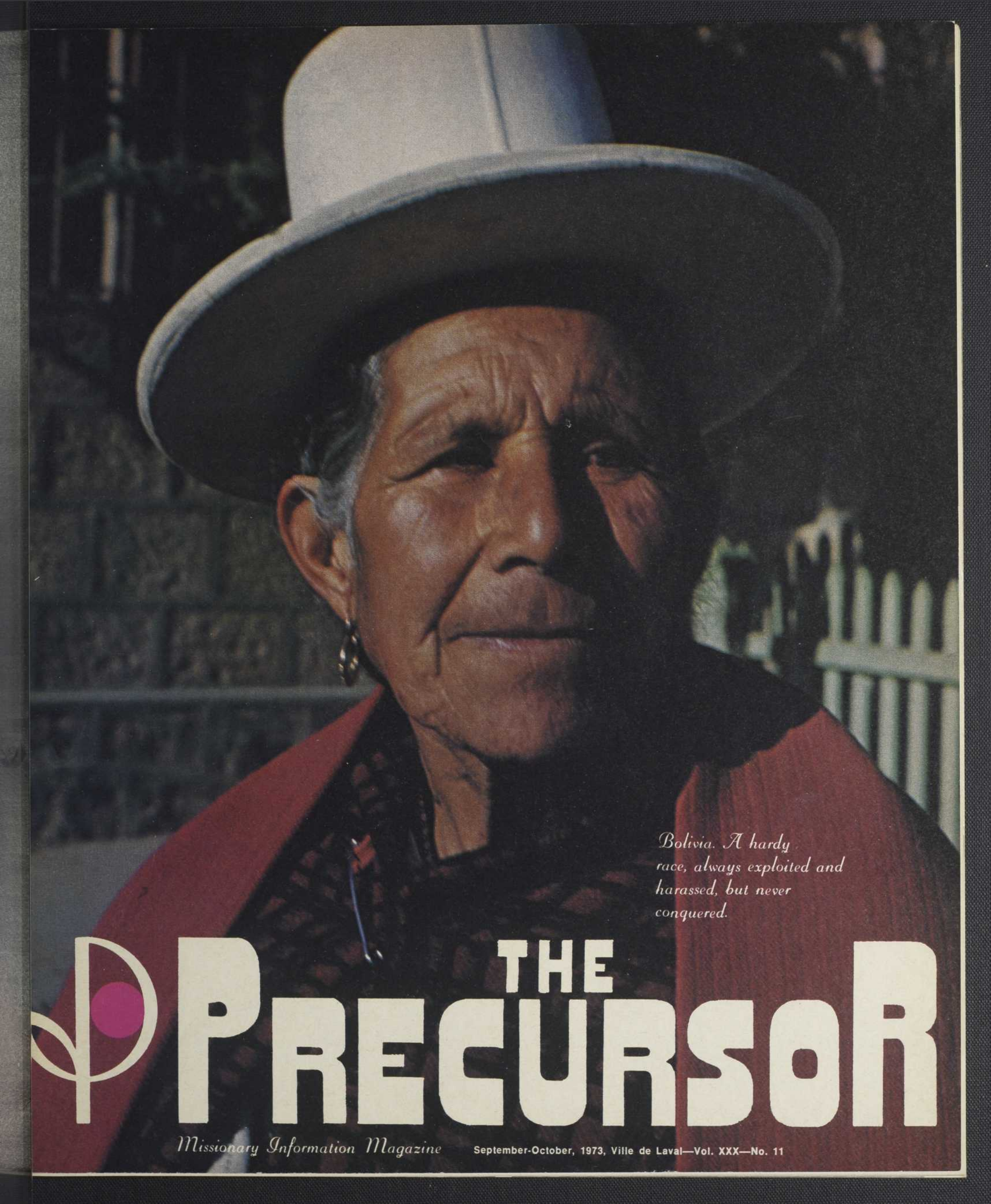




*Bolivia. A hardy  
race, always exploited and  
harassed, but never  
conquered.*

# THE PRECURSOR

*Missionary Information Magazine*

September-October, 1973, Ville de Laval—Vol. XXX—No. 11



*Peoples of every race and colour have  
the same fundamental right to genuine  
happiness.*

## THE PRECURSOR

No. 11 – September-October, 1973 – Vol. XXX

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**Bolivia,  
Irupana**

# **Between Two Testaments**

**Juan van den Berg, O.S.P.**

The following article is due to the pen of a priest deeply involved in the fate of the Indian population. It may help our readers understand the plight of the Aymara mountain folk. This is what led me to translate it from the Spanish.

Murielle, M.I.C.

**Lucho**



**From fear to love. Our task as missionaries is to help others rediscover the joy of living.**

Following the 1953 Agrarian Reform, thousands of Aymara peasants left the arid overpopulated Bolivian highlands for the rich soils of the *Yungas*, (semi-tropical mountain valleys). Their hearts beat high with the hope of a better life in more fertile regions. This happened some twenty years ago. The migrants now feel

“at home”, having readily adapted to their new surroundings. But their hearts instinctively turn to the awesome Andean highlands where their forebears lived for thousands of years. They cannot forget that they are the descendants of a great civilization of the past.

Who are the Aymara? A taciturn people whose origin is obscure. No written records of their history exist. The only things which reveal something of their character are the melancholy music of their *quena* and *zamponas* (musical instruments), and the monotonous rhythm of their folk dances. Their clans made up of hardy mountaineers, long exploited and harassed, opposed fierce resistance to the Incas as well as to the Spaniards. They were really never conquered. In their harsh surroundings, they wrested a livelihood from a barren soil; they tenaciously clung to their patterns of thought, their fascinating language, their religious customs. Theirs is a human type capable of exceptional physical endurance. Although not extraordinarily strong, they can sustain prolonged periods of labour under the severest conditions. No other race is capable of such continuing toil on so little food. These men who have succeeded in preserving their own identity in the midst of such vicissitudes are deserving of our profound respect.

Besides being imprisoned between the snowy Andean Cordillera Real and the Cordillera Occidental, the Aymara are prisoners of their personal fears. Accidents of nature as well as human sufferings are held to be divine punishments. God is considered a sort of impersonal landlord, instead of a compassionate Father. He is a nebulous anonymous Being, while *Pachamama* (mother earth), *Supuya* (evil spirit), *el Tio de la minas* (uncle of the mines), *Achachilas* (ancestor) seem close and familiar. The Aymara believe that all these deities can bring ruin to their lives or wreck chances for happiness. Therefore, in the Bolivian highlands, sacrifices are dutifully offered to them. Llamas are presented as victims, the earth is sprinkled with alcohol, coca is chewed or scattered to the four winds, all in the hope of placating these familiar deities. Masses for the dead and fiesta Masses are offered with the same intention. Indians firmly believe that if a house or a field is blessed, the owners will be preserved from natural calamities and even from death.

An Old Testament mentality still weighs heavily on the conscience of this people hampered by terrors of many kinds.

Mistrust also permeates human relations. The Aymara peasant, the villager, the ignorant, the exploiter, man and wife, children and parents, all live in fear of one another. Love your neighbour as yourself—this commandment often cannot be observed for the simple

reason that life is almost too hard to bear. Providing for basic needs leaves no place for warm human love. Many a father living in the highlands has been forced to turn out a twelve-year-old son to earn his own living elsewhere. Apparently, in order to be free to love, a certain amount of material goods is necessary.

The Aymara have suffered and still suffer to maintain their identity and their dignity. They stoically endure injustice and exploitation although their faith in a loving Creator has long been lost. The message of loving kindness of *Tunupa*, the Christ of the Andes, has survived only in the dwarf deity called *Ekeko* believed to be endowed with undisputed rights in the realm of fortune, love, and happiness. Alas! *Ekeko* has become rather a talisman for La Paz citizens than a symbol of hope for the Aymara.

Are these people then waiting for a Messiah? I believe they are. During four centuries, the presence of the Church in their midst has not effected their liberation. Emphasis has perhaps been placed rather on a system of laws than on Christ Jesus and his message of love. The atmosphere was that of the Old Testament, instead of the liberating atmosphere of Christ Jesus.

Devoted heart and soul to the Aymara, I at times feel as if I were another Jeremiah, not indeed to announce the ruin of my people, but to help it realize its yearning for peace and liberty.

Harvest time is over,  
Summer is gone  
and still no deliverance  
has come to us.  
Wounded she lies, my own people,  
and is not her wound mine?  
. . . Grows the balm in Galaad no more,  
is the healer's art lost there,  
that the people I love should lie wounded,  
and the wound will not close?

Jer 8: 20-22

Forward then! Let the message of Christ Jesus, Liberator, Life, and Joy of the world be announced everywhere.

Juan van den Berg, O.S.P.



