

Precursor

75th Anniversary Issue

No. 1 1977



The M.I.C.'s in Asia

**The M.I.C.'s
Around the World
For A 75th Anniversary
A Trip
In Time
And Space
(1902 - 1977)**

1977 underlines an important event in the history of our Institute.

In fact, June 3rd will be the 75th anniversary of her foundation.

The institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception was born on June 3, 1902.

But who was the founder? It is . . .



... a woman whose heart knew no frontier

Yes, a woman of our own country; a woman with prophetic intuitions. Her name: Délia Tétreault, a native of Marieville, in the diocese of St. Hyacinth. At an early age she hears a faint but persistent call. Attentive to the Spirit dwelling within her, she remains listening and when a definite plan emerges, she courageously adheres to it. Deep within her she realizes that it is time for the Canadian Church to share the FAITH formerly received from the Christians who had migrated from France. Anticipating all the great missionary encyclicals — among which the first, *Maximum Illud* of Benedict XV, published only in 1919, — she dares to push forward and direct the frail boat, born of her heart, to all the shores of the world, especially where the Lord, the great love of her life, is still unknown. Her heart, like His, knew no frontier.

75 years later — the boat is still sailing ...

The small boat of Délia Tétreault has become a big ship. The name of that ship was given by Pope Pius X. On December 7, 1904, as the universal Church was preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Msgr. Paul Bruchesi, archbishop of Montreal, asked the Holy Father what name would be given the new religious Institute. His Holiness replied. "You will call it 'the Society of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception'." Archbishop Bruchesi remarked: "This will be the bouquet for the feast of the Blessed Virgin."

Since then the ship has been sailing on under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. From 1902 up to the present more than *one thousand* messengers of the Good News have sailed and some 800 landed on the distant shores of fifteen countries, in four continents.

How would you like? ...

Parents, friends, benefactors who, through your ever constant generosity, have enabled our ship to sail endlessly on the seas of the world in search of unknown brothers, how would you like to relive with us, your Canadian missionaries, the M.I.C.'s, some of the most daring adventures of these bearers of the Gospel?

If you agree, in its special issues, all along this jubilee year 1977, the *Precursor* will look through some pages of the Community history. It will be good to relive these family events and together we will magnify the Lord for having realized the impossible dreams of a child of our country, named Délia. A child with a heart as wide as the universe. A child who, like the Immaculate Virgin, dreamed of giving the world to Christ and Christ to the world: "... the only adequate way", she liked to repeat to her daughters, "of giving thanks to the Father." "God has given us everything," she writes one day, "even his own Son; what better way of thanking him in return than by giving him children who will also sing his kindness all along the centuries."

Towards the 1909 China ...

Our trip begins with the present issue of the *Precursor* around the world via the great yellow Empire.

With the help of the archives of the Institute, we shall start with the first six M.I.C.'s who, in 1909, left their family and country for the faraway and mysterious China. Why did they leave? What happened to them when they reached their destination? Was this project really justified? Would other Bearers of the Good News follow in their footsteps?

To all these legitimate questions we shall try to answer briefly, but clearly. And, as we visit these Canadian pioneers at work in the four corners of the globe, we shall come to recognize in Délia Tétreault, a woman-prophet ... one who saw far ahead of her times, whose vision was broad and just. It was necessary for her to have the visual acuity of prophets and also the daring of the conquerors to send, at the turn of this century, other young and inexperienced women to all roads of the world. She accepted this challenge. Her daughters still take it today, in 1977, because they always have at heart a dream, a dream as wide as the world, the dream of their foundress: "That Christ and the Immaculate Virgin be known from pole to pole."

Original French text by: Réjane Gaudet, M.I.C.

History of the M.I.C. Community Through the Years

A Nest on the Hill



His Holiness, Pope Pius X



*His Grace, The Most
Reverend Paul Bruchesi*



*Délia Tétreault
Foundress of the Mis-
sionary Sisters of the
Immaculate Concep-
tion*

We are in 1908. The very young community at 314 St. Catherine Road has now six years of existence. Professed Sisters, novices, postulants, and students of the Apostolic School are gathered around their beloved foundress, Délia Tétreault, who has taken the name, Mary of the Holy Spirit. From the very start they are filled with a spirit of THANKSGIVING. The chronicles of the times note: "... the happy little group, having taken up its residence on the hill, settled down with great satisfaction in this enchanting nest where they felt close to heaven; a place where space, vast horizons and fresh air abound and a crystal-clear brook seeming to mingle its babbling with the song of the daughters of Mary in a daily hymn of thanksgiving."

Looking Forward

In prayer, work and joy, each one prepares herself for the fulfillment of her life dream: the MISSION.

Finally on November 7 a letter arrives with a message full of hope. This letter came from Msgr. Paul Bruchesi, archbishop of Montreal, who was in Rome at that time. He writes: "I have seen the Holy Father to whom I spoke about you. No definite territory will be assigned to you since all mission countries of the world are open to you. As it was once said to the Apostles: 'Go and preach to all nations...' I clearly see that this is what the Lord expects from you".

The Mission at Last

In early 1908, Bishop Jean-Marie Mérel of Canton, China, while passing through Montreal, pays a visit to the nascent community. Of course, he speaks of his Chinese people... and the future missionaries are strongly attracted to this mysterious and sympathetic people. After his departure, negotiations are pursued by the foundress, the Archbishop of Montreal and the Bishop of Canton.

