each Sister has a shining bucket, pretty well her only possession apart from a change of clothes, her devotional books, and a thin mattress with a pair of sheets. Clothes and books rolled up in her mattress and the rest stored away in her bucket, the Sister is ready to leave at a moment's notice. By worldly standards, her life is austere, but in her Congregation there are very few defections.

Malcolm Muggeridge, noted journalist and broadcaster, has described the Sisters as follows, "I have never met such delightfully happy women or such an atmosphere of joy as they create."

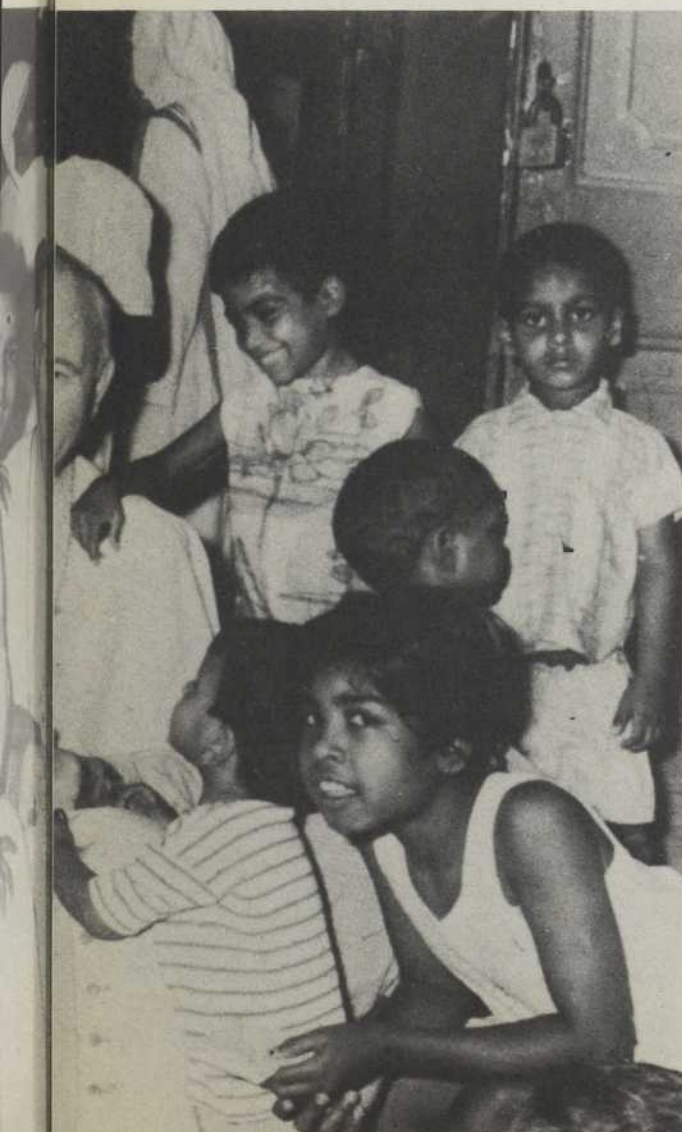
Jesus my Patient

Mother Teresa composed this prayer especially for her Sisters: "Dear-

est Lord, may I see you today and every day in the person of your sick, and, while nursing them, minister unto you.

"Though you hide yourself behind the unattractive disguise of the irritable, the exacting, the unreasonable, may I still recognize you and say: 'Jesus, my patient, how sweet it is to serve you'.

"And, O God, while you are Jesus, my patient, deign also to be to me a patient Jesus, bearing with my faults, looking only to my intention, which is to love and to serve you in the person of each of your sick. Amen."



PHILIPPINES

There is in our midst an emerging institution that puts the pessimists to shame. This is the FATIMA COMMUNITY CENTER, which has served thousands of families in the slum dwellings of Piapi and other parts of the Fatima parochial jurisdiction.

Barely two years old, the Center has rendered medical and dental services to more than 48,020 indigent patients and has trained more than a hundred out-of-school girls as skilled workers who are now earning for their families. Some of them as assistant instructresses in the Center's Sewing Classes.



THE SENTRY



The story of the Center is as beautiful as its objectives, so we were told by Fr. Marcel Lavoie, Fatima Parish Priest, Sister Madeleine Alarie, and Councilor Bonifacio Tamayo, three of the moving spirits behind the Center.

Lavoie, Alarie, and Tamayo were among the religious and lay leaders, who, in the latter part of 1969 decided to initiate the establishment of a community center "by which the actual conditions of life in the parish could be improved, and thanks to which brotherhood, charity, and love among the parishioners, irrespective of religion, could be fostered."

RY POST



With nothing but "faith in God and faith in the people" the parishioners were able to build a two-storey building out of donations and actual contributions from the residents themselves. Thus, in only a matter of a few months, the first FATIMA COMMUNITY CENTER building stood up proudly in the district, "a shining ray of hope for all in need."

As its first project, the Center established a medical and dental clinic. The Clinic is not entirely free. Patients who are bonafide members of the Community Center are asked to donate a few centavos each time they are prescribed medicine. The donation is aimed at accumulating funds to help defray the Center's expenses for medicine and the salaries of the clinic staff.

Thanks to the Center's initial services, its membership has swelled to a little more than 2,000 families. Fatima parish, where the concentration of the city's population is, numbers more than 10,000 families.

The Center is managed by a board of directors headed by Councilor Tamayo. Overall Coordinator is Sister Madeleine Alarie, M.I.C., who worked in the famous Sapang Palay re-settlement.

Dr. Merle Ypil, a young bachelorette, is the Center's fulltime medical officer, while Dr. Salvacion Singco Estergio attends to dental cases three times a week. Equipment and apparatus have been donated.

The sewing classes are provided with 20 sewing machines, 2 zigzag machines, one over-edging machine, and one electric cutter all of which have also been donated.

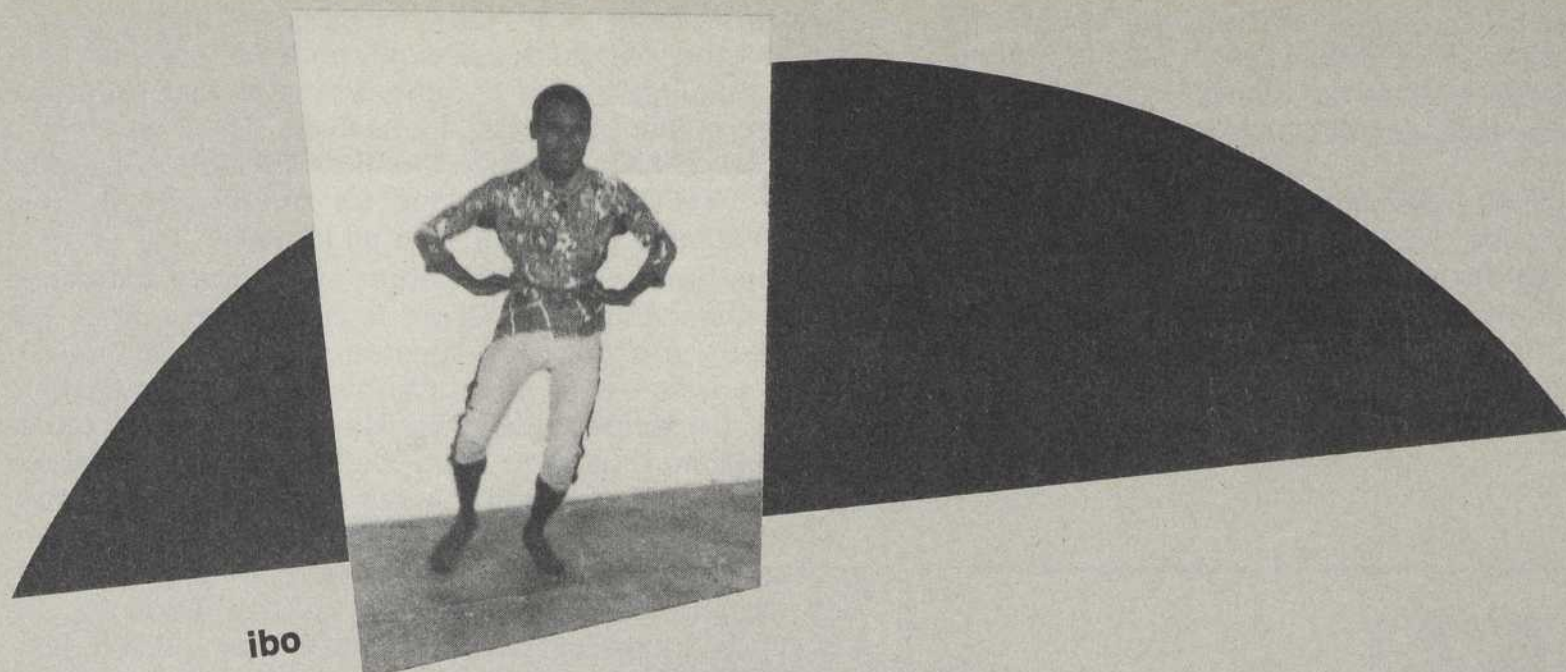
Moreover, the Center holds adult evening education classes, credit union seminars, and basic leadership training. It plans to conduct occupational training in cooking, barbering, plumbing, basic electricity, and electronics.