**A group of catechists from the Yunguena district.**

Father Juan, a Dutch priest, is on the staff of the Chulumani School of Catechetics organized two years ago. This school functions with a view to the human and Christian formation of the Aymara. We are preparing Christian animators, men ready to serve their brothers. Catechists and deacons are the hope of the Yunguena Church rooted in the hearts of the Aymara. But, the way is long from an Old Testament mentality of fear to the New Testament mentality of joy and love.

Murielle Dubé, M.I.C.



# **BOLIVIA, CATAVI**

## **S as in SERVICE**

**Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.**

According to Emerson, the secret of education lies in respecting the student. The young want to have a voice in the choice of methods used by the schools and colleges they attend. Whoever desires to help today's students in an efficacious manner, must take their personal aspirations into account. This is the only practical way to channel their energies into creative activity. What art can be compared to that of guiding and forming mind and character?

Student nurses in Catavi hospital have always had on their curriculum a course of medical ethics. Five years ago I was in charge of this course and was re-appointed upon my return this year. Convinced that the contact of mind with mind is more important than what is taught, I decided to conduct an inquiry. There was nothing scientific about it. I merely wanted to ascertain the teachers' and the students' point of view.

My class numbered thirty-five young women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five: sixteen in

the first-year group, five in the second, and five in the third. These students, daughters of miners, had obtained scholarships from the Bolivian Mining Company upon completion of their secondary education. Four were from various mining centres: Colquiri, Potosi, Quechisla, etc. In general, they found it hard to adapt to the rather severe discipline imposed by the directresses of the dormitory attached to the hospital. Of course, most of them enjoyed more material comforts than in their family surroundings, but until now they had been left to do pretty much as they pleased. There had been no strict timetable to be followed.

As far as religious affiliation is concerned, eighty per cent of these students are Catholics; three are Mormons; two Evangelists; one so-called unbeliever. All willingly accepted me as their teacher. They even seemed to think that as a Sister-doctor I would be better equipped to answer their questions in the moral or medical field. Apparently, they are free from prejudice as regards priests or religious.



I requested them to answer a questionnaire which they need not sign personally. To the questions, "What does God mean to you?" "How do you consider your patients?", the answers were positive for the most part. The majority acknowledged a God who was Father and Friend, an all-powerful Being who loved them. A few regarded him as Someone far removed from their own lives, distant, unfeeling, cold. The professed unbeliever admitted she knew nothing about him. Another wrote, "For me, God is the Light which guides me in my daily life."

With regard to their patients, most of the students replied that they considered them brothers of the suffering Christ who must be tenderly cared for. In their answers to the question "What does 'practising' religion mean to you?", the majority manifested their ignorance. Some wrote, "To fast, practise self-denial, do without things, work hard, pray the Rosary, hear Mass, etc." Oddly enough, none mentioned the processions so dear and so important to Christians in these parts.

Five only mentioned that their most important obligation as Christians was to love God and neighbour, and to prove this love by charitable deeds. One suggested that maybe it means being a missionary, preaching the Good News far and near.

To the query "Why do you want to become a nurse?" the greater number of students answered, "To take care of the sick, to relieve their pain, to 'serve.'" A few admitted they wanted to please their parents whose ambition was to have at least one white-collar worker in the family. Love of study was another motive advanced. Also, some wished to earn a higher salary, but this latter wish was never given as chief motivation. One said she merely aspired to do something worthwhile, while another answered that it was "her vocation."

It was interesting to note that for the majority of my students, the perfect type of nurse is one who serves the ailing with disinterestedness. All are eager to help others especially the sick, the handicapped,



S

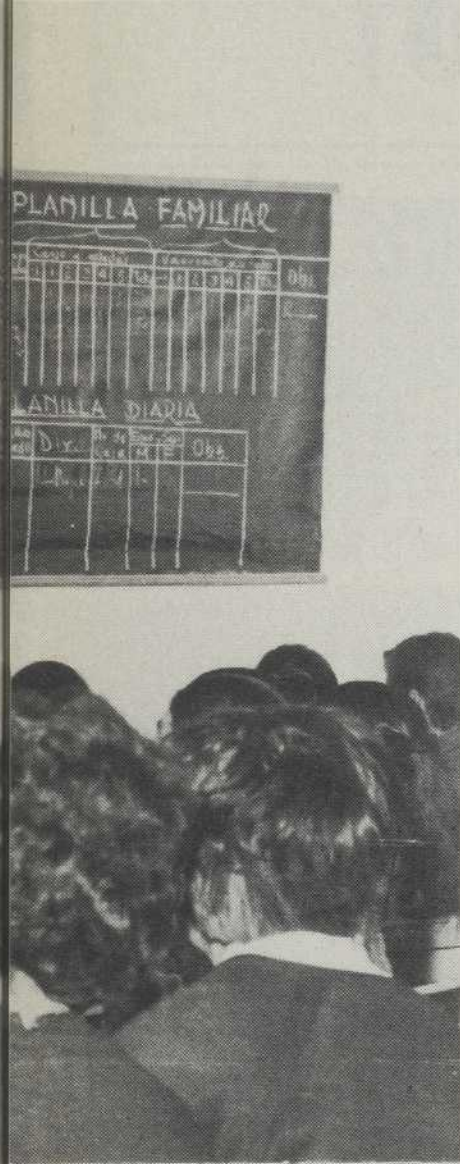
the needy. They would like to see everybody happy. They added that besides professional competence a nurse should possess several qualities such as kindness, patience, self forgetfulness, sympathy, cheerfulness, etc.

"Are you happy in your chosen work? Why?" This question might have seemed tactless if the questionnaire had to be signed. As it was, one could gather from the anonymous answers that, even for the young, perfect happiness simply does not exist. A good number were embarrassed by the family's financial situation. As a rule, miners are poor.

The girls who have just been registered as first-year students, find life in a dormitory dull business. They miss their family. Others face training for their future profession in a completely different manner.

Still others wrote in their answers to the questionnaire, "How could we be happy surrounded with so many sick people?" The latter will have to reconsider their choice of a career unless they can learn to find their happiness in relieving other people's sufferings. In short, most were of the opinion that the happiest are those who can think of others and give them joy. One wrote, "I'm happy, because I can assist those who suffer and do something to make people happy."

"What do you think of the course on medical ethics?" In general the answers were positive without being unduly enthusiastic. The students thought the course might include other subjects. "Which? A religious course, one on the history of religion, on medical moral philosophy, on initiation to the Bible?" The latter two subjects were the most popularly approved.



| PLANILLA FAMILIAR |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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## as in **SERVICE**

My course is now divided into two sections: initiation to the Bible and study of the nurses' ethical and professional obligations. Another few hours are given over to the discussion of youth problems: dating, courtship, possibility of lifelong fidelity in marriage, qualities required of a future wife and mother, etc. Subjects of a professional order are also discussed: attitude towards patients about to die, use of contraceptives, manner of helping patients who have ethical problems. . .

The Gospel is lovingly read and pondered. Practical applications are made on love, self-giving, service. Christ Jesus is revered as the model of those who have "come to serve."

However, the young are not satisfied with theories. They want to share in realities, to serve more in action

than in words. All have responded with enthusiasm to the suggestion that they help the personnel of the Llallagua hospital in their campaign of vaccination.

This last winter, there has been a high incidence of infant mortality due to complications resulting from measles. An American research laboratory forwarded to our hospital 2,000 doses of a new vaccine against measles, mumps, and rubella. The student-nurses of Catavi joined the personnel of the Llallagua hospital in a door-to-door intensive vaccination campaign. In one day, they vaccinated 2,000 children.

A few photographs of the event were taken. How do you like our little Bolivian student-nurses, so eager to serve? For my part, I feel very proud of their record.

*S as in Service.* And here again I sign my name beginning with an S,

# PHOTO/REPORT

In Bolivia, almost all villagers deck their hats with special figures thanks to which their wearers are easily identified. Each headgear is fashioned out of straw, palm leaf, rushes, cowhide, felted wool, etc. Some hats have a wide or rolled brim, a peaked or a square crown. Others have ear-flaps. If the wearer can afford such luxury, he sometimes wears two or three one on top of the other.

The majority of the Indians who live in Bolivia's urban centres are either Quechuas or Aymaras, descendants of pre-Colombian civilizations. Stolid, gaunt, and taciturn they go to their way wearing headgear which tells at a glance whether they come from La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, Santa Cruz, Sucre, Potosi, etc.

(1)—This Aymara woman from La Paz sports the peculiar headgear of her race fashioned out of llama leather or felted wool. Her hat takes shape from soaked wool pounded to a cardboard texture and starched.

(2)—The bowler hats worn by Indian women and Cholas from Oruro, Sucre, and Potosi are usually chestnut brown in colour and worn low over the forehead.

(3)—In the Altiplano region, Aymara Indians wear tasselled woollen caps with ear-flaps. Hand-woven in bright shades of red, yellow, orange, and pink mixed with dark red and brown, this colourful headgear brightens the bleak unyielding countryside.

(4)—An Indian tailor plies his trade in the neighbourhood of Tiahuanacu. He wears a top hat with wide rolled brim.