1909



1953

September 8, 1909

On September 8, 1909, the first six missionaries chosen for the mission of Canton, in southern China, leave Montreal for Vancouver where, on the 15th, they board the Empress of Japan bound for Canton. Having safely arrived at their destination, they immediately set to work. They first attend to the abandoned babies. The superior of the mission writes to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit. "... everyday three or four babies wrapped in rags, are brought to us, but most of them die; we have about ten of them who seem to want to survive. I am referring only to the children living under our roof because outside the city there is another foundling home under our supervision where Chinese catechists are taking care of the children."

Not long after their arrival in Canton, the missionaries consider the opening of a school, since there are no Catholic schools in this crowded city. At the beginning of 1910, the superior of the mission writes to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit: "I believe you will be happy to know that we shall name our school 'Holy Spirit Academy'. It is the first Catholic school

for young girls to be opened in Canton. A few pagan girls have already registered. They are very charming, and no doubt you would like them".

On May 22, 1910, Bishop Mérel of Canton writes to our Foundress: "... the Holy Spirit Academy gives the Sisters much satisfaction", and he adds: "after the work of the Holy Childhood ... the schools for young Chinese girls, the most urgent work for the moment is the school of Shameen for the children of our French, Portuguese, English and American compatriots who are brought up unaware of their duties toward God".

The education of youth constitutes a priority right from the beginning of our missionary work. The Holy Spirit Academy proves to be a center of culture on various levels including the teaching of arts, but, above all, a center of Christian faith where numerous conversions to Catholicism originated. Among these, is a highly gifted student, Miss Lucia Ho, who later on joined our Institute and became headmistress of the school in which she had been educated. Following the expulsion from China of all foreign religious, our heroic Sister remained alone.

The first six missionaries.



Toward the Most Unfortunate...

At the Leprosarium of Shek Lung

On October 4, 1912, the Bishop of Canton writes to the Archbishop of Montreal: "... your dedicated Canadian Sisters would be needed in another field: work among the leprous women. The Government is asking us to take charge of a leprosarium that could shelter 300 to 400 women and young girls. It would be willing to give five cents a day per leper for her upkeep. Three or four Sisters would be sufficient to take on the administration..."

Monsignor Bruchesi replies to Monsignor Mérel: "... I was deeply touched by your request in favor of the poor leprous women ... I went to see our dear Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. There are about forty of them: professed, novices and postulants. 'Dear Sisters', I told them, 'another work is requested of you in China, a work of self-sacrifice, but rewarding because of Christ's promise: 'what you have done onto others ... It is the work among the poor leprous women. Do you accept it? Those among you who feel ready to go and devote themselves to this great cause

may rise.' Your Excellency, all of the forty Sisters stood up".

Among the 'forty', three lucky ones are chosen for the care of the leprous women: Sr. Marie-Bernadette (Alma Leger), Sr. St. Francois d'Assise (Clara Hebert), and Sr. St. Raphael (Malvina Biron). Sr. St. Paul (Blanche Clement), already stationed in Canton, becomes the first superior of the group. On October 12, 1913 they officially take possession of the St. Paul Leprosarium of Shek Lung, and are entrusted with the care of 214 women and children.

With the years, the size of the leprosarium expands. When our missionaries were expelled by the Communist authorities, it had more than 900 patients. A rewarding fact for the Bearers of the Good News: all of the lepers, men and women, who died while the Sisters were in charge of the leprosarium, asked to be baptized before dying.



Mother Marie-de-la-Providence, superior general (1st row, left) with a group of women lepers on the occasion of her visit to Shek Lung.

From Canton to Hongkong

In the wake of political troubles giving rise to bloody civil wars, the missionaries in Canton and Shek Lung were forced on several occasions to seek refuge in the island of Hong Kong.

In April 1927 due to the imminent danger brought about by the bolshevist hordes who aimed particularly at the foreigners, the British Consulate orders the Sisters to find lodging elsewhere. After searching for a few days, the Sisters rent small houses in Kowloon, a territory situated at the estuary of the river facing Hong Kong. The Canadian missionaries manage to settle down as best they can with the thirty-five orphans they brought along with them.

By May of the following year, the situation having partially calmed down, the Sisters of Shek Lung and most of those of Canton take the risk of returning to their work. Since reprisals are constantly feared, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit requests from the Bishop of Hong Kong, Bishop Valtora, the permission to keep a "pied-à-terre" in his episcopal city. Having received a favorable answer, the courageous Foundress notifies the superior to keep one of the two houses where some private courses may be given as a means of subsistence. "Let us try it out like that for a while," she writes, "God will let us know in due time His views on our settling down in Hong Kong."

It did not take long before Providence revealed his plans as to the contribution of our Institute toward the evangelization in this new territory. In 1929 the authorities give permission to open an elementary school in the Chinese district of Kowloon. On that occasion Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit writes: "You cannot imagine how the news of this new project gladdens us! I think it is the mustard seed . . . which will become a large tree . . ." This woman, apostle and prophet, was farsighted and her prediction soon materialized, as the following facts prove:

February 1930 — Opening of a small school of 39 pupils (boys and girls) ranging from five to seventeen years of age, distributed in the six grades of the elementary course.

