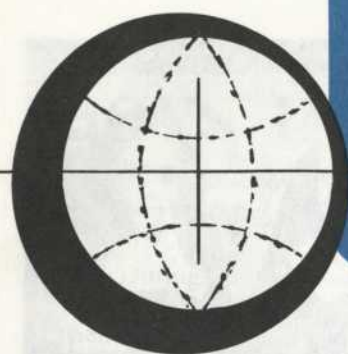




SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OF APOSTOLATE

1902-1977

by Rita Blais, M.I.C.

Almost a century ago, a little Canadian girl became involved in a lifelong love affair. Every now and then, she would steal up to the garret of her home attracted, not by the mysterious dimness and silence of the place, but by old Annals of the Holy Childhood and of the Propagation of the Faith stored away in a box. She never tired reading about the apostolic achievements of the missionaries of that time. Thus was kindled in her heart the flame of a love for souls which was never to be extinguished. Délia Tétreault — such was the little girl's name — eventually became the foundress of the first Canadian Missionary Institute for women: The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

In later years she was to recall how, from her early girlhood, she had been obsessed with the idea of the missions, and felt urged to found a community whose aim would be to spread the Kingdom of God far and near. Yet, she did all in her power to rid herself of this so-called obsession, fearing she might be giving way to fantasy. But one day, it happened that as she quietly sat in the garden at home, mulling over this idea, she suddenly became deeply conscious of the presence of the Spirit within her soul. Yielding to his impulse, she felt herself swept into a new course of life, although she did not as yet clearly understand what was required of her. Long years of groping and suffering were to pass before the divine plan became perfectly clear.

As a tentative beginning, on January 12, 1901, she opened an apostolic school to dispense adequate guidance to girls who wished to enter a missionary Congregation. She rented a small house, suitable for this purpose,

in Côte des Neiges. On June 3, 1902, a memorable date in the Annals of the Institute, Délia Tétreault, Joséphine Montmarquet, and Ida Lafricain took up their residence in what was to become the cradle of a new religious family.

While in Rome, in November 1904, Archbishop Bruchési spoke to Pope Pius X about Délia Tétreault's aspirations and was happy to hear him say, "Let this foundation be made.



Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit Foundress of the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

The blessings of God will descend upon it from the start." In a second audience, in December 1904, Archbishop Bruchési having asked Pius X what name should be given to the new Institute, the Pope answered, "Call it 'Society of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception'." The little group was thus recognized by the Church as a Community destined to the foreign Missions. In November

1908, Archbishop Bruchési again wrote from Rome giving Délia the result of an interview with Cardinal Gotti, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda. "No special country is assigned to your Sisters as field of apostolate. All mission countries are open to your zeal. What was said of yore to the apostles, the Church now says to you, 'Go, teach all nations'."

The very first appeal for help came from Mgr. Jean-Marie Mérel, Prefect Apostolic of Canton, China. In answer to his request, six Sisters left Montreal for Canton in September 1909. Various activities were entrusted to them: day nurseries, orphanages, homes for the aged and disabled, a leprosarium, etc. In 1910 they laid the foundations of Holy Spirit School, the first Catholic educational institution for girls ever opened in Canton.

Despite trials of all kinds, such as bandit raids, revolutions, the sino-Japanese war, World War II, the communist war, their works of apostolate rapidly progressed. From the time they arrived in Canton in 1909 up to the arrest and imprisonment by a people's court of five Sisters on trumped-up charges in March 1951, 153,000 children were baptized. The orphanage sheltered about 200 orphans at a time. The greater number of these children had been snatched from death. Of the six to eight hundred lepers who passed through the wards of the Shek Lung Leprosarium, before the communist invasion, not one died without requesting baptism. Eager to continue helping the Chinese people they had learned to love, the Sisters who had been expelled from China later resettled in Hong Kong and Taiwan. They are still at work there, spreading the Gospel and carrying on various social and educational works. A local Novitiate



First group of M.I.C. Sisters. Seated: Centre, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit.

has also been opened for Chinese aspirants to our Institute.

In 1921, the Archbishop of Manila wrote to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit asking her to send Sisters to conduct schools and a hospital for the 40,000 Chinese dissiminated throughout his diocese. At his request, five Sisters arrived in Manila in August 1921. All were familiar with the Chinese mentality, having lived in Canton for several years. They assumed the direction of the Chinese General Hospital in Manila and of the nursing school attached to it. Immaculate Conception Anglo-Catholic Academy for the children of the Chinese Colony was also firmly organized. When World War II broke out, three Sisters were imprisoned while the others were interned in the concentration camp of Los Banos. Thanks to a miraculous intervention of divine Providence, they, together with other detainees, were delivered from certain death by two hundred American parachutists on the morning of February 23, 1945, at the very moment when Japanese soldiers were getting ready to shoot all the inmates. Peace having been finally restored, the missionaries started anew. At present, the Institute runs twelve establishments in the archipelago. More than sixty Filipina Sisters have entered the Baguio Novitiate. The Provincial and the Assistant Provincial are both Filipinas. At the last General Chapter, Sister Guadelupe Sempio, also a Filipina, was nominated as a member of the General Council.