(5)—White straw hats worn in Cochabamba are cylindrical in shape. This typical headgear is the symbol of the country's three and a half million inhabitants of which sixty per cent are of pure Indian descent and thirty-five per cent are Cholos.



**BOLIVIA**

# TO EACH VILLAGE ITS HAT



# TO EACH VILLAGE



(6)—Potosi, awesome desert of silence and forgetfulness. Here whites are few in number. The fifty thousand inhabitants are for the most part Quechua Indians. Dressed in sombre hues they are impassive and secretive. The women wear top hats in tones of beige.

(7)—His hat keeps out the heat of the sun's rays. He halts on his way to market to sell the contents of his pack.



# VILLAGE ITS HAT

(8)—From Sucre, a chaotic road leads to Tarabuco, across a bleak stony landscape. The headgear of the Indians who live in these parts differs from that of other regions. It consists of a heavy affair of stiff brown leather decked in front and in back with sequins and pompoms, somewhat reminiscent of the helmets worn by the conquistadors. The women's headgear consists of close-fitting black velvet hats embroidered with beads and sequins.

(9)—The Indians of Sabuta, a small village situated close to Catavi in the Oruro section, wear top hats. We see them here preparing to celebrate the village fiesta. Stovepipe hats are worn on top of Aymara caps. They add the finishing touch to fiesta finery.

(10)—One of Oruro's chief attractions is the *diablada* folk dance performed during the town's annual pageant. Incredibly gaudy, the costumes are made of cheap velvet and silk in a riot of clashing colours, embellished with gold braid, tinsel, imitation of jewels, coins, and mirrors . . . Hats of velvet or silk are plumed and rosetted.

(11)—Catavi miners wear the typical miner's cap with light attached in order to dispel the darkness of the tunnels where they work.

(12)—From ancient times, headdress has been an important element of fashion in Bolivia. This row of smiling Bolivian beauties jauntily wear the distinctive hats of the regions whence they come—La Paz and Santa Cruz.



Gabrielle Ouimet, M.I.C.



# Los Sz

## ECHOES FROM ORURO



The quena

Flory

—Pablo Arias—I feel I have more than made up for a lost year of study while touring Canada and the United States. I love Bolivian folklore and I hope that North Americans have enjoyed our performances.

—Happy to meet you, dear friends. My name is Pastor Perez, and I am a student from Oruro, Bolivia. Traveling all over North America has been a pleasant experience for me. In this sense, I don't think I have really lost one year of study. I appreciate Bolivian music and always feel happy to perform in honour of my dear homeland.

—Robert Lacasse, O.M.I.—I joined *Los Supays* in January 1973. Father Jolicoeur was a friend of mine with whom I had worked in the Oruro pastoral ministry. It was in this town that I met the members of the quatuor who used to sing at Sunday Mass.

I knew the folklore group had gone to Canada and wanted to travel in the U.S.A. Their performance being a genuine message from the Third World, I decided to organize a ten-day-tour at Natick and Boston. It would be a pleasure to give the young Bolivians a helping hand by managing their interviews, after various performances.

—Louis Jolicoeur, O.M.I.—We brought along the more practical musical instruments: the Spanish Guitar well known around here; the *BOOMBO*, a wooden drum;

# Supays

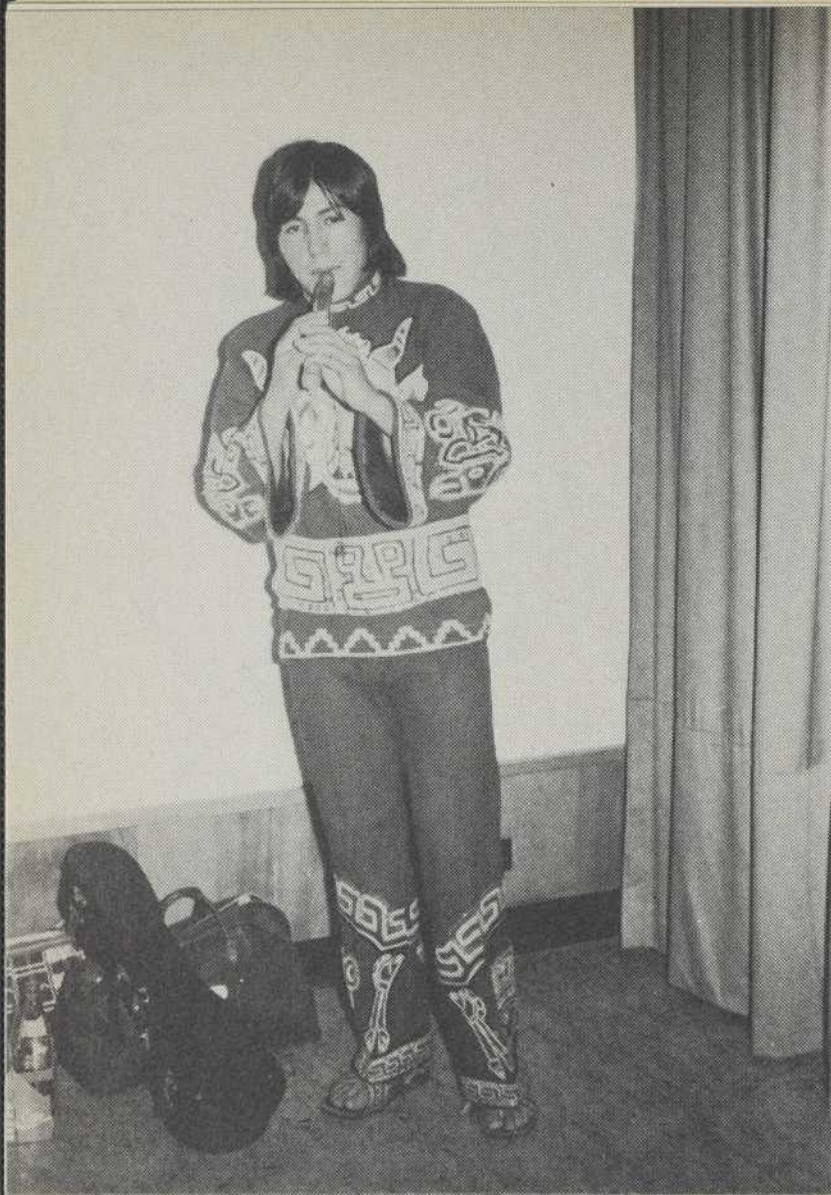
## CARNIVAL BOLIVIA



*Veto, Pablo, Pastor, and Flory, called LOS SUPAYS, travelled all the way from Bolivia, to share with us, Canadians, the joys of the great Oruro Carnival.*

*Accompanied by Fathers L. Jolicoeur and R. Lacasse, O.M.I., LOS SUPAYS toured the Mont Laurier diocese giving performances in every parish in order to acquaint people with the folklore and musical culture of their homeland.*

*The directors of pastoral activities in the diocese, Father Guido Brault, O.M.I., and Sister Céline Trudeau, M.I.C., interviewed the young Bolivian artists for our benefit.*



Pablo



Veto

Pastor



Los Supays



the *CHARANGO*, a small guitar with five double strings which came down from the Spanish conquistadores. Its sound box is made of armadillo shell. Under the reign of the Incas, no string instruments were used in Bolivia. The *CHARANGO* guitar is played exclusively by the *Quechuas* and the *Cholos*. The *ZAMPONA* (classical panpipe or Greek syrinx) is formed of hollow reeds cut in graduated lengths fixed in two rows. Those in front provide the sharp pitch, those in the rear, the semi-tone. The *TARCA* is a kind of flute-whistle made of *mara* wood, and shaped like a clarinet, with perforations like the *QUENA*. All these instruments are made in Bolivia.

In Quebec, *Los Supays* gave approximately one hundred concerts of from fifty to ninety minutes each, and as many mini-performances of thirty minutes duration.

—Visitation Arais Mendoza—My name is Veto for short and I am Pablo's brother. I am twenty-one years old and intend to enter the University when I go back. This trip has been very pleasant and profitable. My intention in coming here was to earn a little money so as to help pay for my studies. My parents are too poor to defray my tuition fees.

—Pastor—When we first came here, we nursed a sort of capitalist mentality. During our stay in Canada, we lived through great contrasts in mentality, environment, ways of life. This led to deep reflection on our part. We will return home a little wiser, and somewhat different from what we were when we set out on this trip. For one thing, we have awakened to the exploitation current in our homeland and we wish to improve things. Thanks to our folklore, we would like to urge Canadians to pay closer attention to our problems so that we may try to find better solutions together.

—Pablo—We have noticed great material progress in Canada, also liberty, modern conveniences . . .

—Pastor—I envy Canadian students. All the chances are theirs.

—Guido Brault, O.M.I.—These young Bolivians have fulfilled a mission in Canada. They came to learn about another people, another way of life. We have been a "worthwhile experience" in their youthful lives. Before leaving Mont Laurier, they declared, "We, Bolivians, are poor. We thought that in a rich country like Canada, all the people must be happy. The contrary is unfortunately true, as we have found out. So, we realize that riches do not automatically spell happiness. What really matters is brotherhood among men of all races. We will try to live up to this ideal when we return to Oruro."