1933 — The Government grants the school an annual subsidy.

1940 — The number of pupils has increased to over 400 and everyday some have to be refused for lack of space.

At the outbreak of the Second World War (1939-1945), the Governor of the city orders all women of British allegiance to leave without delay. The Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception offer their services as nurses. They follow first-aid courses for the care of the wounded. Having passed the exams, they go through a four-week probation period in a government hospital. Then follow the invasion of enemy troops, the internment in a concentration camp, the repatriation and finally, the return to the field of action as soon as the war is over. We shall resume the history of our missionary work in Hong Kong after this painful period of war.

Canton refugees during the Civil War on their way to Hongkong.



Another Ramification on the Chinese Soil

Tsungming (1928-1948)

On October 28, 1926, the first six Chinese Bishops receive their episcopal consecration in Rome from his Holiness Pope Pius XI.

On January 28, 1927, one of these new Bishops, Simon Tsu, S.J., apostolic vicar of Haimen, province of Kiangsu, while visiting Montreal drops in at our Motherhouse and speaks to the Community about his vicariate. Out of a population of 6,500,000 inhabitants, there are 33,000 Christians and 20 priests.

Of course, his visit is intentional, since he wishes to have Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, at least two, to take charge of some of the six orphanages in his district. Our apostolic foundress then replies that she usually sends at least four Sisters for a foundation. No doubt Bishop Tsu is most pleased with this unexpected promise.

A Great Intuition of the Foundress

In a letter addressed to Bishop Tsu on February 4, 1927, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit reveals one of her greatest preoccupations which is the formation of indigenous Sisters: "You seem to want to entrust an orphanage to us, but, in my humble opinion, the creation of a novitiate for Chinese Sisters would not be detrimental to the work previously mentioned; on the contrary, it would give the novices of the new Congregation the opportunity to prepare themselves for their future apostolate."

To her great joy, Bishop Tsu immediately replies that he sees no objection to it. However, the foundation of this new mission is delayed by the revolution then going on in China. Finally on September 4, 1928, two Sisters: Sr. Marie-de-l'Epiphanie (May Moquin) and Sr. Marie-de-Jésus (Elmina Melanson) leave Canton for the island of Tsungming. Two others leave Canada to join them: Sr. Marie-de-Sion (Florida Ravary) and Sr. Ste-Rose-de-Lima (Rose Bérubé).

The mission begins with the foundling home and orphanage which, in no time, is filled to capacity. A year after, the mission of Tsungming is able to place 70 babies in good foster-homes, house thirty newborn babies in the foundling home and 20 children in the orphanage. The apostolic school, opened in view of preparing candidates for the future indigenous novitiate, has already forty-five students. A small dispensary is also set up and receives many patients each day.

The following year a workroom is opened in order to provide work for the women of the locality; thirty workers are busy with lace-work, sewing, embroidery, etc.

Finally the novitiate so eagerly desired becomes a reality. On September 8, 1931, nine young Chinese girls — five are from the Apostolic School — make up the new community. This Society, named the Teresian Sisters, has Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus for its model and patron. Ten years later, the number of Sisters having increased rapidly, Bishop Tsu sees to its canonical institution and names the superior general and her council. Gradually the Teresians take over the various works started by our missionaries and in 1948, being sufficiently numerous, the former are ready to assume complete responsibility.

Aware of this situation, the general direction of our Institute requests Bishop Tsu an authorization to call back its missionaries from Tsungming in order to meet more urgent needs. Understanding the reasons behind it, the Bishop complies with the wishes of the general council, praising the members of the Institute for the excellent apostolic work accomplished in his diocese. He also congratulates the general direction for keeping up with the missionary evolution as reminded by the Popes and outlined in the directives of the Congregation for the Propaganda.

On November 24, 1948, the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception entrusting their work to the Teresian Sisters, leave Tsungming.



Sr. Marie-de-l'Epiphanie



Sr. Marie-de-Sion



Sr. Marie-de-Jesus



Sr. Ste. Rose-de-Lima

The Last Torch Lit on Mainland China (1937-1949)

March 27, 1934. Departure of Sr. Marie-Xavier (Berthe Paradis) and Sr. St. Victor (Germaine Tanguay), the first two missionaries assigned to the new mission of Suchow, a city of the province of Kiangsu, north of Nankin. For the first time we miss the presence of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit at the farewell ceremony which is so touching. The departing Sisters have to bid her farewell in the room where she is confined for the past few months, a serious illness depriving her of the use of her legs. She repeats to them, in an emotion-filled voice, the advice she usually gives to her daughters leaving for the missions: "Be women of duty and you shall be happy."

Sr. Marie-de-la-Protection (Cecile Roberge), superior, and Sr. Ste-Alice (Jeanne Bastien) arrive from Manchuria to complete the group, and the four meet in Sienhsien on May 16. This transfer of missionaries from Manchuria to Suchow is advantageous because Mandarin is the language spoken in these two Chinese regions.

Bishop Georges Marin, S.J., director of the Mission, wants the newcomers to acquaint themselves with the works in Sienhsien. He wishes to open a novitiate in his vicariate for the Presentandines, indigenous Sisters already residing in the district. By associating with them, the Canadian missionaries would get to know their spirit and their rule. Bishop Marin also dreams of training virgin catechists and opening a dispensary. Such are the works he wants to entrust to the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception.