In 1926, Mother Foundress sent a group of three Sisters to Japan. Their first activity there consisted in con-

ducting a secondary school for girls in the city of Naze, on the island of Amami-Oshima. A second post was opened in Kagoshima in 1928. As the storm clouds of World War II gathered, the Sisters were forced to leave these two posts, situated in strategic areas. In 1930, they moved up north to Koriyama, in the Sendai Diocese, and in 1933 opened a new post in Aizu Wakamatsu. Interned at the beginning of the war, all were repatriated in 1943. After the hostilities were over, they returned and opened an orphanage, schools, and dispensaries. Forty M.I.C.'s are now active in Koriyama, Aizu Wakamatsu, and Tokyo. Besides a Novitiate for Japanese M.I.C. Sisters, they conduct a kindergarten and a dormitory for university students in Japan's capital city.

During the period when M.I.C. missionaries were repatriated from the Far East, many pressing calls came to the Mother House from other mission fields. In 1943, Mgr. Louis Collignon, O.M.I., Bishop of Les Cayes, Haïti, welcomed the Sisters in his diocese. Every year since then, large groups of missionaries have left for this region. As we write, over one hundred M.I.C.'s are at work in fifteen establishments, and fifteen Haitian girls have been trained in the Novitiate of Port au Prince. Full-fledged Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, they now share in the development and the evangelization of their country.

Two important foundations were made in 1948, the first in Cuba. In this country, the Sisters were called upon to assist the priests of the Quebec Foreign Mission Society in their apos-

tolate. Seven large schools were opened. However, as these institutions could reach but a limited number of children, the missionaries established doctrine centres in the countryside where the pupils attending public schools could receive catechetical teaching, after regular school hours.

When the Castro regime prevailed, the Institute had to abandon all these flourishing educational institutions. Deprived of living quarters, most of the Sisters were obliged to return to their home country. Upon the Papal Nuncio's request, however, a small group accepted to remain in Cuba for pastoral service and the teaching of Christian Doctrine. A Novitiate was opened in Havana in 1965. Twelve M.I.C. Cuban Sisters are receiving their religious formation there. With their Canadian Sisters they assure a generous collaboration to the Church of Cuba.

Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit had always had a special love for Africa. A few years before she founded her Congregation, she had planned to devote her life to the evangelization in this country. On the eve of the day she was to leave, however, she fell seriously ill. Although this was a bitter disappointment, she saw in the event a sign of God's will and accepted it willingly. It was only after her death that, in compliance with Mgr. J.M. St-Denis' desire, a first group of M.I.C. Sisters left in 1948 for Nyasaland (since renamed Malawi). Foundations multiplied as new needs arose: a small bush hospital; a dispensary; mobile clinics; primary and secondary schools; boarding schools; domestic economy

centres; a novitiate for Sisters, etc. A foundation was later made in Zambia. In these two Central African countries M.I.C. missionaries carry on the work of evangelization in nine areas. Over forty Sisters are at present active in five centres on the island of Madagascar, off the coast of Africa, where they devote themselves to educational, social, and pastoral activities.

In Bolivia, Peru, and Chile, as well as in Guatemala, 95% of the people are baptized. These countries, however, may be considered mission fields because, due to the lack of priests and Sisters, the people are mostly dechristianized. The Sisters conduct five posts in Bolivia, four in Peru, one in Chile, and two in Guatemala — twelve establishments in all. Their activities vary in these countries according to local needs.

Délia never forgot her childhood attraction for the Annals of the Holy Childhood and of the Propagation of the Faith. After she became the foundress of the first Missionary Institute for women in Canada, she often stressed the importance of the press in developing a missionary mentality. "If we wish to have missionaries," she used to say, "we must create a missionary ambience." In 1920 in pursuance of this idea, she launched a missionary periodical called *Le Précurseur*. Many persons strove to dissuade her from this enterprise, warning her of its inherent difficulties. She persisted and the magazine met with remarkable success, so much so that in 1923 an English edition was published — THE PRECURSOR. Due to financial difficulties, this latter magazine was replaced in 1974 by a newsletter — MIC Mission News — destined to all English-speaking persons who are members of the Immaculate Conception Missionary Association.