**Guido Brault, O.M.I.**

## TWO CANADIAN STUDENTS COMMENT AFTER THE CONCERT

Four students dressed in bright red and wearing sandals, greeted our audience with friendly smiles. Their music had a remarkable quality of warmth and sincerity. They explained the various instruments they used. We who hardly knew anything about Bolivia, have come to love it with all our hearts.

The quatuor closed the performance with a chorus song—*oiga amigos* (Listen friends). With this, the charm was broken and down went the curtain. We tramped around the four, clapping hands and congratulating them. Together we went for a long walk, like old friends; we chatted, sang, and enjoyed ourselves. Then all too soon, it was time to say goodbye.

We, Mont Laurier students, are happy and proud to have met *Los Supays*. Thanks to them, we now know something about Bolivia and Bolivians. We have learned about the music of their native land of which they have every right to be proud.

Maybe we will visit Bolivia one day. Who knows? This is such a small world.

**Pauline Lépine  
Carole Groulx**



**After a performance at Saint Jovite, Mgr Fernand Parent and Father André Desjardins welcome Los Supays and Fathers Jolicoeur and Lacasse.**

# VISITING THE CHINESE IN VANCOUVER



**A young Chinese lady confirmed by His Excellency Mgr James Carney, archbishop of Vancouver. She is surrounded by members of her family and Sister Theresa Fung.**

Since 1950, more particularly, the Chinese of Taiwan as well as the progress of the Church in their midst have been much in the news. The Chinese of continental China are also occasionally mentioned, more so since the admission of their country to the United Nations. Diplomatic relations with numerous countries and greater openness to the outside world now allow China to exercise considerable influence in various countries.

This article is about the Chinese of the so-called diaspora who have been living, often for several generations, outside of China. If it is a truism to say of the Jews that they are found in every part of the world, it is possibly even truer to say so of the Chinese. But, wherever they may be dispersed, the Church does not forget them.

The population of mainland China numbers over seven hundred and fifty million. There are at present fourteen million Chinese in Taiwan, four million in Hong Kong (English territory), and three hundred thousand in Macao (Portuguese territory). In reality, these two areas form part of the Chinese mainland.) Overseas Chinese number twenty-five million scattered more especially in other Asian countries, in Africa, and in America.

To these overseas Chinese, the Church has every facility to communicate the knowledge and love of Christ Jesus. The Holy Father has put Mgr Carlo van Melckebe, a former missionary to China, in charge of this overseas apostolate. He has his headquarters in Singapore. Statistics of 1969 reveal that of the twenty-five million overseas Chinese, seven hundred and fifty thousand are Catholics. Over six hundred priests, Chinese or foreigners, minister to their spiritual needs. In Canada, the Chinese population numbers one hundred and twenty-five thousand of whom only four thousand are Catholics. Canadian Chinese reside in Toronto for the most part: thirty-two thousand, seven hundred Catholics; Montreal: sixteen thousand, two thousand Catholics; Vancouver: forty thousand, one thou-

sand eight hundred Catholics. Others may be found all over Canada, from West to East as far as Halifax, from South to North as far as the Yukon.

My first idea in drawing up this article, was to present our readers with a general idea of the Chinese diaspora throughout the world. I had already gathered material from Chinese centres in Europe, Asia, and Africa, when an un hoped-for occasion allowed me to get introduced to the Vancouver Chinese colony. Assigned to preach retreats in this area, I took up residence at the Mount Saint Joseph Hospital conducted by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Founded in 1921, this institution was formerly called the Chinese Hospital. During these early years, it cared not only for the Chinese, but for the Japanese, the Filipinos, the Indians, and other Orientals. Today, the hospital admits patients of all nationalities. Chinese doctors and nurses and physicians of other nationalities are on the medical staff.

It was a joy for me to meet in Vancouver former missionaries to China, among them Father James Leonard of the Scarboro Foreign Missionary Society, initiator of the first Vancouver Chinese Catholic Mission in Vancouver, Grey Nuns (of Pembroke) who conduct the Chinese Catholic School, and the actual zealous pastor of the Chinese parish, Father Peter Chow. I had already met Father in Hong Kong when he attended the Aberdeen Major Seminary. Another of my Vancouver acquaintances was Sister Theresa Fung of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, known around here as Father Chow's "curate". Her work consists in making the rounds of families, helping immigrants, preparing catechumens for baptism, first communion and confirmation.

As I happened to be in Vancouver during Holy Week, I was happy to attend liturgical ceremonies performed in Chinese or in English. Older people prefer Chinese. The young, however, favour English although all have studied their mother tongue.

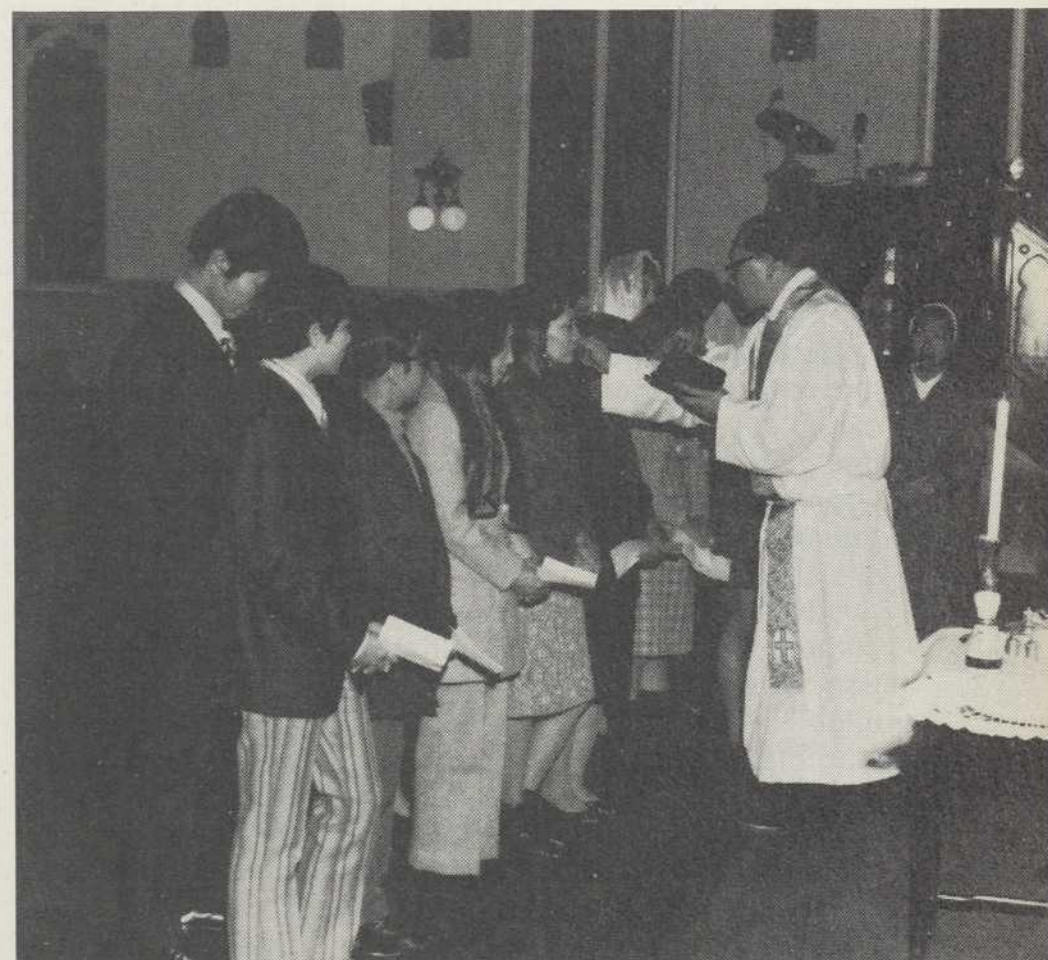
The first permanent Chinese settlers to Canada, arrived in British Columbia in 1850. You are perhaps wondering why I have called them "permanent settlers". In their history handbooks the Chinese claim the honour of having discovered the North American continent long before the Scandinavians, the Spanish, or the French. Of a certainty, ancient China did possess a powerful military and merchant fleet. Its vessels sailed the seven seas as far as southern Australia, Madagascar, Japan, the Aleutian Islands, and what is now called Alaska.

Coming either from California or southern China, the Chinese settlers were chiefly employed by mining corporations, more especially in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. On my way home I met a railway official who told me something of the story of these Chinese labourers. In two years' time, thanks to daring and persevering work, hundreds dug through the two superimposed spiral tunnels of the Yoho Valley, in the Canadian Rockies. After the labourers, came merchants and professionals in increasing numbers.