The Sino-Japanese War and the capture of Suchow by the Japanese in 1938 delay indefinitely the starting of these projects, except for the dispensary which is in operation since October 1936. The fifteen years of the presence of the M.I.C.'s in Suchow are filled with painful events. Even before they are definitely expelled, our missionaries have to leave their mission stations; twice on the occasion of bombings during

the Sino-Japanese War, then in 1945 when they are interned in Shanghai. After the Japanese defeat, they return to Suchow on the 27th of September. The courageous missionaries resume their work with enthusiasm; the dispensary keeps the two nurses busy. At the request of a district leader, they visit the prisoners and take care of the sick, doing their best to comfort those who suffer morally more than physically.

Due to the vandalism of the communist armies, famine occurs in the surrounding regions during this period. Thousand of refugees seek shelter in the city of Suchow. Refugee camps are then organized, and each week our missionaries visit these poor refugees, distributing food, medication and extend their sympathy and the comfort of the Christian faith.

On October 24, 1947, five of our Sisters of Manchuria who fled from the communist invasion penetrating the northern part of China, arrive in Suchow. After a good rest, they are ready to lend a helping hand to the works of the Mission; however, this lull is short-lived. War between Chinese nationalists and communists is in progress: the communists gain ground and are close to Suchow, reducing everything on their way to fire and blood. Fearing that this situation would have the same sad outcome as in Manchuria, the M.I.C. general direction sends a cable to Bishop Côté, S.J., of Suchow, enjoining the small M.I.C. community to leave their mission and return to Canton. This is a hard blow for these brave missionaries who wish to remain at their post till the last minute. But the dangerous condition wherein the eleven Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception find themselves in the two missions of North Manchuria justifies the decision of the M.I.C. authorities.

Heart-broken, the Sisters leave this cherished corner of China. On November 28, 1948, they are en route for Canton and on December 1st, three days after their departure, the city of Suchow is captured by the communists.

The M.I.C.'s in Manchuria

The year 1927 marks the silver jubilee of the Institute and, to commemorate this event, a new territory to evangelize is being offered: Manchuria, a vast country situated in the northern part of China, close to Mongolia.

The Foreign Missions Society in Pont-Viau has been in existence since 1921. Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit has played a leading part in this foundation calling the attention of the Bishops of the Province of Quebec to this project which she values as much as the foundation of her own Institute. The first field of apostolate given to the Foreign Missions Society is precisely Manchuria.

As early as autumn 1925, three priests of the young society sail for this far-off country. The Superior of the trio is none other than Father Louis-Adelmar Lapierre, the first priest whom Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit has won to the Seminary for the Foreign Missions.

Barely two months after his arrival in Moukden where he studies the language of the country, Father Lapierre addresses a letter to the Foundress hoping to attract Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception to the territory of his future apostolate. This wish, repeated in every letter to Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit, is finally fulfilled on the eve of the jubilee year of our Institute. In a letter dated June 2, 1927, eve of the 25th anniversary (June 3, 1927), the apostolic-minded Mother reveals to Father Lapierre the names of the three Sisters chosen for the new mission: Sr. Ste-Marie-Madeleine (Ann-Marie Magnan), Sr. Jeanne-de-Chantal (Jeanne Caron) and Sr. St. Gérard (Ann Roberge). Shortly before the departure, Sr. Ste-Marie-Madeleine is stricken with a serious throat ailment complicated with aphonia. In spite of the care received she remains in the same condition and much to her regret, the young missionary finds herself forced to give up the idea of an immediate departure. She is replaced by Sr. Julienne-du-St-Sacrament (Béatrice Lareau) who is going to take charge of the group.

From 1927 to 1933, under the dynamic impulse of the Superior of the Mission, the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception work in eight mission-stations of this far-off Manchuria.

They first settle in the city of Leao Yan Sien. Received by Father Lapierre himself, the newcomers immediately begin to study the language. The dispensaries are the first work entrusted to them; later, gradually added as the needs occur are: apostolic

schools preparatory to religious life, a novitiate for indigenous Sisters, catechumenates, home visits to take care of the sick unable to reach the dispensaries, founding homes, orphanages, schools, workrooms and homes for the aged and the crippled.

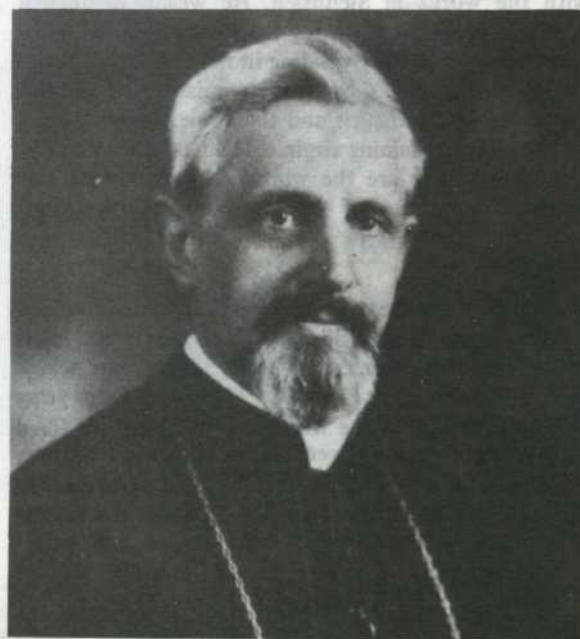
Though all these works belong to the Catholic Mission, they are maintained or supervised by our Sisters.