Every religious community has a spirituality of its own. Délia Tétreault ardently desired to spread the Kingdom of God to the ends of the earth, in a spirit of thanksgiving. In one of her letters she outlined the goal of her Institute as follows, "To promote the sacred interests of God in every possible way and to thank Him unceasingly for ourselves and for all men — such is the definite aim of our Society. "This quotation sums up both the objectives of our Institute and the core of its spirituality: Missionaries in a spirit of thanksgiving!

WITH OUR FRIENDS IN HAITI

by Rachel Blanchette, M.I.C.

Agathe Jean-Gilles, a guest at the Cape's Communal Refuge, is deaf and blind. Sr. Lucienne Déry, her devoted nurse, has devised an ingenious means of making herself understood. She writes out letters in Agathe's open



Sister Lucienne writes out a message in Agathe's open palm.

hand. The latter repeats letter by letter until a word is formed, w - a - l - k, for instance. It takes time and patience but what a joy when Agathe finally blurts out the right word! Two light taps on her hand mean that her response was good.

Now that she has caught on, Agathe is very anxious to make herself understood. She lightly touches her nurse's lips, after asking questions, trying to guess the answer. Before she was brought to us here, she spent her days squatting in front of the parish church, begging from passersby. To her the refuge is something of a paradise where she is secure and happy.

I enjoy the weekly Gospel sharing with my aged and handicapped charges. A group of 34 patients share an hour of prayer with the senior citizens of Harricana, Amos, Abitibi, every Tuesday, and another hour, on Wednesday with a group in the city of Amos proper. Links of prayer thus unite the aged of Canada with the aged of Haiti. On wings of prayer hearts communicate.

OUR LADY OF THE WAY

It is interesting to take up the Gospel of Luke and to follow Mary on her numerous journeys. When we read that she *went* from one place to another, we must keep in mind that she *walked*. She belonged to the poorer classes, and poor people in her time travelled on foot. To visit her cousin Elizabeth, she walked about 180 miles from Nazareth to a "certain city", in the Judean hills, and back again after a three-month stay.

"And Joseph went up to the city of David with Mary..." (Luke 2: 4-6). This means our Lady walked about 95 miles that her Son might be born in Bethlehem, in accordance with the prophecies. Afterwards came the flight into Egypt, a journey averaging at least 200 miles.

After the wedding feast at Cana (a walk of about 10 miles from Nazareth), our Lady apparently did not return to her home town. Saint John tells us that Jesus then went

down to Capernaum with his mother and his brethren. According to modern commentators on Scripture, the purpose of the 20 mile trip to this town was to form a caravan on its way to Jerusalem for the Passover. We can easily presume that Mary accompanied the disciples and their women folk to this Passover, the first of Jesus' public ministry.

All four Gospels mention the group of women who assisted Christ and his apostles on their missions throughout Galilee, supplying them with their daily necessities. It is unthinkable that Mary was not of this group, the chief animator perhaps. She lived our human life and she knows how harsh it can at times prove. We can have recourse to her in any situation, assured that her compassionate heart will reach out to us in all our troubles and sorrows. Well has she been named "Lady of the Way". Is she not the mother of Him who is the Way?

ON THE WINDS OF GRACE

by Odile Malboeuf, M.I.C.

After having spent 44 years on the distant mission fields of Manchuria, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, I am now a home missionary. For the last few months missionary animation has been my apostolate.

I would like to share with you all the many rewarding events which mark my days. Space being limited, I will relate only a few so that you may thank the Lord with me for his mercies. One fine day while visiting some acquaintances, on my usual errands, I was told to give a wide berth to such and such a house. The people who lived there were said to be heavy drinkers. As I passed in front of the house, however, I completely forgot about the warning and rang the bell. A woman answered the door. I explained why I had come and, being a Catholic, she said she would be

pleased to become a member of our missionary association.

Meantime, her husband invited me into the kitchen where he was sitting with a group of friends. I accepted, and it was their turn to listen to a little talk on the missions. When I had finished, one of the men excused himself for a few minutes. When he returned, he said to me, "Sister, you have just been telling us that as baptized Christians we all have a missionary duty of our own. Well, I've made up my mind to begin right away and I want you to help me. One of my friends who lives on this floor is a sick man. He feels lonely as he seldom has visitors. I'm sure your visit would perk him up a bit."

How could I refuse? The sick man was overjoyed to meet a missionary Sister. Crippled in a bad accident,

one year ago, he was still unable to walk. During the course of our conversation, he told me how much he desired to receive Holy Communion. He was not a resident in the city and did not know any priest in the vicinity. I promised to make arrangements that very day and we parted good friends.