**Sister Theresa Fung visits a Chinese family.**

**Baptism ceremony presided by Father Peter Chow.**



Canadian immigration laws gradually became less restrictive, more particularly with regard to Chinese women.

According to Doctor Wilmott, of Cornell University, an expert in the question of overseas Chinese, Vancouver is the cultural centre of Chinese Canadians. It is also the centre of their various associations in this country.

The Vancouver Chinatown is situated in a rather limited district as compared with the San Francisco Chinatown. You can hardly tell it from its commercial surroundings. There is nothing typically Chinese about its architecture. We know we are in Chinatown because of the many Chinese we come across, and of the wares exhibited in shop fronts. Men and women wear Canadian clothes. I do not recall having seen even one woman in the elegant Chinese dress worn in Hong Kong, for instance. Sign boards are written in characters but with the English translation alongside. This obtains for restaurants, importation offices, shops, travel agencies, insurance companies, gaming houses, lawyers' offices, etc. Chinatown is more of a business district than a residential area. However, all the Chinese do not live in Chinatown although the greater number like to settle close to it.

About one hundred Vancouver Chinese are from northern China and speak Mandarin. The others are from the south, from the Kwang-tung province, more particularly from the city of Canton and its neighbourhood. Nearly all speak good English. About one fifth were born and educated in Canada. They have never even seen the land of their ancestors, but they hope to visit it some day. This is considered a sacred tradition in Chinese circles. Well-off families send their children to pursue studies in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and even in China proper.

The Chinese are successful because they are industrious, orderly, frugal, and very well organized. Wherever they live, they form groups according to their places of origin, their family or clan relations, their work. Doctor Wilmott mentions fifty similar associations in Vancouver alone. They elect representatives who constitute a super-association which might vaguely be termed as a "Chamber of Commerce". Its role is to coordinate, conduct, and unify the life and activities of the Chinese community. It protects members, settles disputes, facilitates legal and commercial consultations, and provides funds for enterprises, thus at times preventing bankruptcy. Moreover, it maintains a social assistance system, seeks employment for newly arrived Chinese or for those who are out of work. The community's commercial initiatives fall under its direction, in such a way as to avoid any competition which might prove harmful to the community as a whole. It also makes arrangements for public celebration of the Chinese New Year and of the Tsing Ming festival in honour of the dead. Lately, this super-association has lost something of its influence. Vancouver Chinese tend more and more to have recourse to Canadian legal, commercial, and social institutions. The association's

cultural role endures, however, a role which consists in maintaining Chinese tradition in patterns of thought, in customs, and in patrimony.

The Chinese Saint Francis Xavier parish is situated on the outskirts of Chinatown. Its church, of a vaguely Gothic style of architecture which formerly belonged to Catholic Ukrainians, is plain but inspiring. Father Peter Chow, the pastor, came to Vancouver in 1954 as assistant to Father James Leonard who had founded the Vancouver parish in 1953. At that time, there was not a single Catholic. They now number 1,800. All fervently participate in liturgical offices, and are deeply attached to their pastor and his "curate", Sister Theresa Fung. Father Chow is a zealous pastor, selfless, wholly dedicated to his work. His rectory, part of the old sacristy which has been remodeled, consists in a bedroom, an office, a small sitting room, a dining-room, an assembly room, and a library. The pastor had displayed great ingenuity in contriving these arrangements.

This setup is called the Catholic Centre. Father is kept very busy with visits to his people, doctrine lessons, various associations for the young and not so young, correspondence courses, radio lectures, newspaper articles, etc. I often wonder how he can find time for all these activities.

The Pembroke Grey Nuns conduct the Chinese school which has a roster of over one thousand pupils, eight hundred and fifty of whom are non-Catholics, and one hundred and eighty are Catholics. For their part, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception were for many years, in charge of a Home for aged Chinese. Situated in one of the city's poorest quarters, it lately had to be abandoned as the city plans reconstruction of the area.

Although constant, the increase of the Vancouver Catholic Chinese population is not rapid. This increase comes chiefly from births in about three hundred Catholic families. Converts number an average from fifty to eighty a year. Buddhism remains the religion of the majority. About nine hundred belong to various Protestant denominations.

To Father Chow and his "curate", Sister Theresa Fung, go my sincere wishes for continued success.

**Léo-Paul Bourassa, S.J.**  
in "Le Brigand", Montreal  
No 329

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY MOTHER DEAR

*A missionary Sister writes*

Taipei, Taiwan

Dear Mother,

On the occasion of your 86th birthday, I want to offer you an original birthday gift consisting in 92 hours of teaching the doctrine. May our dear Lord grant you a renewal of strength and much happiness every day of this coming year.

I am sure you would like to hear about my work in Taiwan, the beautiful Isle I have come to love so well. Of course, it was a wrench for me to leave my beloved Hong Kong. You will not be surprised to hear that I shed tears upon leaving the mission where I had been stationed for 25 years. I loved its people, young and old, with my whole heart.

But, life is made up of partings. You have not lived for all those years without knowing only too well what this can mean . . . An old French proverb says we must try to flower wherever God sees fit to "plant" us. I have tried to put this into practice, first in Manchuria where I lived for 13 years, then in Hong Kong for 25 years. Now, at 65, I have been transplanted in Taiwan. I rely on your prayers, Mother mine. Do keep on helping me in my apostolate among my beloved Chinese people. Pray more especially for the young to whom I am asked to give lessons in catechetics, French, and English. How they yearn after the Absolute! They feel the need for Christ to fill the void in their eager young hearts.

I have already prepared a little Filipina for her first Communion. A young Catholic girl who had not received the sacraments during the last eight years, has returned to her duties. I was fortunate enough to convince a young couple to have their marriage regularized . . . These few examples show how the Holy Spirit breathes wherever and whenever he wants. My gratitude goes out to those who, in the homeland, participate in our missionary works through prayer and sacrifice.

Once again, dear Mother, I beg of you to continue assisting me in my daily encounters with the young in universities, colleges, secondary and elementary schools.

Thank you for encouraging me to follow God's call to the religious and missionary life. I owe you my happiness. May our Lady have you in tender keeping always, you who are, in your hidden way, a greater missionary than I can ever hope to be.

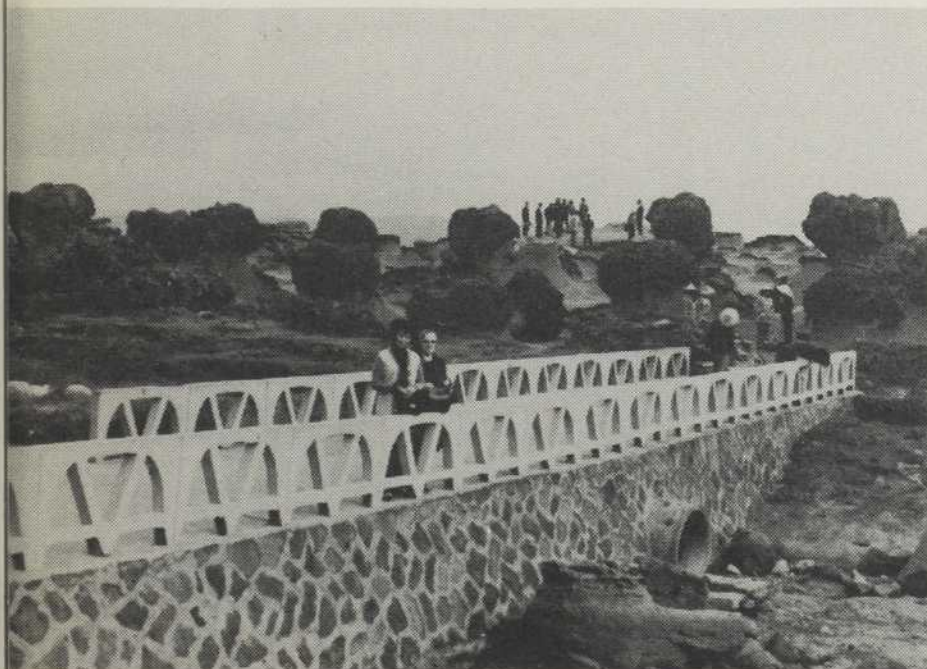
Happy, happy birthday and many more to come.

Your loving daughter,

Odile, M.I.C.



**Sister Odile teaches in Yehlin. Situated at the northern tip of Taiwan, Yehlin is one of the island's most picturesque spots in the Taipei suburbs. Wind and wave have carved in the granite extraordinary sculptures of great natural beauty. Some represent persons, animals, and plants. Close by, fishing villages dot a lovely beach.**



# WHY I WANT TO



**Monique Cloutier, M.I.C.**  
**Missionary to Japan since 1951**

"Going back to Japan? Why? Can't non-Christians be saved without your interference? It seems a waste of time to tell them what perhaps only a few want to hear—You say you are going back to teach, but Japan certainly has more than enough schools to go around. Would it not be better for you to go out to one of the emerging countries instead? In the economic field, Japan is the second or third best-developed country in the world today. Moreover, Canada needs reli-

gious. Why go into exile to pursue the work of evangelization when so much remains to be done here? Japan is a beautiful country and its people are among the most courteous in the world. Maybe that is the reason why you prefer going back . . . But, will the Japanese themselves be happy to see you return?"