In 1929 Father L.A. Lapierre is appointed Apostolic Prefect of Szepingkai. This city becomes then the center of his apostolic action.

As new reinforcements arrive from Canada, both from the Foreign Missions Society of Pont Viau and from the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception, Bishop Lapierre opens either one or two new Catholic Missions in his prefecture each year: Pamientchang — 1929; Fakou — 1930; Tong Leao — 1931; Paitcheng-tze and Kountgchouling — 1933.

In each of these eight mission-stations, a dispensary, sometimes two are first opened as in Fakou and Tong Leao. Szepingkasi has three. Our Sister-nurses have to travel one hour and a half by train in order to reach one of the missions. These eager missionaries are so devoted to their work that the Foundress with maternal solicitude entreats them to moderate their zeal and to think more about themselves: "You must not want to accomplish in one year what should take ten," she writes one day, "otherwise after a couple of years, your health will be completely ruined."

Msgr. L.A. Lapierre, P.M.E., bishop of Szepingkai: the giant of the Manchurian mission.



With interest and delight Bishop Lapierre follows the quiet conquests of the young missionary nurses. Though the work of the dispensaries means care and conversions, a work that is still more important is entrusted to the missionaries: the direction of an indigenous religious community.

In 1930, the vigilant Prelate has a modest house prepared in Leoyuansien to receive six young girls who wish to devote their lives to the evangelization of their fellow countrymen.

The beginnings are difficult: the Sino-Japanese War is declared. The following year, the small community of Our Lady of the Rosary moves out quickly to Szeping-kai where it settles down temporarily with the Sister-in-charge. To recruit members, Bishop Lapierre opens an apostolic school in 1933 and entrusts its direction to the Missionaries of the Immaculate

Conception. Nothing hinders his dynamism nor that of his missionaries: the priests of the Foreign Missions and the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

On November 21, the Catholic mission of Szeping-kai celebrates the religious consecration of the first four Chinese Sisters of the apostolic prefecture. It is the beginning of an indigenous religious family which, later on, will render excellent services to the Christian community of this mission territory.

Very soon they are in a position to help the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception in their apostolic work. The members of the young community increase in number and before long, provide precious auxiliaries for our missionaries in other stations. The novitiate receives good recruits; these young Chinese girls are generous and eager to share their faith with their fellow countrymen.



Msgr. Lapierre with Srs. Julianne of the Blessed Sacrament, m.i.c. (left) and Jeanne of Chantal, m.i.c. (right) and the Congregation he founded: the Sisters of Notre Dame du St. Rosaire.

Trials Come

The Sino-Japanese War nevertheless continues its havoc. The enemy troops are drawing near with their bombings and machine guns.

In all corners of the Prefecture we have to interrupt our works and seek refuge in Szepingkai. Then comes defeat: Japan is victorious. With the intervention of Japan, Manchuria is separated from China to form the Republic of Manchoukouo. In 1933, this new Republic becomes an Empire: Pou-yi, last emperor of China who had abdicated in 1911 at the age of five, accepts to reign over this short-lived empire of Manchoukouo which still remains a Japanese Protectorate.

As soon as the war is over, the courageous missionaries hurry back to their stations. Unfortunately, the work of the dispensaries, though the most flourishing of the region, has become very difficult due to the requirements of the Japanese authorities. The diplomas of the graduate nurses are no longer recognized. In spite of their exhausting work, the Sisters determinedly set themselves to study in order to obtain the necessary qualifications. The results of their exams having been judged satisfactory, the dispensaries remain open, though, in several of them the services of a doctor must be secured.



In spite of the war, the valiant M.I.C.'s kept their dispensaries open. We recognize Sr. St. Anne (M. Louise Gosselin) and Sr. St. Denis (Anne-Marie Dubé).



The priests of the mission of Szepingkai surveying their quarters after the bombing.

War Once Again

1939 . . . the Second World War has just been declared. All Canadian missionaries in Manchoukouo are notified by the British consulate to leave the country. Bishop Lapierre disagrees and replies: "The missionaries will remain at their post unless they are driven out by military or civil authorities." A second notice is given in 1941. The answer remains unchanged: "The Catholic Church does not run away from danger."

By the end of 1941, the postal service is interrupted and it is only in 1945, as the world conflict comes to an end, that the Motherhouse receives news from its missionaries. In the meantime, they have gone through a long and painful internment. Forty-one of our Sisters have been interned in the central house of Szepingkai. The Bishop's palace has been turned into a concentration camp for the priests of the Foreign Missions.

After the war, the missionaries obtain from the Russian military authorities, permits to reside and to travel in the country. They are anxious to return to their Christian communities who are calling for them everywhere. The works are resumed with enthusiasm and the future seems bright enough judging by the proclamations and the programs of the new Regime. In fact, the situation of the country is deteriorating. In the nights of March 16 and 17, 1946, Chinese communist troops encircle Szepingkai and take the city by assault; a desperate fighting goes on between the nationalist and the communist armies. The communist army is victorious. After three days of danger and anxiety beyond description during which time the Catholic mission is reduced to ruins, the missionaries have to accept the inevitable.