For this purpose, the Center has started the construction of larger quarters: a P40,000 two-storey building adjacent to the one now in use. Fatima youths are engaged in a massive fund solicitation campaign on volunteer basis.

Sources of income derive from the Center's members (60%), the parish (10%), and benefactors (30%). The financial status of the establishment is accounted for everyday.

For the Fatima parishioners, more especially for the Center members, life will never be the same again. Their determination to achieve self-improvement is paying off. "God helps these who help themselves."

Reprint from Davao City Dispatch April, 1972



HAITIAN FOLKLORE

by Joseph Augustin

1—Mr. Augustin, your exceptional talents for poetry and song have greatly enriched the Haitian repertoire. Your numerous pieces manifest at once the religious spirit and the artistic tendencies of your people, fond of colourful images. I have noticed that rhythmic dancing often punctuates your poetic works. Does this mean that harmony calls for movement or does movement simply serve as an introduction to mystical elevations? How would you explain this matter?

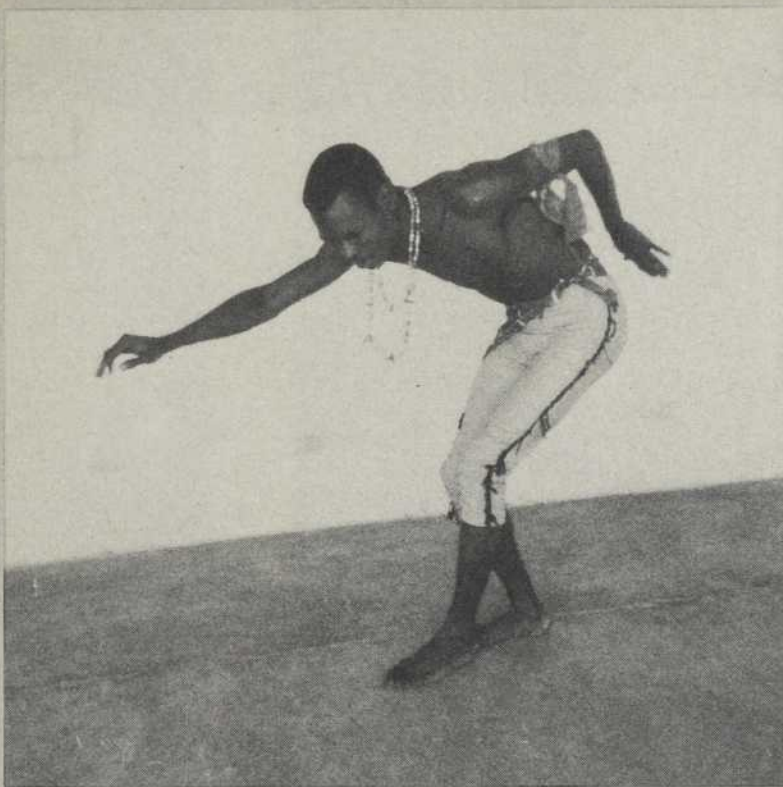
R—First of all, allow me to thank you most gratefully for your gracious appreciation of my Creole musical essays. It is with real satisfaction that I learn

how my songs have succeeded in conveying the adequate expression of our Haitian people's Christian faith.

And now in answer to your question, allow me to make the following remarks which I hope will enlighten you.

The drum and its rhythm are the source from which my songs evolve. One may say that the drum moans like the wind in the forest, roars alternately, crashing like thunder, or whispers like throbbing heartbeats. Rhythm and dance take precedence of melody. They could easily subsist independently.

Punctuated by cascading rhythms, our Haitian dances represent many rich and varied forms of human expressions. For instance, the *ibo* emphasizes