These are but a few of the remarks heard since my return to the mission field has been announced. In order to reply to at least a few of these questions, I want to write out plainly some answers. These may serve to enlighten the doubting "Thomases", and prevent other missionaries from being subjected to such a barrage of objections.

## **Can't all men be saved?**

All those who faithfully follow the dictates of their conscience, whatever their religious associations may be, share in the salvation bought so dearly by Christ Jesus. It is not merely to help them reach salvation that missionaries go out to non-Christians. In the first instance, it is to announce the Good News that God loves them and that they are destined to survive forever in his love. They also have the right to benefit by the words of Christ, "No longer will I call you servants, but I will call you friends." They are not only servants obeying the divine law engraved in their hearts, and receiving the reward of their fidelity. Jesus calls them *friends*. He invites them to share his happiness. He wants them to become his friends, to love him as he himself loves them. Why should they be

# IT TO GO BACK

barred from this privilege which alone can satisfy their innermost cravings for that which is beautiful and great and good?

Christ has entrusted us with the task of making sure that everyone will enjoy such a privilege when he said, "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." Yet he knew far better than we can ever hope to know, how his infinite mercy could and would mysteriously reach out to those who, because of our insufficiency, would never know him here below.

## Why upset their religious beliefs?

Every religion is a groping after an unknown God whose presence is instinctively felt. How could people be upset when presented with the true image of a God they are looking for? Fear of knowing can be upsetting, never an honest search for the truth. Evidently the Message must be tactfully transmitted. There can be no question of underrating traditional values, or of flouting free will.

For my part, I believe I am respecting other people's liberty and their right to know when I provide them with all the elements needed to make an enlightened choice. At any rate, in Japan today the problem is different. The great majority of Japanese no longer have any personal religious convictions. Buddhism has been reduced to a purely nominal religion. Shintoism, which seems more in harmony with the



Japanese soul, has become a kind of folklore more or less related to animism or to a confused sentiment of the deity existing in all creatures. Might not even this prove a distant preparation for Christianity?

## Is Japan a mission territory?

This question implies a deplorable confusion. The term mission is too often identified with development. Self-appointed prophets declare that under-developed countries will soon be in a position to

assume their own social welfare. Missionaries will then prove perfectly passé. But, what is a missionary? An envoy who like Christ Jesus has been sent to proclaim God's love to all men. This is his specific task. In imitation of his Lord and Master, he tries to help those who suffer and are in want, to improve their miserable conditions. He translates into deeds the love he has come to proclaim. His mission, however, is not confined to these

that they offer, besides a sound education, a place where those who wish to do so may acquire the only science which can bring freedom and happiness. I marvel at the secret and mysterious workings of God's grace which prompts non-Christians parents to choose a Catholic school for their offspring. It would surely be easier for them to send their children instead to the public schools where no fees are required. Since God leads them to us, should we not welcome them with open arms?

### **There is enough work to do in Canada . . .**

At present, it may be true that in certain sectors of our country, there are so-called godless people. This might be explained in various ways. Even if we admit that there have been serious defects in the religious education of a number of our people, those who hover on the brink of disbelief, still have numerous opportunities for clearing up their difficulties or working out their problems. Numerous priests are at their disposal. Scores of valuable books are available which may bring enlightenment and peace to the souls of modern men.

Jesus has always been a sign of contradiction even among his own. Accepted by some, he is rejected by others. Sad privilege of human liberty. Besides, if religious are needed here to guide and sustain the faithful and prepare the return of the wandering sheep, why should missionaries be hindered from carrying the Message to those who yearn after God's love? To keep our missionaries home would be exercising a sort of spiritual capitalism. We are so much better off in a religious way.

### **Do you really like Japan?**

I am not going back because Japan is a beautiful country and the Japanese are a lovable people. No matter how lovely a country, there is no place like one's homeland. The bonds of friendship may be strong, but they can never make up for the pangs of separation from our own beloved people. Blood is



activities except perhaps in countries where all direct apostolate is hampered. In his heart, he forever hears the echo of Christ's command, "Go out . . . teach them to observe all the commandments which I have given you." This is why every country, whether rich or poor, where the Message has not yet been proclaimed can truly be said to be a mission land. Is not the lack of Love the only real poverty?

Christian schools in Japan are indeed superfluous from the point of view of mere secular instruction. Their only reason for existence is

thicker than water, as the old saying goes. This does not imply that missionaries are unhappy. Their happiness must be sought at another level. They are happy in their mission lands because they are where God wants them to be, they are playing a role, however minimal, in the great drama of Redemption. This is what led them, in the first place, to respond to that call which, in their youth, was powerful enough to part them from their dear ones and to nip in the bud their plans for a bright future.

One of the keenest of missionary joys is to feel the deepening of one's own faith, while one tries to communicate it to others. While evangelizing others, we soon find out that we are evangelizing ourselves. With the Samaritans in the Gospel, we can say, "We believe now not because of what you said, but because we ourselves have heard him, and we know that he is really the Saviour of the world." Another wellspring of missionary joy is the discovery of God's ways in the souls of those who come to believe in him. We can echo the words of John the Baptist, "The bridegroom is the one to whom the bride belongs; the bridegroom's friend stands by and listens and he is glad when he hears the bridegroom's voice, and this gladness is mine now in full measure." Missionary joy consists in rejoicing that Christ is known and loved. Every time we learn that new souls have drawn close to him, we experience a pure happiness because a soul has found its Bridegroom.

### **Do the Japanese really want you?**

When Jesus came into the world, he knew in advance that the Jews expected a very different Messiah from what he was, a political leader who would liberate their country from the hated Roman invader. He was sure to disappoint a good many of his compatriots. The Pharisees and their followers would certainly not accept him; indeed they would finally reject him. Nevertheless, he also knew that many who were sincere and upright yearned after him, even unconsciously. He agreed not to be accepted by all, as long as

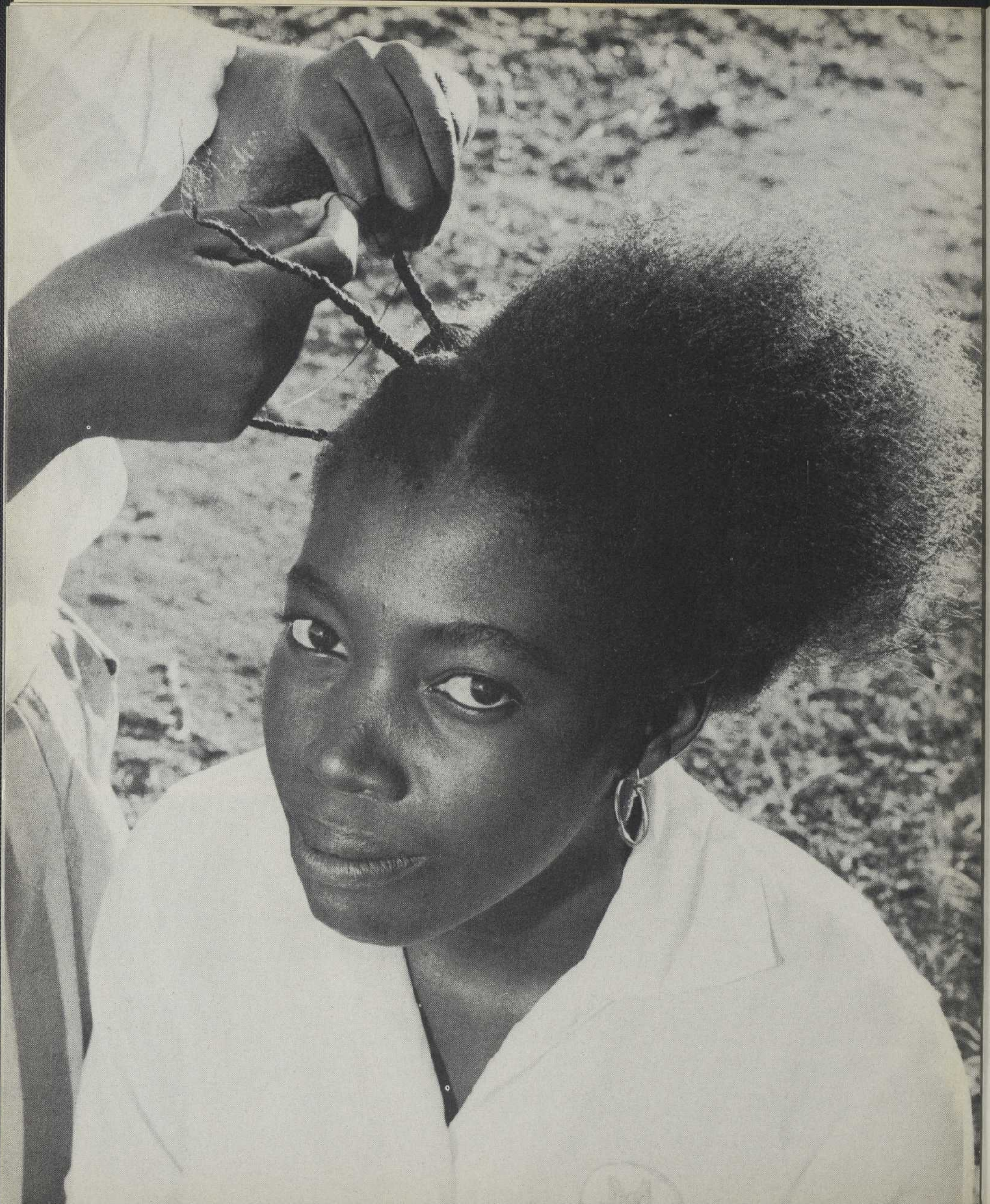
he could reach those who would come to him as to their Saviour. His Bread of life he offered to everyone because he knew that even those who had no taste for it were the very ones in danger of dying of hunger. The missionary walks in the Master's footsteps, follows his example.