Exodus

July 30, 1947 remains an unforgettable day for all these veterans of the Mission who, for the past twenty years, have given the best of their years to this poor, sorely tried and sympathetic people whom they have learned to love with all their heart. However, they must obey orders.

Thirty-seven persons make up the small group: Bishop Lapierre, Brother Lalonde, C.S.V., Barnabe Wung, a Chinese seminarian who is to complete his studies in Canada, four 'Antoniennes-de-Marie' Sisters, and thirty Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. After an exhausting three-week trip through almost impassable roads, the Sisters finally arrive on the island of Tsungming where they are warmly greeted by their Sisters of that mission.

And the Others

There were still forty-one M.I.C. Sisters working in Manchoukou at the time of the communist invasion. Thirty of them left this torn-up country; but, what happened to the eleven who stayed behind?

The letter ordering the Sisters in the two mission stations of Leoyunsien and Paichengtz in the extreme north of the diocese of Szepingkai, to leave their mission and join the thirty departing missionaries never reached them. A year later, they learn that they are alone in this far-off and disorganized country, exposed to the worries and dangers of the new Regime. It would take more than a book to relate the moral and physical sufferings that the missionaries had to put up with during their six years in Manchoukou where they managed to pursue their work though their lives were constantly in danger.

The Chinese priests and the Sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary proved to be really heroic. Questioned, ill-treated, tortured, some sent to prison, they held out to the end. As daring as the first Christians, they proclaim their faith and their allegiance to the Church. Bishop Lapierre and his missionaries can be proud of the seed they have thrown in this rich soil. The storm may come and give the tree a good shake but it will stand up against it because its roots are deep and strong.

On December 1, 1952, Bishop Lapierre, founder of this Canadian mission, dies at his post at the age of

72. After the exodus of 1947, he rested for a while in Moukden, then returned to his diocese. Optimistic by nature, he was always ready to start again from scratch. No wonder the Christians mourned over his death as if he were their own father. "The death of His Excellency seems to draw them closer to the Church," said Father Tch'ang, vicar-general of the Cathedral.

The End Has Come

The communist stranglehold on the missionaries is tightening up gradually. Priests, Sisters and Christians are literally sifted. The foreign missionaries are arrested one after the other. It becomes evident that they must leave. The superior of the last small group of M.I.C.'s, after being in prison for four days, receives her sentence on November 4; she is expelled and must leave the country within twenty-four hours.

The departure takes place on Sunday, November 15. Pathetically, the Christians beg the departing missionaries to pray for them. They want to remain faithful to their faith no matter what happens. "We no longer have priests," they cry out. It was true, since the two Chinese priests of Szepingkai were in prison.

On December 4, the Sisters arrive in Hong Kong. "Nothing can make us forget the sufferings of those we have left behind," says one of them, "neither the benevolent liberty of Hong Kong nor the hearty welcome of our Sisters." But hope, which always cheers up those who live by faith, remains. Therefore, the mysterious bond created by prayer and suffering will never stop uniting those who were forced to leave and those who had to remain.

Bidding farewell to our last missionaries, Father Tch'ang said to them: "Ask your Mother General to prepare many recruits for us . . ." It is still this invincible hope which, one day, puts these words on the lips of the brave Bishop of Szepingkai on seeing his cathedral in ruins: "We will rebuild it larger and more beautiful!"

Following in the footsteps of the six M.I.C.'s of 1909, the departing Sisters of 1977, with a heart full of enthusiasm, are going to reveal Jesus Christ and his Gospel to those who do not know Him.

1947



Hongkong

1977

The Adventure Continues in Hong Kong

Mention has already been made in the first part of the M.I.C. history in China, of our opening of the Anglo-Chinese School of *Tak Sun* in 1927 — which means “SCHOOL OF FAITH” — in Kowloon, opposite Hong Kong.

After serving as internees at Camp Stanley during the Japanese Occupation, our Sisters were repatriated to Canada in 1943. At the request of Monsignor Valtorta, four Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception were assigned to start again “the mission” in Hong Kong after the war: Sr. Marie Philippe, Sr. St. Etienne, Sr. St. Philippe and Sr. Marie Florida. They left Canada in mid-December and arrived in Hong Kong on January 9, 1947.

Re-opening and Evolution of Tak Sun

The school opened in 1927 was destroyed by the bombings during the horrible World War II. In the beginning of 1947 at the suggestion of Mother Marie-de-la-Providence, then superior general, one of our missionaries from Canton, Sr. Gratia Blanchet, went to Hong Kong to look for an appropriate site. This was not easy; so many houses had been burned during the numerous raids that devastated the city. By means of canvassing, Sr. Gratia luckily found a dilapidated building, which could be converted into a school, once repaired. The house was purchased on March 24 and on April 2 the Sisters occupied their convent-school. Thus *Tak Sun* was reborn: a bud full of sap promising an abundant harvest from the moment it opened.

Here is a brief summary of the evolution of this “small school,” humble in its beginnings but inspiring for the apostolate. This was a primary school for boys: in the morning, the English section; in the afternoon, the Chinese section. As early as August, pupils are refused for lack of rooms.

1948

An expansion of the building is judged necessary and carried out.