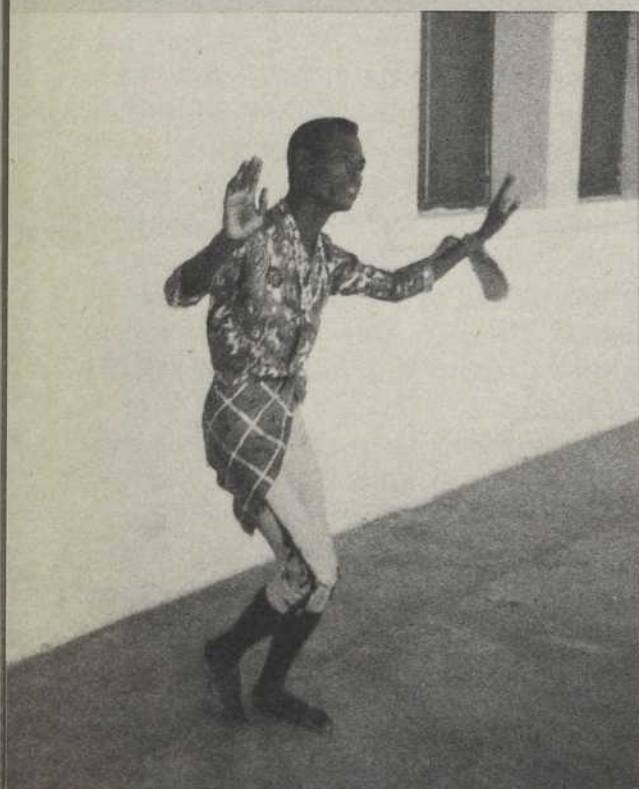


yanvalou

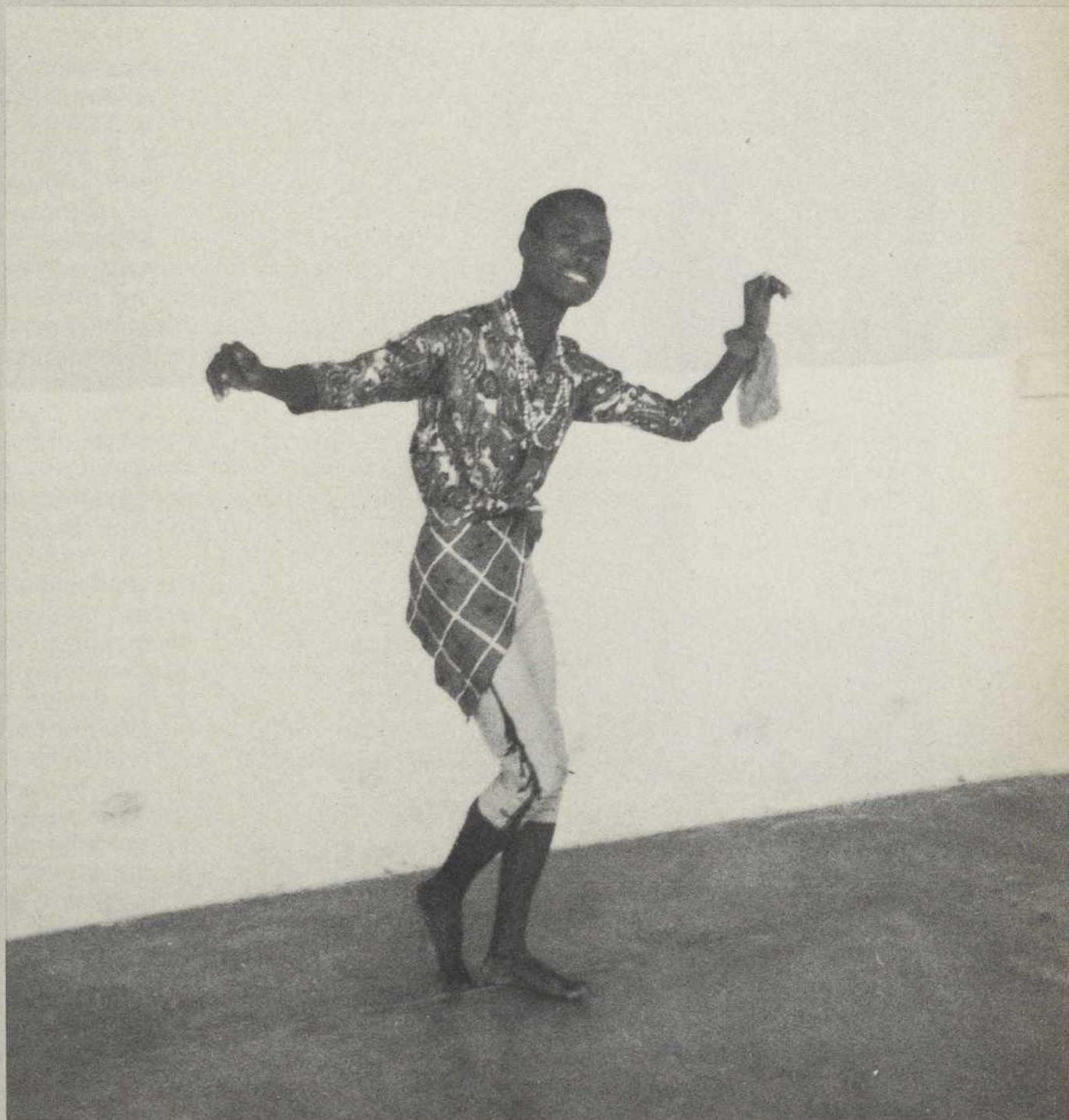


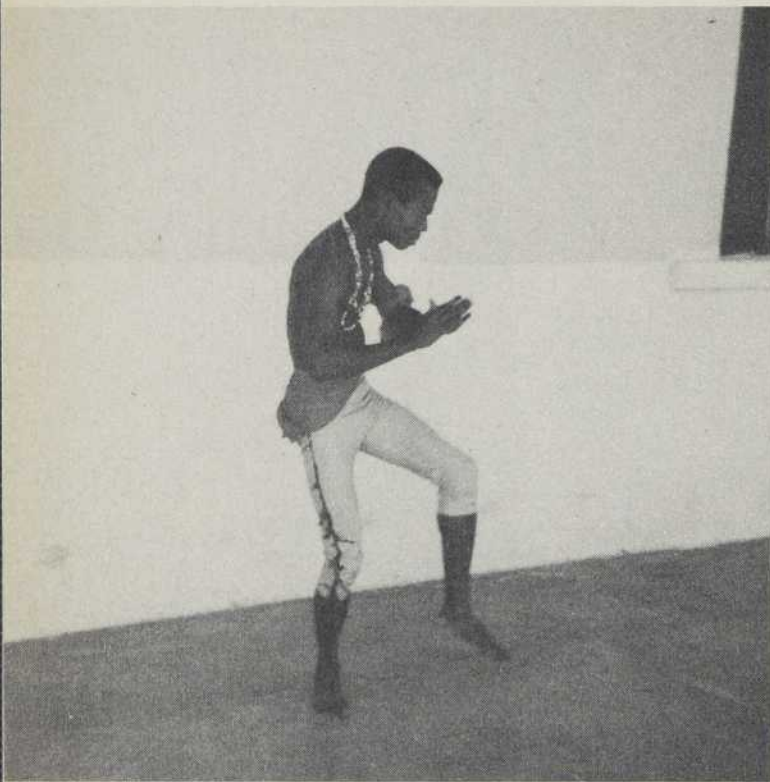
yanvalou

kongo

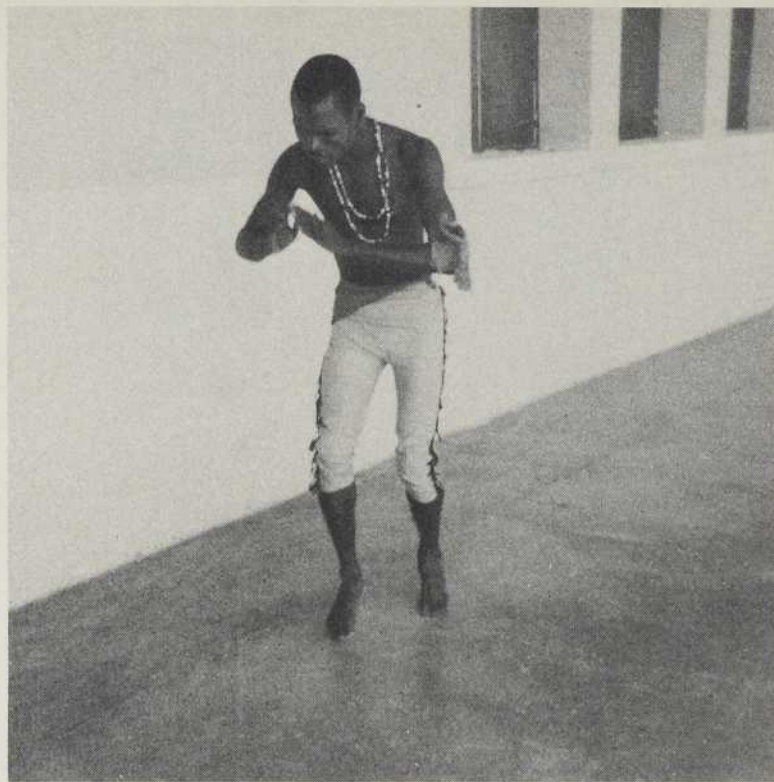


kongo





nago



nago



djouba

The members of "The Precursor's" editorial team thank Mr. Michel Cyriaque for his performance.

liberation; the *yanvalou* contemplation, tenderness, and oblation; the *kongo* friendly relations; the *nago* endurance.

If we consider the word of God and its expression with regard to Christian faith, this expression in Haiti can only be Creole as far as human authenticity and fidelity to the divine are concerned. Our language, our melodies, our dances are one and the same reality. They are manifestations of a unique ethnic genius. Both our rhythms and our dances form an integral part of our mystical elevations.

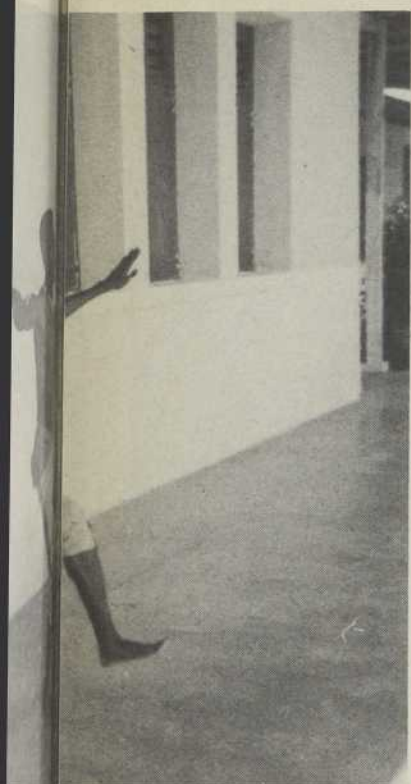
2—You have, for example, composed an *Alleluia* on the *kongo* rhythm. Does this rhythm convey the enthusiasm of the resurrection and a climax of joy?

R—The *kongo* expresses friendly overtures and cheerful cordiality. I chose this rhythm for the paschal *Alleluia* because the paschal mystery contains not merely the sense of renewed friendship with God, but also the idea of a transition from death to life. As you know, this transition is a daily motion of our whole being. Such a motion springs from a joy which increases every day and reaches its climax at Easter. This, to the extent that we live the hope stemming from the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

In my opinion, other rhythms such as the *mayi-zépol* or the *raboday* are better suited to the expression of mere enthusiasm. But in the composition of my *Alleluia*, I wanted to insist more on the part we play in our salvation than on our paschal joy.

3—Do the *nago* and *ibo* rhythms contain a certain hidden allegorical meaning?

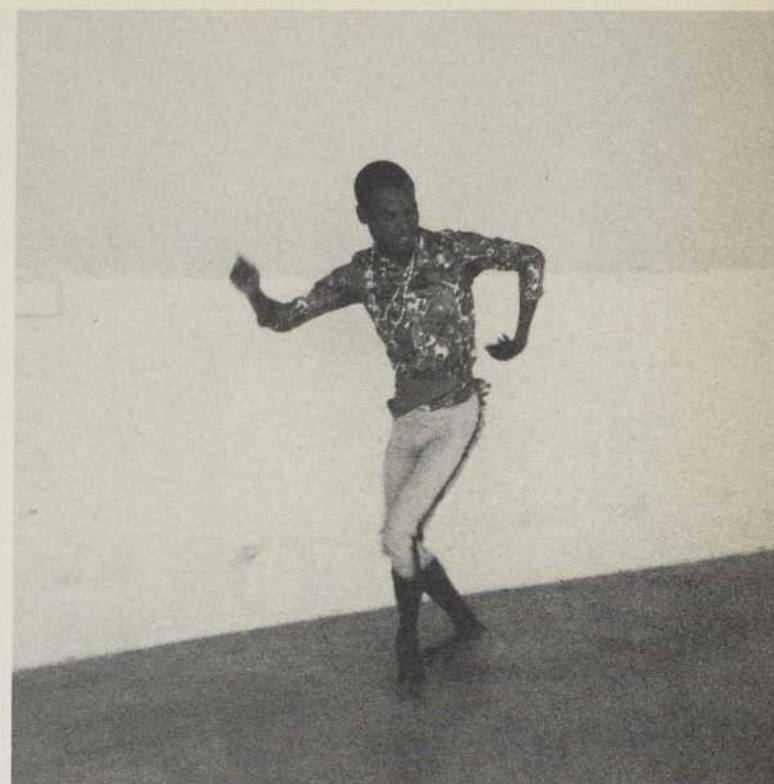
Is the swaying called *zépolan* allusion to fear or does it imply an expression of reverence?



mayi-zépol



mayi-zépol



raboday

R—The *nago* dance celebrates the dauntless courage of those who after a fall quickly rise up again. No matter how often they may stumble and fall, even though they feel exhausted, they still find in their faith sufficient energy to struggle on to the final victory against hostile forces.