On my way home, that evening, I stopped at the rectory and told Father Côté, S.J. who was temporarily replacing the pastor about this sick person. Later that evening, Father called me on the phone to tell me he had visited the man and heard his confession. As he found himself unable to return the next day, he asked me whether I would take him Holy Communion. I went the next morning and stayed long enough to help the sick man with his thanksgiving. The following Sunday I went again on the same blessed errand. My newly made friend's eyes were bright with tears as he thanked me. And this is how I go about my Father's business, borne on the wind of grace.

PHOTO/REPORT

Everyday life problems are still solved in a simple manner in many parts of Malawi and Zambia. A little girl tells us how she gradually learns to manage a household by watching Mother and imitating her in the performance of everyday chores.



It is still one of the main duties of young girls in my country to provide water for the needs of the family. As soon as I was tall enough to reach the wheel of the village pump, I started to fill and carry many pails of water every day. This is one of my favourite tasks. Don't you think it also is good physical exercise?



The pail is full as full as can be. To keep the precious water from spilling over, I place a few green leaves on top. to show how strong I am, I carry two pails at a time, using both head and hand. Mother has taught me how to make a small pad out of leaves and twigs to protect my head from the pail's sharp edges. This pad also comes in handy when I carry firewood.



Two by two, we pound maize just as our mothers do. Papa himself hewed out the mortar and pestle from a tree trunk. When the maize has become flour, under our pestles, we cook the family meal called *sima*, a sort of porridge seasoned with beans, tomatoes, pumpkin flowers and leaves or other vegetables.

Photo credits: Pawek

HONG KONG

BOYS IN A GIRLS' SCHOOL

These essays come from the pen of teenage students in our Good Hope Secondary School. They will give our readers an insight into the mentality of the young in Hong Kong.

During the first week I spent in this school, I was highly excited as well as challenged. The first thing that interested me was the large number of girls as well as their reactions. Maybe it was excitement that made me a bit too sensitive. I found many girls watching me closely. Their eyes were like the spotlight in a theatre and shone directly on me. It made me feel that they were searching for something, studying something or expecting something. Sometimes, they murmured a few words to their neighbours and giggled afterwards. These giggles usually made me feel shy and confused. This often occurred while I was having my lunch in the canteen. Every time I took a mouthful of rice, the girls sitting opposite me would giggle and stare at me. I just did not know why. Maybe they had never seen rice being eaten at such speed!

In the classes also there were a lot of giggles and murmurs. This once, the cause of the giggles was not the "speed" in eating rice, but the nicknames given. I was amazed when I found out that the boys were all given strange names — "Big Mountain", "Volcano", "Yellow Hair"... It really made me feel that boys were "monsters" in the eyes of those girls. No doubt, we boys are in a very outstanding position and are thus naturally exposed to the jokes of the girls. Nevertheless, we poor fellows also became the scapegoats during the lessons. It seems that all teachers are weak in mathematics; they never came to know the proportion between boys and girls in a class. Very often, they questioned a few girls before they asked a boy. Hence, the chance for boys to answer questions became greater only in the month of October. I was questioned at every lesson, and each time I had to make a long speech in front of the class. So, I called that month "The black October". My boy classmates agreed with me.

Fortunately, this period did not last long. In about two months' time, the girls' giggles were no longer concentrated on boys, and pressure tactics became lighter. Maybe they found out that boys are not "mon-

sters" or we ourselves became used to the new conditions. The only unbearable ones were the teachers who still questioned us with the same persistence, and then ignored our presence in the class by saying, "Good morning, girls", and "Goodbye, girls"... Now I find the whole situation rather humorous. Besides, the more questions I answer the more I benefit from the class.

Actually, school life in a girls' school is just as simple and pleasant as in other co-educational schools. The only difference there is, the boys get many more chances to answer questions, and many more chances to help the "weak ladies" and become real gentlemen. Besides, we boys can easily win gold medals on the sports day.

Jonathan Lai
F. 6A

GIRL'S POINT OF VIEW

It is quite challenging and interesting for me to express my feelings regarding the presence of Form Six boy schoolmates in our school. Personally speaking, I would say that I welcome the idea of having boys for classmates. They have very different tastes and ideas. Sometimes we find that their opinions differ from our own. This helps broaden the scope of our learning and our thinking. It is

TAIWAN, FORMOSA

DRAGON-BOAT FESTIVAL

The Dragon-Boat Festival falls on the fifth day of the fifth moon in the Chinese lunar calendar. This is one of the three major traditional festivals of the year marking as it does the coming of the summer season.