1949

Eight hundred pupils are enrolled; twenty-five teachers handle the classes distributed in two sessions to accommodate a bigger number of pupils.

1955

The school has become too small. With courage the Sisters undertake the construction of another annex. The pupils of the elementary course move into the new quarters. The former building houses the kindergarten and serves as the Sisters’ residence.

1966

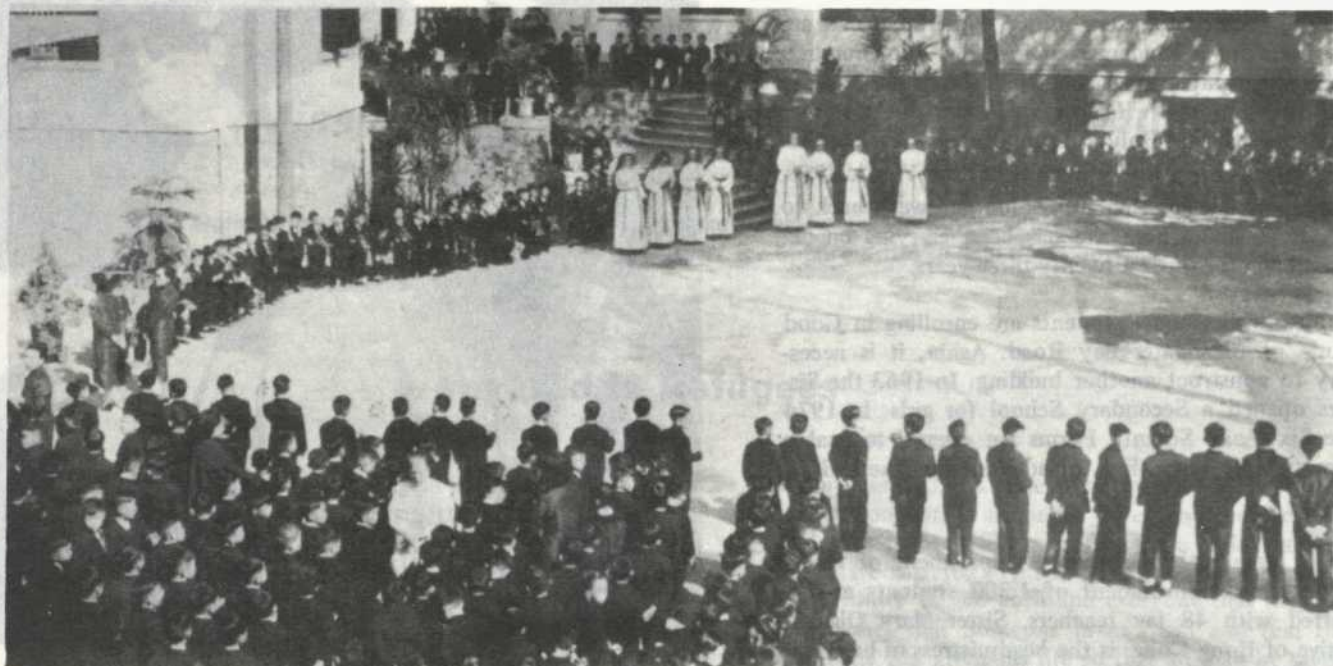
Evening classes for young working students are added to the already loaded program. Always on the alert to extend their help to all and more specially to the numerous refugees from mainland China, the missionaries launch this educational project to allow young workers to continue their studies. In 1972 as other schools are offering the same opportunity, the M.I.C. Sisters close the evening classes. This enables them to direct their efforts to other fields calling for help.

1969

As the number of pupils goes on increasing, an expansion is necessary and a storey is added to the new building.

1977

The small *Tak Sun* School of 1930 which opened its doors to 39 pupils had a total enrollment of 1,680 primary and kindergarten pupils in 1976. A fact worth mentioning: Sr. Marie Florida (Clara Leblanc), one of the four missionaries who reopened our mission in Hong Kong in 1947 is still with the school after thirty years of dedication. As headmistress of *Tak Sun* School, she administers the school with the same love for the young Chinese to whom she dedicated the best years of her life.



Tak Sun: It is the official re-opening of the school in 1947. Blossoming youth: promise of abundant harvest.

After Faith...Hope (Tak Mong or Good Hope)

With the increase of population in Hong Kong due to the influx of refugees from Red China, the number of schools became insufficient to accommodate those seeking admission.

At the request of the religious authorities of the diocese and with the help of companions expelled from Canton, the Sisters of Kowloon open another school. It is named Tak Mong, school of hope and more often called by its English name: GOOD HOPE. Started in narrow quarters, this school is transferred to 125 Waterloo Road in 1953. The premises are filled in no time so that as early as 1956 another construction is considered. This time the building is erected alongside Mount Kowloon on Clearwater Bay Road. The first graders remain in Waterloo while the second graders move to the new school.

In 1964 provinces are set up in the M.I.C. Institute and the house at Waterloo Road becomes the provincial house of the Orient and the first novitiate of the M.I.C. Community in China. In 1971 the novitiate is transferred to Clearwater Bay Road.



Sr. Helena Foug, M.I.C., former alumna of the Holy Spirit Academy in Canton is in-charge of the kindergarten at Good Hope.