As to the *ibo*, it symbolizes the snapping of chains. This explains the sharp parting of arms and legs representing the efforts made by the slaves to break the chains binding their ankles and wrists. Such a rhythm inspires us in our efforts at liberation, at ridding ourselves of complexes and oppressive measures.

The *zépol* is neither a fearful trembling nor even a movement of reverence. Rather, it expresses overflowing vitality issuing from the divinity, and communicated interiorly to man. It may also translate certain outbursts of enthusiasm.

4—Several dances express concrete local situations like those of seeding, harvesting . . . Which dances relate to these situations? Moreover, Haitian folklore comprises rhythms inspired by tenderness. These reveal the interior sentiments of love which aims at conquest. What particular rhythm would, in your opinion, be more appropriate on the above occasions?

R—The *djouba* rhythm corresponds to the seeding season, hinting at a generous yield. A slight motion of the toes seems to indicate that the dancer is gently caressing each tender sprout. His swaying bodily gestures manifest vital internal motions, thus interpreting the growth of the future plant and its rippling in the breeze.

In the *raboday*, the joy of a plentiful harvest explodes. This exultant dance is not performed in

as conventional a manner as others. It varies according to the dancers' whim. Why should it be otherwise? All true joy would be faked if it had to be expressed in a fixed manner.

As to sentiments of tenderness and love they are best expressed by the *yanvalou*. This dance, which consists of graceful undulating motions, enters for a part in 80 per cent of popular dances. It has numerous variations. The *kongo* is another dance which manifests conquering love, proceeding from a heart filled with the joyous expectation of a sentimental victory.

Nevertheless, experts in choreography do not place the *yanvalou* and the *kongo* in the same classification. The *kongo* operates on the social plane, while the *yanvalou* has a deeply mystical quality.

Dear Sister,

I am happy to have had this occasion of expressing the human values of Haitian folklore.

Thank you for your kindness. I wish to congratulate you on the publishing of a magazine animated by the genuine missionary spirit which acknowledges the positive elements in non-Western culture.

May this essay contribute to the pleasure of your readers.

Joseph Augustin

INTERVIEW: Elizabeth Van Chestein, m.i.c.

PHOTOS: M. Paule Sanfaçon, m.i.c.

BOLIVIA

ORKOPINA RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL

Photos: Imagen, Cochabamba

Ramirez, Cochabamba



The festival of Our Lady of Orkopina, one of the most colourful in Bolivia, annually takes place from July 31 to August 14. Highlights occur on the 14-15-16.

According to local tradition, our Lady appeared at Quillacollo, Cochabamba, during colonial times. This year, civil and ecclesiastical authorities concurred in making a resounding success of the *fiesta*.

August 14

At the dawn of August 14, the first ceremony consisted in carrying her statue in procession to the children of the parochial primary school. Afterwards came a solemn High Mass called *campana*, with general communion and an offering of flowers. A reception party was then offered to thousands of pilgrims who had come from as far away as northern Argentina and Paraguay.

Towards 2:00 p.m., solemn Vespers were sung, followed by a homily, and the traditional *entrada* or folk march. The religious procession proper would come later. On August 14, the secular aspect of the *fiesta* is usually emphasized. March-





Those who wanted money bought miniature tickets representing desired amounts. Others offered small objects representing their wish to acquire a truck, a house, a farm, etc.



Group of dancers.

ing in the *entrada* were over 50 groups of dancers wearing brightly coloured costumes. Next came the *pasantes* or persons who had contributed to the payment of the costumes blessed before Mass that very morning. Cars decked with flowers and silver objects closed the cortege.

Onlookers lined both sides of the road. Numerous booths offered refreshments, flowers, candles, holy pictures, etc., for sale. Meanwhile other groups of pilgrims visited the church to sing hymns to Mary, light candles in her honour, beg for the priest's blessing given by laying an end of the stole on the devotee's head. Unfortunately, *chicha* (native beer) flowed all too freely outside the church, and many got drunk.

In the early evening hours, the main plaza overflowed with spectators eager to watch the band contests. Games were played, and the traditional fireworks exploded. Music filled the night with more or less pleasant harmony. Inside the church, peasants played on their *samponas* and *tarkas* (primitive instruments) monotonous melancholy tunes, echoes of their harsh existence in drab mountain surroundings. Their message seemed to be, "When will you help us, O Lady of Orkopina?"

August 15

Early on this morning of August 15, church bells rang out a joyful message. At 5:30, a Mass of the Dawn was followed by concelebration and *novenantes* (novena). Throughout the forenoon, Masses were celebrated. After dinner took place the grandiose procession of the Cochabamba department. The Cross was borne ahead of the cortege followed by our Lady's statue carried aloft on the shoulders of whoever was fortunate enough to obtain this honour. On either side of the streets, throngs of faithful sang and prayed while bands and groups of dancers stressed the religious character of the processions with rhythmical tread.

All day long, the *fiesta* was punctuated by the music of the bells

which sang through the packed city streets. People from all over paid homage to Our Lady of Orkopina. The evening was gay with the playing of bands, and the glittering flowers of fireworks.

August 16

On this day, the ceremonies took place on the mountain called Calvary. Our Lady's statue was carried to the top accompanied by a procession of faithful alternately singing and praying. Mass was then offered. The other part of the ceremony was symbolical, and typically Bolivian. People who wanted to acquire money, bought miniature tickets representing the amounts desired. Others presented pebbles which they asked to have blessed. They promised to make a godly use of their riches if their wishes were granted. Still others offered miniature objects representing their wish to possess for instance a truck, a house, a farm, etc. Even lovers had their own band and danced in honour of our Lady, begging her for a blessing on their future marriage.

At 7:00 p.m., the people of La Paz and Oruro presented their splendid fireworks and a concert just as the Santa Cruz people had done. Festivities lasted throughout the night. Small processions were organized by various groups of pilgrims. Everybody seemed happy and contented, just as if all their wishes had been granted by Our Lady of Orkopina.

WHAT ABOUT THESE CELEBRATIONS?

During the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops at Medellin, Columbia, in 1968, the bishops attentively studied popular religious manifestations of Latin America.

The expression of the people's religiosity is the result of an evangelization carried on since the time of the Spanish conquest. It has its unique characteristics. In general, it is a religion of vows and of promises, of processions and pilgrimages, of numberless devotions. It

is based on the reception of the sacraments, particularly Baptism and the Eucharist. Just as each man differs in his relationship to God, so does each nation. With the years, certain expressions of faith have been deformed. They have often become entangled with practices of the ancestral religious heritage in which tradition plays an almost tyrannical role. Missionaries engaged in pastoral activities must strive to discover in these expressions, the stammerings of an authentic religious sense. The Church accepts such elements with respect. She purifies and incorporates them into her deposit of faith as "seeds of the Word".

Missionaries ought not to condemn at first sight practices which to them appear bizarre and superficial. Their studies should be geared to the implementation of an adequate and catechetical pastoral action based on the various subcultures, with due regard for human needs and aspirations.

Devotion to our Lady is a Spanish heritage not to be taken lightly. As time went on, each Spanish missionary brought here the particular devotion of his own town or village. Hence the great number of Marian titles. Hence also the numerous Marian pilgrimages which characterize the faith of the Bolivian people.

Visiting such and such a shrine, burning a candle in front of a statue, may be tokens of a promise. Such a promise is often honoured at the cost of much fatigue and heavy sacrifice. The hardships entailed do not seem to matter. As long as the faithful have visited Mary in one of her shrines, kissed her statue, lighted candles in her honour, they return home contented and happy. The Latin American people need to translate their feelings through tangible signs, especially with regard to the Mother of God. May not Latin America be called the Land of Mary?

Pierrette Quevillon, M.I.C.
Cochabamba, Bolivia

AFRICA AS I SAW IT

Seventeen-year-old Christiane spent a few weeks in Zambia, last summer. Sister Pauline Pageau, M.I.C., interviewed her for "The Precursor".



by CHRISTIANE

Q. Christiane, I would like to know your impressions about Africa. I'm sure it was a worthwhile experience for you as a student. How about it?