### **Why are you going back?**

During my home leave this year, I often visited my aged parents. Nothing pleased them more than to



hear about my work in Japan, and the many friends I had made there over the years. They were overjoyed to know their "little girl" was loved and appreciated. After all, it is only natural to want our dear ones to be cherished. Their friends are our friends. This is the profound motivation which urges missionaries to leave for the missions. It explains why they are so eager to return. To borrow the words of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, they want "Love to be loved". Why am I going back? Because I want to make others love my Beloved.





Photos: W. Pawek

**Hairdresser's art in Malawi.**

# THE CHURCH IN AMAMI OSHIMA

## JAPAN

### **The Church in Oshima: its past**

The first Catholic missionary to Oshima, after the Meiji restoration, was Father Ferrier of the Paris Foreign Missions. His mission territory then extended over the province of Satsuma (Kagoshima Prefecture). Meanwhile, a carpenter who travelled regularly between Kagoshima and the island of Amami Oshima, told him that the islanders keenly desired his visit. Father Ferrier finally went there in December 1891. On this occasion several families asked him to instruct and baptize their children. Shortly afterwards, the parents themselves asked to be baptized. The registers of 1892, destroyed during World War II, mentioned more than 1,000 baptisms during this period.

In 1921, the two ecclesiastical prefectures of Kagoshima and Okinawa were entrusted to the care of the Canadian Franciscans. The first Franciscan to arrive on the scene was Father Maurice Bertin who, a few years ago, died in Vietnam at the age of 98. Gradually, a number of Canadian Fathers and Brothers arrived.

At the request of city officials, Father Bertin built a girls' school in Naze, the island's largest city. In 1926, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception arrived in Oshima, to take charge of the school. This was their very first mission on Japanese soil.

From the early 1930's, the Church in Oshima and Kagoshima was constantly harassed by military authorities. The island, more especially, was a strategic point in the Pacific. As the military clique was even then preparing for war against China, the presence of foreign missionaries in the territory was eyed with suspicion. They were looked upon as spies in the service of the United States. Indirect attacks on missionaries and faithful increased. Great pressure was put on the Christians to apostatize and to ask for the expulsion of all missionaries. Undaunted, the Christians pointed out that the Constitution guaranteed their freedom of religion and that nothing in their conduct could prove that they were not good patriots. Great courage was required to show such steadfastness as the military were then all-powerful. Finally, in December 1934, the Apostolic Delegate asked the missionaries to leave the mission temporarily so as to avoid further persecution of Christians. Many then left the island. Those who remained, in spite of the vexations of the police and the military, held fast to their faith in Christ and patiently waited for better times.

After the war, in 1946, civil authorities, police, and groups of prominent citizens offered their apologies for the past. Church buildings, houses, kindergartens, and various pieces of land were returned to the Church. Missionaries were urged to return. An envoy sent by the Apostolic Delegation was received with open arms. This envoy, who had been a missionary in Oshima, was accompanied on this tour of the villages by a former seminarian who had studied under the direction of the Canadian Franciscans. Recently demobilized, he was then serving the Church as a catechist. He was later to become a priest, and the first bishop of the newly-erected diocese of Naha. His name was Peter Baptist Ishigami.

The charm of the people of Oshima endures in their dialect and their music. During centuries, they suffered from oppression. Old people still remember when children were flogged for stealing bits of sugar cane. Experience has taught them what it means to suffer with and for Christ Jesus. They can laugh and joke about life's vicissitudes: *Oshima yoi toko . . . hito tsuki san ju go nichu ame ga furu* (Oshima is a nice place where it rains 35 days a month) seems to be their theme song.

### **The Church in Oshima: its present**

Amami Oshima is now mostly evangelized by the Conventuals with the help of German Redemptorists. Remarkable results have been obtained. There are now about 5,000 Catholics in 30 parishes and stations, and more than 100 vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Quite a number of those who formerly harassed the Christians are now Catholics.

However, to the average missionary on the

mainland, Amami Oshima suggests the image of a lovely green island with a warm climate, but nothing special on the missionary scale of values. But the island is really something special as far as Christianity is concerned.

The first thing you notice is the number of churches scattered all over the island, often in prominent positions. On a total population of 100,000 on the main island there are 5,000 Catholics. Ministering to their needs are 11 priests (mostly young), 2 brothers, and 60 sisters. The same ratio on a national scale would mean 3 million Catholics, 11,000 priests, 60,000 sisters!

Even more amazing is the amount of work demanded from priests and religious. The Church is known throughout the island for its social welfare efforts—a home for mentally retarded children, a baby home, an orphanage for orphans and children of lepers, a home for bedridden old people.

Another remarkable trait is the number of vocations. On the walls of the Kasari parish church, from which the newly-consecrated Bishop Ishigami originated, hang dozens of photographs of priests and sisters whom that parish has given to the Church. Altogether, the little island of Oshima has contributed one bishop, 20 priests, and 120 sisters to the working force of the Japanese Church.

There is a strong emphasis on self-support, both among missionaries and among Christians. The faithful regularly provide for a good part of the cost of construction of their churches, and in time repay the entire amount. This is sometimes loaned by other parishes, an enviable situation indeed.

The overall impression is one of a young but well established Church. Amami Oshima's Christian community has its problems—emigration to the mainland, insufficient personnel, poisonous snakes . . . But it is vibrantly alive and holds much promise for the future.

Who knows why the Church has flourished so well here? Surely the dedication of its missionaries, past and present, is a prime factor. Besides, the absence of Buddhism may have something to do with it. The essential role has doubtless been played by the open, straightforward, and warm character of the islanders.

**Adapted from Tosei News, Japan**

# CHICHICASTENANGO

## GUATEMALA

We left Totonicapan bright and early on a Sunday morning. I had long been looking forward to this trip to Chichicastenango, one of Guatemala's most interesting and picturesque villages. Here ancient Maya traditions have changed but little since the days of the conquistadores.

All along the way, we admired wonderful panoramas of lakes, volcanoes, trees, and cultivated lands where maize is still the main crop as it was in pre-colonial times.

At this early hour, cars and trucks were scarce. The road belonged to stolid Indians, bent double under the loads they were carrying to the neighbouring market of Nahuala whose housetops emerged in the distance.

For its part, the Chichicastenango market, one of the largest in the country, attracts from eight hundred to one thousand or more Indians at a time. Particularly colourful, are the *maxenos* (Indians born in the municipality) whose costumes of black wool and red head-dresses and sashes, strikingly embroidered, are unique. From the hills come many highland tribes with a wide variety of distinctive costumes. Their wares consist chiefly in blankets and other woollen goods.

But Chichicastenango's principal attraction lies in its curious religious atmosphere. The Indians still reflect a primitive polytheism that is very apparent in spite of more than four hundred years of Christian monotheism. They cling to ancient Maya beliefs. In time, pagan and Christian ideology have blended until now it is difficult if not impossible to define where one religion ends and the other begins.

We arrived at the central plaza in early forenoon and found it already swarming with people. The melancholy notes of the *al chirima* (clarinet) added to the peculiar atmosphere.

A large white colonial church is the rallying point of the divers tribes who pray there, as they see fit, according to a pattern inherited from their ancestors. It is a complex and delicate situation. What these people, so long neglected, require is plain, simple, and definite instruction. Missionaries endeavour to create a spiritual family, the Family of God—warm, intimate, loving, self-sacrificing. Only thus can they hope to handle effectively the strange syncretism of old Mayan religious customs and Christian practices.

To the Indian, the church building is a sort of meeting place for *las almas* (souls) of their departed. Cultus



Photos: United Nations

of the dead is widespread throughout Latin America. Apparently, the Indians of Chichicastenango come to church to "meet" their dead.