On this occasion, family reunions usually take place at noontime with meals comprising special food for the festivity such as Chung Tse, glutinous rice wrapped in bamboo or other leaves and stuffed with pork, oyster eggs, dates, beans, sesame seeds... Yellow Dragon Wine or Huang Lung Wine, spiced with various herbs, is often served at this meal. Calamus

important sometimes to get a male perspective of things, to know what the other sex thinks, lest we become too narrow-minded if we are only acquainted with the same sex, sharing the same way of thinking. This is especially important in the case of higher forms, where discussions are necessary and important.

However, many problems have resulted here in Good Hope, concerning the coming of the boys. On the one hand, they are accused of being rude and bad-mannered. On the other, we girls are accused of being fussy, narrow-minded, and quarrelsome. This rather resembles a "cold war". Of course, I dare not say that all this is nonsense, but I do think in most cases the trouble is caused by misunderstanding. Both sides do not know each other very well. Many of the boys have come from boys' schools, and the girls at Good Hope have been used to an all girls' environment. Since it seems that we have been living in two different worlds, how could we possibly get on well with one another so quickly? Moreover, we are all at an age when we are often very unstable and emotional, and thus sometimes cause trouble.

I think this situation will improve very soon when we become better acquainted and more used to boys studying with us. In fact, we should learn from their openmindedness, their carefree attitude, and their remarkable sportsmanship, while they could learn from our diligence, our neatness... They should try to treat us more like girls.

Vivian Chi
F. 6B

leaves are hung on door lintels to avert evil influences. In some households, a portrait of Chung Kuei is hung on the wall to drive away all devils. The portrait is due to the brush of a noted painter, Wu Tao Tse, of the Tang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.) who was ordered by Emperor Ming Huang to paint what he saw in a dream.

Traditional Dragon-Boat races are held to commemorate the suicide of the poet-statesman Ch'u Yuan (378-340 B.C.). Frustrated over the failure of his government to introduce necessary reforms, he sacrificed his life by

(continued on page 6)

THANK YOU DEAR YUKO

by Marie Claire Lacombe, M.I.C.

It is not without a stirring emotion that we leave a country where we have resided for over twenty years. Ties have become so strong that we need to summon all our courage in order to tear ourselves away from so many devoted friends. Shall we ever meet again? This is the question I asked myself wistfully as I left Malawi, a few months ago.

Even now when once again I have grown used to life in my homeland, in close contact with my M.I.C. Sisters and my relatives, my thoughts often roam back to my beloved Malawi, my students, my friends, my colleagues. As I go about my little daily chores here, I remember persons and things so clearly that they seem to stand before me...

However, there is one good friend I cannot hope to meet again — Miss Yuko Isomura, one of the first Japanese teachers graciously sent to Malawi by her country, for a period of two years. She was part of a group of Japanese volunteers who wished to lend a helping hand to emerging countries. Before leaving, all had been given special training in adaptation for their new milieu. The group was made up of scientists, teachers, nurses, mechanics, all young, all eager to do something worthwhile and contribute to solidarity among nations.

For her part, Yuko was assigned as first experience to teach mathematics with me at our Marymount Secondary School. I owe a great deal to this young Japanese friend. Her delicacy of feeling, her refinement, her devotedness soon came to be appreciated by students and teachers alike. As each flower has its beauty and fragrance, so it is with human beings. Yuko went about her duties, competent, gentle, and serene. Coming into daily contact with her I realized how much enrichment we can derive from other people's cultures.



Adieu, dear Yuko. Many grateful thanks for your precious friendship. I am proud of you and I love you for what you were and are.

Dear friends and readers, I am sure you also appreciate my Japanese friend. Let us join together in ardent

prayer to the Holy Spirit that our dear Yuko may receive the gift of faith and come to know Christ. Are we not all brothers and sisters, children of the same God and Father?

DRAGON-BOAT...

(continued from page 5)

drowning in the Milo River. Upon learning of the tragedy, his neighbours immediately rushed to their boats and sailed up and down the river to find his body so that it would not be devoured by the fishes. Hence the Dragon-Boat races which began in 299 B.C.

Ch'u Yuan was a great poet who enriched the literature of China with many poems and songs. One of them, Li Sao, gained universal fame. Chinese poets of later years have observed this day as Poets' Day, featured by recitations or writing of poems.

All these activities have always made the Dragon-Boat Festival a colourful and joyous occasion. Children especially enjoy this day as they are permitted to take part in all the family activities and also watch the Dragon-Boat Races in the afternoon.

Condensed from "China Post"

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