A. Well, I really don't know where to begin. There is so much to say about Zambia in general, and Lusaka, the capital, in particular.

Q. Was this your first trip to Africa?

A. It was. Lusaka does not at first give one the impression of being in Africa. It looks for all the

world like a small North American city. Of course, there are many Africans about, but there also are many white residents. It was only on the long road to Chipata that I finally realized I was in Africa.

Q. Did anybody meet you at the airport?

A. Father Michel, W.F., and Sister Françoise, M.I.C., were waiting for us. They first took us to the White Sisters' convent where a friendly welcome awaited our group of five Canadians. We felt thankful for a

halt in quiet surroundings after our flight of nineteen hours.

Q. I suppose you next drove to Chipata in a car?

A. Yes. It took us all of six hours before we reached Chipata. The trip was full of surprises. First the weather — 50°F. June and July are winter months in this region. The vegetation was dry and brittle. We were struck by the huge baobabs, and the redness of the soil. It amused us to watch mam-

ular group of five Canadians could be doing in Zambia. . . Tourists are few and far between.

Chipata is a small city of about 25,000 inhabitants. It has no hotels, no taxis, no other means of communication. We teased Françoise who wanted to go on a shopping spree. The public market is the one and only shop in the city, and its wares are piled up at random. We did buy a few typical objects as souvenirs.



HOLIDAY ADVENTURE

mas with headborne loads, and babies carried pickaback. Denis was astounded at seeing that the people nearly all looked cheerful, as if they had not a care in the world.

Q. Did the Africans seem surprised to see you people?

A. I don't think so. They are used to missionaries and other whites who have lived here for a long time. Maybe they wondered a little what this partic-

Q. I have heard it said that Africans have a remarkable sense of hospitality. What is your opinion?

A. True enough. They readily offered us simple gifts such as groundnuts, pumpkins, a live chicken. . . Sister Evelyn laughingly took charge of this latter gift. On the other hand, they did not willingly accept presents. Rodrigue wished to give a catechist, whose guests we had been, a woolen blanket. It took a lot of coaxing before he accepted.



Time passed very quickly as we walked in the bush, visited the Reserve, loitered in the market place, climbed thatch-roofed huts . . .

Q. Did you visit any bush stations?

A. Not exactly. We did manage to visit a small farm. Lucia, leader of the Movement for the Promotion of Women, invited us to make the rounds of her fields. We tasted delicious peanut butter and honey. In her house, we sat on the straw mats while her lord and master alone enjoyed the privilege of a bench.

The African men around here are made much of. Of course Rodrigue and Denis found this much to their liking. They could not get over the fact that women often knelt on one knee to shake hands with them, according to traditional politeness.

Q. Did you sample any African food?

A. We did. This was one of my most enjoyable experiences. We once accepted an invitation to supper. In the centre of the family hut, a fire burned on a stone hearth. A makeshift table was covered with clean newspapers instead of a tablecloth. The friendly couple who had invited us, had borrowed dishes and utensils in our honour. We ate by candlelight. Neither the wife nor the children shared the meal, this being the custom. Our host invited us to eat the *sima*, a staple dish of thick corn mush set in the middle of the table. Sister Fran-

goise taught us the correct way of rolling a pinch of *sima* into a ball to be dipped into the three other dishes on the menu—spiced meat, beans, and an omelette. I enjoyed every bite. There are usually no desserts, but soft drinks such as Coke and Fanta are offered.

At another house where we were invited, the host offered us soft drinks and chocolate biscuits, then gave us about sixty cents so we could buy ourselves some Fanta in Europe or in Canada!

Africans are noted for their politeness. When visitors take their leave, they accompany them part of the way. The more they wish to honour you, the farther they go. This, Sister Françoise explained, was why our late host followed our car, riding his bicycle, almost up to our destination. It made me feel nervous.

Q. As a student you probably were interested in visiting schools?

A. I visited only one—Saint Monica's Secondary School, a state-sponsored establishment. Several foreign Sisters were on the teaching staff—one Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception, a group of Grey Nuns and another of Maryknoll Sisters.

The chemistry and biology laboratories were well organized. Here it is easy to secure items for dissection: serpents, panthers, crocodiles, etc. There was a typical African touch to the equipment and furniture. The garbage cans were shaped like elephant legs. Teaching is done in English, but a few students learn French as a secondary language. We were thus able to exchange a few words with them.

Q. Did you visit Zambia's animal reserve?

A. We did. There is a huge park in MFUWE where wild animals roam at will. We saw hyenas, antelopes, leopards, elephants, zebras, lions, hippos, etc. This park is very different from the zoological gardens we visited back home. Animals are not cooped up in cages, but visitors are prudently cooped up in their cars. It is not easy to take photographs.

Q. What were your impressions as regards the missionaries' work? What did you expect? Did you think they were concerned with development and the human interests of the people?

A. The five of us were pleasantly impressed with the missionaries' achievements. Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters all foster human dignity. For my part, I had some sort of idea that they were interested only in religious questions, in the salvation of souls, as we used to say. I found out that these experts in missiology, while far from neglecting religious aspects, appreciated the concrete which leads to the ideal.

Q. That's right. They proceed from the visible to the invisible, from cultural values to the values of evangelization . . . Were you present at Sunday Mass in one of the mission posts?

A. Indeed we were, and what an experience that proved to be! I could not get over the enthusiastic response of these people to a liturgy adapted to their own mentality, to their age-old religious values.

Q. As far as I can see, you enjoyed your trip to the full. Are there any other impressions you would like to share?

A. I want to emphasize the admirable work accomplished by missionaries. The Sisters, in particular, struck me as being remarkable women, wholly dedicated to their task, competent in home economics, catechetics, pediatrics, the sciences . . . They were not only teachers but friends of their African pupils. In short, I met such wonderfully authentic personalities that I am half tempted to join them in their apostolate.

Q. Perhaps you would like to work as a lay missionary for a year or two?

A. I don't think I would. But I might spend part of my holidays helping.

Q. In your opinion, do missionaries still have a role to play in the modern world? Do you believe that some persons can still be called to this vocation?

A. I do believe in the missionary vocation, although I am not sure about its full implications. The Sisters I met were so deeply attached to their mission country that they did not wish to return to their homeland. This left me really puzzled.

Q. Don't you think this might be because they are motivated by something stronger or by Someone dearer than all?

A. They surely need strong motivation to persevere in their work. But then, they are so deeply loved . . . I could not help being impressed by the respect shown them by the Africans.

Q. What about the cultural point of view? Did this trip enrich you in any way?

A. It surely made me appreciate the privileges I enjoy in my homeland. We are literally spoilt children compared to other people. I am sure we ought to do a lot more to help our missionaries overseas.

The missionary priest's lot, in particular, is difficult. He is not merely pastor of his people, but carpenter, adviser, peacemaker all thrown into one. He is wonderful. I remember one of our group remarking, "If missionaries did not exist, we would have to invent someone to replace them." How true this is!

Also, my stay in Chipata convinced me that our missionary Sisters are exceptionally competent, warm-hearted women. We were deeply impressed by their friendly welcome. All of them treated us as if we were members of their family circle. Never can we forget the good time we spent together in Africa.

FROM GUATEMALA

WITH THE RED CROSS

Bertha Buisnières, M.I.C.
Champerico, Guatemala



On December 23, 1972, Guatemala radio, TV and newspapers broadcast the sad news of a devastating earthquake which destroyed half of Managua, the capital of Nicaragua. Neighbouring countries and nations all over the world soon set relief services going.

I personally wished to do my share. As I was on my holidays, extending up to January 8, I asked my immediate superior and our pastor, Father Juan Man-

uel Amezaga, to allow me to go to Managua as a nurse. Both gladly assented, and Father even promised to make arrangements to have me flown to the disaster area. A friend of his was preparing to leave for Managua with parcels of food. He might agree to take me along as a Red Cross worker.

The answer came on December 26. I was told to be ready to leave a few days later. On December 28, a group of friends accompanied me to the airport

A TO NICARAGUA

S IN MANAGUA



Managua lies in ruins after the quake.

where Don José Cuesta, member of the Retalhuleu Rotario Club, was waiting with a small four-seat plane. Bulky parcels already filled two of the seats. I sat beside the pilot. Don José announced, "Ready! We are going to León, a city close to Managua, where your services as a nurse will surely be appreciated."

Having left Guatemala at six in the morning we reached León, Nicaragua, at nine. Two doctors were waiting at the airport. They drove me to an old people's home conducted by Sisters of the Poor of Saint Francis Claver, a Columbian Congregation. The superior welcomed me with open arms, for her six Sisters and their twenty aides were exhausted. There was not one registered nurse among them. Beside their seventy-six old people, many of whom were incapacitated, they had to care for over fifty refugees.