When we arrived, we were surprised to find the thirty odd steps of the church encumbered with Indians who swung censers, sending a haze of copal incense skywards as a vehicle for their prayers.

Fortune-tellers and sorcerers wearing multicoloured ponchos and pointed caps crouched on the steps, hoarding reserves of coal and incense, and exchanging gossip. Others knelt beside small personal altars fanning sacrificial fires. Still others climbed the steps on their knees and entered the church praying and singing in a loud voice.

Inside, the smell of lighted candles mingled with the pungent aroma of copal incense. There were no benches. On the floor or set on special boards burned hundreds of candles. Some of the Indians held four or five in their hands, kissing them devoutly. Fire is a favourite symbol of the divine. Prayers of the suppliants, kneeling beside the flickering beacons of their faith, filled the old church with weird cacophony. Each ignoring his or her neighbour, prayed earnestly and forcefully for better crops, good health, children,

money, a new house, protection against enemies or anger of the dead, etc. Meanwhile, censers swung and incense rose, speeding prayers in their way.

Men, half kneeling, consulted sorcerers who responded with ritual gestures. *Centavos* (pennies) or *al guare* (beer) were offered as payment.

Pine needles, dyed sawdust, and rose petals clothed the stone floor. All along the walls, dark with soot, stood statues of various saints gaudily dressed and half smothered with roses, the Indians' best-loved flower.

To whom were these Indians addressing their prayers? To the God of Christians, their ancient Mayan gods, the saints, the sorcerers? We noticed that a few suddenly left the church and went up a hill or into the woods to pray to concealed idols. In the profoundly religious life of the Indians, rites are of supreme importance.

Nominally, all Guatemalan Indians are Christians. But their worship is at times such a mixture of Catholic and pagan rites and of witch-doctor superstitions, that it would take an ethnologist and a theologian to unravel it.

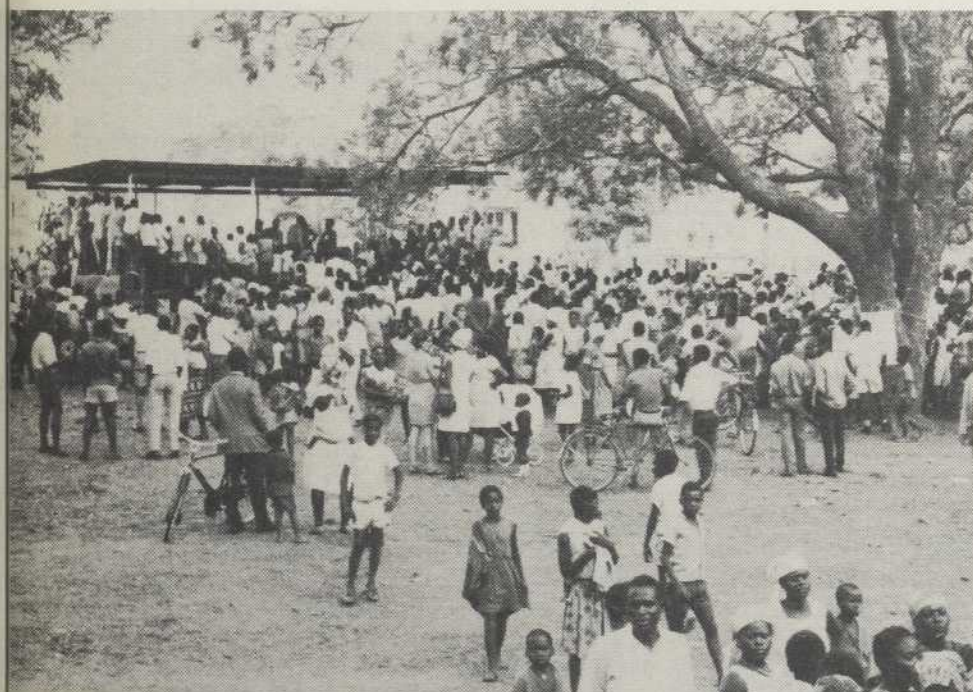
**Pauline Pageau, M.I.C.**





# HELPING OTHERS HELP THEMSELVES

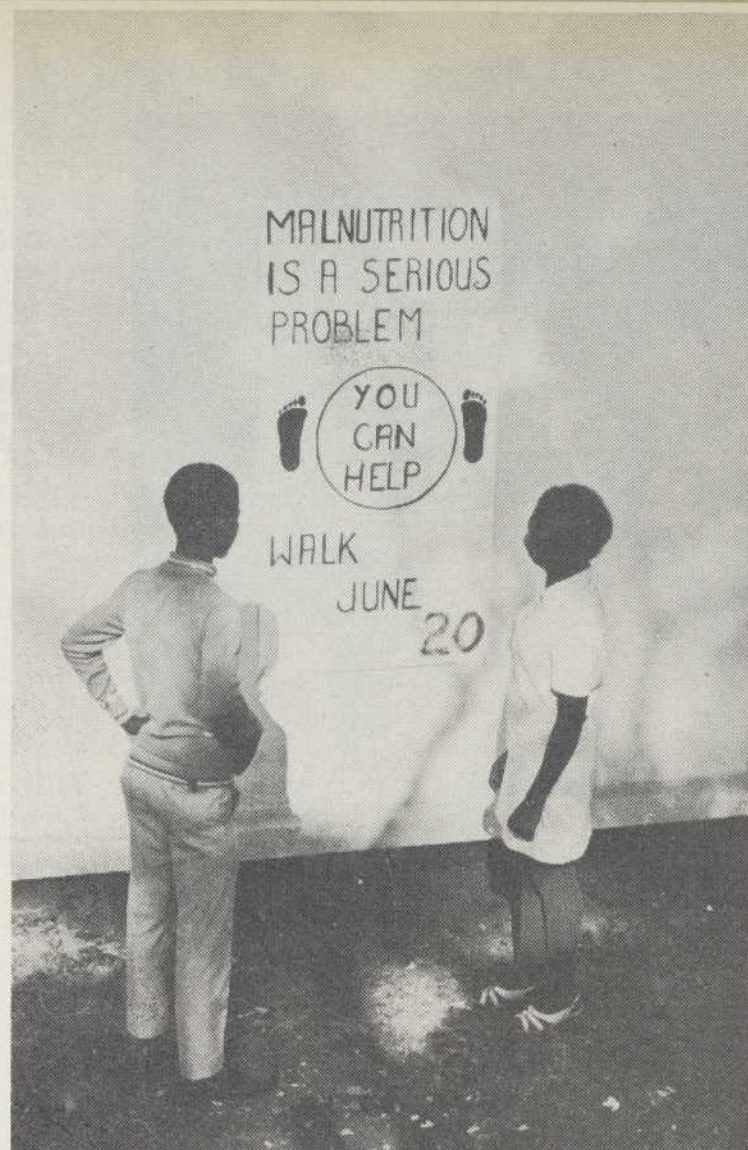
## ZAMBIA, CHIPATA



The primary aim of the Eastern Province Nutrition Groups is to fight malnutrition. Members do this through selling and teaching. What do they sell? Protein foods at very cheap prices to people who feel the lack. What do they teach? The relation between good food and good health. Secondary school students gladly give their spare time to teach and to demonstrate.

Nutrition Groups are voluntary, non-profit organizations. The people who run them, are not operating a profit-making business. They are attempting to help people buy essential foods at the lowest possible prices. Eleven of the Chadiza depots are run by primary school teachers, one by the Roman Catholic Mission, and one by Chadiza Rural Health Centre.

In October 1972, this Group started to build its own main depot where food for all the different areas could be packed and stored, pending distribution. Cement blocks for the building were made by the Chadiza Secondary School students in their spare time. More power to them!



The idea of establishing the Chadiza Nutrition Centre was prompted by the existence of a similar Group in Chipata. Campaigns had been launched to raise funds thanks to such activities as folk dances, walks, etc. Local people were appealed to and so were international agencies.

Malnutrition still exists in this region. According to statistics published by the Nutrition Centres, about forty per cent of Zambian children die before they are five years old because of malnutrition. A great number of the remaining sixty per cent are mentally or physically handicapped due to the same cause. If all people join and give their time to help others, this problem will soon be solved.

With this end in view the Chipata Nutrition Group organized a walk which was sponsored jointly by Mr. Rodrigue Pageau and by Mrs. Laberge during their recent trip to Africa. Indians, Whites, and especially Africans cheerfully joined the march. I also was happy to take part with Sister Yvette Demers and with about forty Girl Guides and twelve Legionaries of Mary.

Groups of Guides, Scouts, and secondary school students walked for one fourth of a *ngwee* (about five cents) a kilometre. Some of the young people sponsored their own groups. Adult sponsors are hard to find. The young want to live up to the slogan of the Eastern Province Nutrition Groups—*DZITHANDIZENID* "Help yourself" or "Stand on your own feet!"

**Françoise Pageau, M.I.C.**

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**NIHIL OBSTAT:**

June 12, 1973  
Rev. Jean-Charles Valin

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