Among the latter many were wounded or sick or merely stunned by the catastrophe. Fortunately, there were no serious injuries. However, numerous persons suffering from varicose ulcers had not had their bandages renewed for the last seven or eight days. The worst part of it was that there were not enough medical supplies to go round. We would have to find ways of getting at least a decent supply of bandages and antibiotics to ward off contagion.

During the morning hours, I took care of those who needed medication and accompanied the doctor on his rounds. In the afternoon, I looked after the charts, and taught a young girl first aid so that she might carry on when I was gone. Late in the evening, I again made the rounds of my patients to wish them good night and distribute medication.

On December 29, I was invited to attend the funeral of Father Bruno Ramirez, a Spanish member of the Society of Saint Joseph Calasanz. He had succumbed to injuries received during the earthquake. Over one hundred persons accompanied him to his last resting place.

There were two other funerals during the following days: an aged woman whom I had treated for a head wound and an old man who did not outlive the terrible shock of the quake. No relatives could be located as nobody knew where they were. Four prisoners accompanied by two soldiers dug the graves, then buried the two. I reflected how Father Ramirez, who had left his own country and family, had been accompanied to the cemetery by many Nicaraguans who revered him as a benefactor. Our two patients, however, although they died in their homeland, went to a lonely grave. How incomprehensible are the workings of divine Providence!

On December 30, another group of refugees arrived at the Home. There were no beds left, so they had to lie on the bare floor as the Sisters were unable to find even a few mattresses to accommodate them. The next day, I left with a group of friends for Managua about eighty-one kilometres from León. It took us barely one hour to reach the stricken city, by now a pile of rubble and practically deserted. Where had all the people gone? Some to cities, an hour or more by

truck—León, Granada. Others filled already existing slums like "Open 3", about eleven kilometres from the city, and a place called Torres Molina.

The León newspapers described the calamity as follows: "According to a report from the United States embassy, over 60,000 houses collapsed, 300,000 persons were evacuated, 20,000 were injured, and at least 6,000 were killed. Half of the internal raw production was lost, half of the school buildings ruined, and all of the government buildings destroyed. It will take years to rebuild the shattered lives of the survivors."

What saddened me most was to see hundreds left homeless, many in a state of shock and grief, alone in a world of chaos and pain. Entire families were buried under piles of debris. Over four thousand people perished in the flames.

Only ninety thousand Managuans survived. Twenty thousand sought refuge in León which is now overcrowded.

Refugees' houses are marked with a red flag. Certain public services have been disrupted, telegraph and post office for instance, but international aid is pouring in. I spent two days helping at a food distribution centre. Order reigned; everything was controlled; the food was distributed fairly. Persons in need of assistance held a card indicating their names and the number of people to be succoured. A supervisor jotted down the date on the card itself, then on his own list. Sugar, maize flour, beans, rice, cereals and potatoes (donated by Canada Packers Ltd), were distributed in quantities sufficient for a week, according to the number of persons. Meantime, tremors continued to shake Managua. International relief agencies will have a lot to do during the coming months.

Thanks to the kindness of Don Manuel Barrios, administrator of the Company for which I work as a nurse in Champerico, I was allowed to stay on one more week in León. On January 15, 1973, I returned to Guatemala, enriched by the searing experience.

Before leaving, I again visited the tragic city of Managua. Everywhere I saw large buildings partially destroyed, houses of adobe and wood completely disintegrated. The market place had been levelled. Groups of men with their noses and mouths covered to keep out smoke and stench roamed over the ruins. They came to retrieve what they could from offices, hotels, and the bigger buildings still standing. The whole city appeared like a quiet graveyard. After waiting all day for the plane to Guatemala, I finally flew back to Champerico, late in the evening.

Managuans who have survived are in a pitiful situation. The tragedy of an earthquake continues long after the initial shock. But these people have such unshakable faith, that in spite of their heavy material losses, they can still smile and thank God for keeping them alive. I also feel thankful for having been allowed to bring them my small share of relief. It was a heartwarming experience for me to discover the spirit of solidarity and brotherhood manifested by numerous countries on this occasion.



I WAS AN AUXILIARY HOLIDAY WORKER IN MOROCCO

Dear Gisèle,

You asked me to tell you about my recent experiment as a holiday worker in Morocco. Believe me, those three weeks proved to be a wonderful adventure.

As you already know, I had gone out there as a member of a volunteer holiday worker association to take care of a group of needy senior citizens. The invitation had been launched by the Little Brothers of the Poor.





Text and Photos: Luce de Guillebon

Morocco's crowded streets.



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After a whole year spent teaching, those three weeks were a welcome change. I came away enriched in many ways. Although I had gone out there to help, the people themselves helped in many an unexpected way.

I began my stint at the "Holiday House", in Bouskara, sixteen kilometres away from Casablanca. Five of us were assigned, with a Moroccan aide, to take care of a group of twenty aged French or Spanish men who had lived in Morocco for several years.

Every morning, it was my task with a companion to fetch milk from a farm situated at about five kilometres from Bouskara. We usually rode our bicycles, leaving before seven while the weather was still relatively cool. The bumpy road wound through a large forest of eucalyptus trees. As we neared the farm, we met farmers riding to their work on their little donkeys. Children washed their faces at a fountain, then gleefully splashed one another.

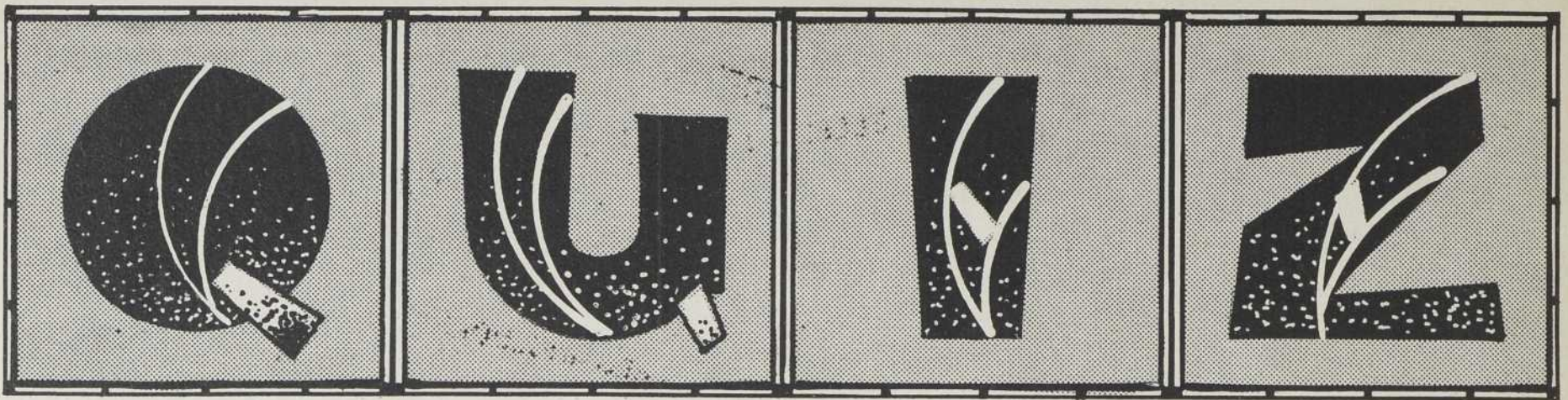
Upon returning to the house we prepared the usual light morning meal for our old friends and kissed each one good morning. This simple ritual did wonders to bridge the generation gap. Breakfast was then served

under the swaying palm trees. The old men liked to linger over every bite, reminiscing about the past, endeavouring to forget the loneliness of their present life.

Breakfast over and dishes washed, we peeled vegetables while exchanging bits of gossip. Sometimes we played our favourite records. Meantime, the old men held a bowling match close by.

Once in a while, I went shopping in Casablanca. How I enjoyed walking through Arab bazaars where sights, smells, and sounds assault the senses! Here one steps from a modern world into a centuries-old way of life. Amid a labyrinth of crowded streets, tiny shops sell everything from ribbons to birdhouses, from almonds to leather goods. Spice shops offer freshly ground red pepper, cumin of Biblical fame, paprika, ginger, and mustard seed. The accompanying photograph shows vendors surrounded by baskets of water melons or crouching close to their tents, fashioned out of bits of cardboard and dirty canvas.

Continued on p 288



THE WOMAN WHO CARED AND DARED

Pauline Marie Jaricot's story is a fascinating one. It is the story of a passionate nature choosing holiness; the story of a high intelligence desiring to do God's work on earth. Missionary of missionaries, she has rightly been called. She once wrote to her brother Philéas, "My vocation is not to promote only one missionary work . . . I must be at the beck and call of all missionaries, always ready to rush to the aid of those who most need assistance." Pauline Marie lived 150 years ago but the good she did still reaches out to the ends of the earth. The world is better because one woman dared to get involved.

1

Pauline Marie Jaricot was born in on
London, January 1, 1801
Lisieux, July 16, 1780
Lyons, July 22, 1799

2

As a teenager Pauline Marie led a life of:
luxury
austerity
retirement

3

Pauline Marie turned from a worldly life to a life of total dedication when she was:
middle-aged
old
a teenager

4

She laid the foundation of the SPF (Society for the Propagation of the Faith) when she was:
fifteen
nineteen
twenty

5

Her missionary project was:
successful
doomed to failure
ridiculed

6

After the administration of the SPF had passed into other hands, Pauline Marie:
rested on her laurels
devised other means of procuring the salvation of souls
lived the life of a recluse

7

The administration of this new work of apostolate:
passed into other hands
was handed over to clerics
remained in Pauline Marie's hands

8

Pauline Marie was among the first in the France of her day to:
promote social justice
encourage woman's liberation
follow a political career

9

This new design was called:
social promotion service
brotherhood of workers
Conservation of the Faith

10

Her new work:
was jeopardized
met with general approval
was forbidden to function

11

In her trials, Pauline Marie:
received encouragement from the majority
was blamed by the majority
was judged to be a fool

12

Pauline Marie made up her mind to:
salvage what was left of her fortune
to borrow
to honour all her debts especially to the poor

13

Reduced to extreme poverty Pauline Marie:
gave way to despair
decided to ignore her obligations
requested a testimonial that she was a pauper in need of social welfare

14

In her trials she:
never bore her enemies a grudge
berated her enemies
decided her opponents

15

Pauline Marie died:
after having honoured all her debts
before she could honour her debts
after she had recovered her fortune

Pauline Marie Jaricot. Painting by Le-Van-De (Indochina).



Photo: Univers 73, Québec

ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

1

Pauline Marie Jaricot was born in LYONS, France, on JULY 22, 1799, the last child in a family of seven. The father, a wealthy manufacturer, doted on this gifted daughter and so did the mother. A strong Christian faith which had weathered the French Revolution was a family tradition. So was concern for the poor.

2

As a teenager, Pauline Marie led a life of LUXURY in the whirl of a privileged middle-class society. Vivacious, witty, beautiful, she was the belle of every ball, the best-dressed girl in town. She was in love, as far back as she could remember, with life, her family, the boy whose chain she wore around her neck. But under this frivolous exterior lay deep layers of generosity, a genuine goodness. The Hound of Heaven had marked her out for his quarry and the chase was on. Who would be the winner?

3

Pauline Marie turned from the worldly life to a life of total dedication when she was a TEENAGER. A sermon she heard on the futility of worldliness first turned her thoughts to the ideal she had always secretly cherished—to do something great for God. Once her mind was made up, she never turned back. Making a clean break with frivolity, she chose a vocation whose salient features were love and service without frontiers and without fear.

4

She laid the foundation of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith when she was NINETEEN. Her efforts sparked a new vision of world missions on the part of the Church. She wrote, "I love all those who suffer or who are oppressed even more than myself . . . I feel that I must work at their salvation not only in one place but over the whole world."

5

Her missionary project was SUCCESSFUL. Within three years, it grew so rapidly that she could no longer handle it alone. Unforeseen circumstances forced her to hand over its administration to a group of men. Soon it was forgotten that she was the one who had set the movement going. She humorously remarked, "I was merely the match that kindled the fire . . . Who remembers a match?" But her loyal and sensitive heart suffered.

6

She DEVISED YET ANOTHER MEANS OF PROCURING THE SALVATION OF SOULS. France was in turmoil; its religious practice had slipped. Pauline Marie set about making her homeland say its prayers. In 1826, she organized the "Living Rosary". Her plan consisted in parcelling out decades of the Rosary, one to each 15 persons. Each associate was encouraged to meditate on the "mystery" allotted him. These 15 persons in turn enrolled 15 others so that membership grew rapidly. A modest allocation provided the means of spreading good books to counteract the pernicious effects of impiety on the masses. Over one million persons were enrolled in her "Living Rosary" in France and abroad as early as 1827.

7

The administration of the "Living Rosary" REMAINED IN PAULINE MARIE'S HANDS. But although the vast majority applauded this work of apostolate, dissenters blamed her as an eccentric, domineering woman, fond of the sensational. Her enemies even strove to rob her of her rights as foundress. In her autobiography Pauline Marie wrote, "The devil fought tooth and nail to stifle this new 'Isaac' . . . For a while, it seemed as if he would win but the Lord stopped him in time. Jesus alone knows what agony I then endured."

8

Pauline Marie was among the first in the France of her day to PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE. Her concern for the poor dated from early childhood. Both her parents were remarkable for their charity to the destitute. When she was six, confronted with some people in distress, Pauline had once exclaimed, "Mamma, I should like to have a well of gold so as to help the needy!" Her desire grew with the years. She wanted to restore to workers their dignity as human beings. She wrote, "It is useless to lecture the workers unless we love and assist them in a practical manner." For ten years she silently elaborated her new plan, then she set to work.

This new design was called "CONSERVATION OF THE FAITH" It comprised three branches: a league of prayer and practical assistance to the poor; a "Bank of Heaven", an association of rich persons each donating 10,000 francs destined to form a capital whose interest would be used each year in works of charity; the regeneration of the working class along Christian principles. But, to appear at the head of a social enterprise that would surely be noised abroad, terrified Pauline Marie's humility. "As in founding the 'Propagation of the Faith', I had been able to act and remain hidden, I wished to pass unnoticed while offering my country a source of blessings and peace". This was the breach which opened a way to the enemy of souls.

10

Her new work WAS JEOPARDIZED. Pauline Marie's plan had been examined and approved by intelligent and prudent persons. How was it doomed to failure? Mgr. David remarks, "Souls like that of Miss Jaricot can believe neither in deception nor in base motivations." Pauline Marie fell into clutches of unscrupulous swindlers who posed as friends and collaborators. With consummate skill and audacity, they multiplied their dilapidations. Not only did they squander the sums to be spent on real estate for the workers, but they plunged Pauline up to her ears in debt.

11

In her trials, Pauline Marie was BLAMED BY THE MAJORITY. But she remained firm in the thought that she had been inspired by the Lord. To people who bitterly reproached her with bringing about her own misfortune by her extravagant ideas, she replied, "The idea of apostolate among the workers cannot have come to me except from God. For more than ten years I have felt constantly urged to act accordingly." Famous men like Doctor Récamier and Count Alfred de Mun were loud in her praise, "What an extraordinary woman! Where has she acquired such a profound knowledge of social injustice?" It came to her through her deep union with Christ, the Worker.

12

Pauline Marie resolved to HONOUR ALL HER DEBTS ESPECIALLY TO THE POOR. Her work of apostolate in favour of the workers had been, for the most part, supported by the people of the working classes themselves. These creditors were patient, ready to wait, while she found herself harried by wealthy people who wanted to be paid right away. Not only did they feel no pity for this aging woman, now almost an invalid, but they added to her worries. People who had vied for the favours of the once wealthy Miss Jaricot now looked down upon her with contempt.

13

Reduced to extreme poverty Pauline Marie applied for a TESTIMONIAL THAT SHE WAS A PAUPER in need of social welfare. Her faith never faltered even in the midst of the worse trials. "They are proofs of God's special love," she used to say. "He knows best." But she was human after all. She keenly felt the injustice of people whom she had trusted and who had betrayed her. She wrote to a friend, "Pray for me, or I still feel in my heart of hearts a tiny drop of resentment . . ."

14

Even in the extremity of her sorrows she never BORE HER ENEMIES A GRUDGE. Maria Dubois who was always at her side remarks, "I never heard her answer impatiently to the accusations and contempt with which she was overwhelmed. She usually kept silent, allowing her accusers to have their say out." A few months before the end, she asked Maria to burn all the letters of praise she had received from the Pope, missionary bishops, and other high-ranking persons. Into that bonfire also went the letters of insults, of cruel reproaches, of base insinuations which had filled the latter part of her life with sorrow. Besides, she made her faithful companion promise that she would never reveal anything which might be contrary to charity or harm anyone's reputation.

15

Death came to her before she could HONOUR ALL HER DEBTS on January 9, 1862. God did not see fit to grant her the consolation of paying what she owed especially to her poorer creditors. Hearing that the end was drawing near, many of the latter came to her bedside for a last farewell, assuring her of their love and concern. She begged for forgiveness for having unwittingly wronged them, Pauline died a pauper. This woman who dared to get involved gave an example of social justice that will stand for all time. With her a chapter of the book of life has ended, but the book itself is not yet finished. It may be that one of you, or several, will add some glorious pages.

When Mary claimed America

Long before our Lady smiled upon Bernadette, from a rocky cleft on the shores of the Gave, she had bestowed her maternal favours from the tiny hill of Tepeyac, upon a humble Mexican peasant. Guadalupe is the first in the list of her major apparitions.

The year was 1531. America was then the "New World" and Mexico was at the heart of that great land mass. No national boundaries existed. Thus, when Mary claimed this realm for her own, she included Mexico, what is now the United States, Canada, and every country on the twin continents. Europe has its Lourdes, its Fatima, its Pontmain; America has its Guadalupe. Nearly four and a half centuries ago, we, the people of America were consecrated to the Mother of God, not by a high Church official, but by Mary herself. She claimed America, all America, for her own when she appeared to Juan Diego of Mexico.

Her message

Have we ever asked ourselves why Mary came to the hill of Tepeyac in 1531? If we replace the apparition in the original block of time when it occurred, we will recapture the beauty and harmony of love flowing from the heart of our heavenly Mother.

Indians were considered the dregs of humanity by the Spanish invaders. Some went so far as to hint that they were not even genuine human beings. Courageous missionaries endured great hardship in their work of evangelization. Their efforts were balked by unscrupulous colonial officials who shamefully exploited the people they had conquered.

It was to these downtrodden aborigines that Mary came. Standing in a luminous cloud of mist, she addressed Juan Diego, a poor Indian peasant, "I am the

by Sister Madeline Maillet, M.I.C.

OUR LADY OF THE AMERICAS

Immaculate Conception, the Mother of the true God. . . As the loving Mother of you and your fellow-men, I will show my kindness and compassion for your people and all the other people dear to me." In her talks with Juan she specifically claimed him and "all the people of these lands (the Americas)." Those who refer to Our Lady of Guadalupe simply as the "Mexican Virgin" are in error for she belongs to the twin continents.

One Saturday morning

Ten years had elapsed since the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. In these days there lived a devout Indian convert named Juan Diego. Early on Saturday, December 9, 1531, he was on his way — a six-mile walk — to attend Mass. As he reached the foot of the hill called Tepeyac (sharp summit) he heard a great choir like the warblings of thousands of birds. Glancing up to the hilltop whence the flood of music flowed, he saw a shining white cloud encircled by a dazzling rainbow. Enchanted, he started to climb. Suddenly, the sound of music ceased and he heard himself called by name. "Juan, Juan Diegito". He stopped in his tracks, puzzled, but the voice called again. It was then he saw the beautiful lady standing in the center of the luminous cloud. He bowed low in reverence. Mary addressed him in his own dialect, "My son Juan, whom I tenderly love as a little one, I am the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of the true God. It is my wish that here a temple be raised in which, as a loving mother, I shall show my tender mercy to all who call on me. . . ." She then asked Juan to go to the bishop and tell him her request for a church.

Juan meets the bishop

Juan Diego straightway set out for the bishop's house located some four miles away. Naturally, Fray Juan de Zumarraga was not readily impressed by such an extraordinary story. He prudently told the Indian to ask the lady for a sign that they might know for certain if she was really the Mother of God.

Sadly, Juan trudged back to Tepeyac. He threw himself at Mary's feet and told her the bad news, how the bishop had asked for a sign. Our Lady smilingly put him at ease. She told him to climb further up the hill and pick the flowers he would find blooming there.

The sign

To his surprise Juan found, on the hilltop, a garden of roses such as he had never seen before. Arranging his *tilma* (coarse burlap-like cloak) in the native fashion, he plucked as many roses as he could, then brought them back to where our Lady stood waiting. She took them out of the *tilma*, re-arranged them, then put them back. "Here is the sign the bishop asked," she said. "Tell him that by the token of these roses he is to do what I ordered." Juan humbly obeyed. When, in the presence of the bishop, he dropped open his cloak to spill out the roses, there, upon the coarse fabric stood out an exquisite portrait of Mary — Our

Lady of Guadalupe. Fray Juan de Zumarraga had his sign. Struck with wonder at the prodigy of the fresh dewy roses culled during the most rigorous season of the year, and still more so at sight of the picture, the bishop reverently carried Juan's cloak to his oratory. The next day it was transferred to the cathedral for all to see and venerate.

The fame of the miracle spread like wildfire. Soon, a church rose on the hill of Tepeyac, honouring Our Lady of Guadalupe. Tradition has it that Juan Diego's fellow-villagers built it and the little house where he was to live as its caretaker and guardian.

Juan's *tilma* has endured for over 400 years. The portrait it carries has received every imaginable test religion and science could put it to. Results have always been the same. Even under microscopic inspection, the painting shows no brush strokes. It must have come from heaven. To this day it remains fresh, undimmed, inexpressibly beautiful.

Pilgrimages have continued ever since the apparition, even during eras of severe persecution. Every year, some five million pilgrims and tourists visit the shrine, now a minor basilica. Over a million are present on December 12, the great feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe — the title she herself chose for her image.

Her portrait and its symbolic teaching even more than the work of missionaries converted the largely pagan Mexico to Christianity. Its symbolism as picture-writing continues to teach and convert the illiterate Indians who come on pilgrimage. She speaks for herself to all who gaze upon her image.

Her message is eternal

She came to our land four and a half centuries ago. As a heavenly sign of her passage, she left us the only portrait that was ever drawn of her. Guadalupe is not just a memory. It is present, it is now. Her message is as true for us as it was in 1531.

In our times when social injustice is rampant, Our Lady reminds us of the message of her Son, "Love one another as I have loved you." Mary stressed the point that she was the Mother of the true God. How great is the need for this message for modern idolaters. Of course we have no golden calf, no stone idols, no garish fetishes. We do not offer incense before ugly deities. But how many are ready to throw their souls into the furnace of a secularized society. We have all but forgotten that peace of soul is the only riches worth having. In 1531 our Blessed Mother firmly emphasized her role as mediatrix of grace, as mother of all men: "I feel for those who love and seek me, or all who implore my protection, who call on me in their labours and afflictions. . . I shall give them consolation and relief for I am in truth your merciful Mother." All of these statements of hers are important to emphasize now, when many Catholics seem concerned about "too great an emphasis on the importance of Mary" in our devotional life. These doctrinal points make her 1531 apparitions of universal significance.

Continued from p 281

I often met children trotting along with large dishes balanced on their heads. Women passed with headborne loads of fruit, bread, or water jugs. Veiled mammas carried their babies on their backs, snugly caught up in a shawl or a piece of cloth. Even little girls carry babies that way.

Moroccans resent photographers. It is quite a feat to snap a photograph, but I did manage to get a few. My favourite is the one of the two little brothers with shaved heads. Many children around here suffer from skin diseases. Their heads are shaved for hygienic reasons. On another photograph you will notice the boys wearing a sort of ample robe, much the worse for wear. Poverty reigns in many places, but even though dressed in rags, the children are bright and cheerful. Many among them guided us expertly in and out of the city lanes. Another favourite photograph of mine is the one depicting Grandfather riding his donkey like an emperor of old his steed.

Moroccans have a tradition of warmhearted hospitality. Merchants like to chat with prospective clients over cups of mint tea. My friend and I spent some time as pampered guests in a friendly family. It was hard to leave, as our hosts always insisted on keeping us a few days longer. They gave parties in our honour, and presented folklore entertainment which proved fascinating. It was like living through the Arabian Nights.

Before putting a period to this letter, I want to tell you more about my old friends of "Holiday House". They enjoyed to the full their three weeks spent out in the country, free from financial care. What pleased them most was that they were surrounded with affectionate care and delicate attentions. This meant a good deal to these men who live alone for the greater part of the year. We made it a point, in the evenings, to take time to listen to them and encourage them.

On several occasions, we organized excursions by boat for those who liked sailing. Others enjoyed leisurely walks in the countryside with picnic lunch at some picturesque spot. Nature in North Africa is lavish in enchanting panoramas. Our old friends enjoyed these as much as we did.

Twice a week, after supper, we showed films. The older the film the better, declared our guests. They were not hard to please. Bowling matches and card parties were also on our agenda. When time came to retire, we escorted our guests to their rooms and bade them an affectionate goodnight. At the close of each day, we asked ourselves who were the happiest—the givers or the receivers.

I am sure you have often tasted this deepfelt joy of sharing, dear Gisèle. Why don't you write and tell me about your own holidays? I am looking forward to a letter soon.

Yours as ever,
Luce

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Bi-monthly magazine edited by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception with the approbation of the Ordinary of Montreal.

NIHIL OBSTAT:

April 13, 1973

Rev. Jean-Charles Valin

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