The vacated quarters of 125 Waterloo Road are set aside for a Kindergarten for girls. Four hundred sixty-seven pupils are enrolled and the school is under the direction of Sr. Helena Fong, one of the former students of the Holy Spirit Academy in Canton. Sr. Helena entered our novitiate in Pont Viau in 1950. After making her first profession she went back to her homeland where she has been carrying on her apostolate for the last twenty-three years.

Meanwhile, many students are enrolling in Good Hope of Clearwater Bay Road. Again, it is necessary to construct another building. In 1963 the Sisters opened a Secondary School for girls. In 1974 the Sixth and Seventh Forms are opened to enable the students to qualify for admission to the University.

At present the Secondary Department of Good Hope has an enrollment of 1,300 students and is staffed with 48 lay teachers. Sister Mary Olga, a native of Hong Kong, is the headmistress of both the secondary and collegiate departments. Another M.I.C. Sister who is a native of Hong Kong, Sr. Magdalena Leung, is in charge of the primary section with an enrollment of 1,600 young girls. There are 42 lay teachers in the staff.



Sister Monica Lam, M.I.C., with a group of promising young students (Good Hope's Secondary Department).



"The presence of the Chinese woman is as fresh as a budding flower."

Tak Oi (School of Charity)

The refugees from Mainland China keep flocking to Hong Kong. With practically nothing, they settle down as best they can. It is in this resettlement area that the third school is opened in Kowloon in 1970. For the missionaries it is a real joy to contribute in making education accessible to all, since the school still proves to be the best means of proclaiming the Good News.

At present Tak Oi Secondary School with nearly 1,000 students is under the direction of Sr. Yolande Moquin, M.I.C.

The school objectives are the following:

1. to provide for a Christian education to Chinese youth;
2. to offer religion courses to students who wish to know about the Faith;
3. to promote contacts with the students through various extra-curricular activities which will enable to reach them on the level of their talents and deep aspirations.

These objectives are pursued by the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception of Kowloon with earnest faith, with dynamic hope and with a charity ever on the alert.

Missionary Pastoral Activity in Hongkong

The work of evangelization of the M.I.C.'s in insular China is not, however, confined to educating the Chinese youth. Our missionaries are constantly on the alert for opportunities to help the people and to alleviate their physical or moral miseries.

Aid to Refugees

Since their return to Hongkong in 1947, several M.I.C. Sisters have been visiting the resettlement areas. It is an exhausting apostolate but how necessary and rewarding. Until the government authorities can manage to build enough buildings to house thousands of people crossing the border each year, these poor people have to settle down as best they can in makeshift shelters. Distribution of help in the form of food, clothing and medicine is organized by dif-

ferent associations. The Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception are happy to extend their services and thus to be able to comfort these exiled families who have suffered so much. This also provides a great opportunity to tell each and everyone that they are not alone; that Someone loves them and that this Someone has given his life so that all may be saved. This message is often received in hearts that are prepared by suffering and ready to welcome it.



Hongkong slum crowded with refugees from Red China.

Home and Hospital Visits

Once the Catechumenate of St. Joseph the Worker was set up, the missionary in charge of the catechetical instructions could direct her apostolate elsewhere. Now, she could give more of her time to the 1,500 patients in Kwong Wah Hospital, Waterloo Road.

These personal contacts with the poor and the suffering offer a vast field for evangelical radiance. Most of the patients are either refugees from Red China or immigrants from India. These are the "solitary", the "outcast" who are in great need to meet someone taking interest in them as human beings in all gratuitousness.

Thanks to the generous donations from relatives and friends from Canada or even from Hongkong, the visiting Sister is able to bring along with spiritual comfort, material help and delicacies. It is not rare to see teary eyes at the sight of sympathy and concern extended to them. When the patients are well enough to return to their homes, the missionary continues to visit them; if they die, she is there to share the suffering of the bereaved relatives who find in her a true friend. This kind of witnessing of Christian charity often generates conversions. One such case is the wife of Mr. Lo whom a Sister visited in the hospital as well as in his home until his death. Mrs. Lo is presently preparing for baptism. She encountered Christ through the true and gratuitous love of the missionary.



To visit the poor patients of the hospital: a great joy for Sr. Irene Pelland.

Opening of Catechumenates

In response to numerous requests, our missionaries opened a catechumenate offering religion courses. This is the Catechumenate of St. Joseph the Worker. It is running well and has received so many people of different ages and different life conditions that a few years later the increasing number of Christians who had been instructed and baptized was enough to form a new parish — the parish of St. Paul of Yau Ma Tei, formerly a part of the big Holy Rosary Parish on Chatam Road.

A second catechumenate has been opened at Diamond Hill to which a first-aid clinic is appended. Sr. Jeanne Bouchard, one of the nurses in our former Leprosarium in Shek Lung is presently in charge of this dispensary. She attends to the patients of this unprivileged area. Among them are some lepers, former friends and patients. They are very happy to meet again those who, as in the past, understood them, trying to find ways and means of helping them, working unceasingly for their rehabilitation and the betterment of their well-being.

Constantly on the Alert

With enthusiasm and dedication the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception of Kowloon are using various ways and means of apostolate by:

1. giving private lessons in languages, music and religion;
2. encouraging young workers to participate in different associations and youth movements;
3. directing a Praesidium of the Legion of Mary;
4. collaborating in the parish liturgical services or in the diocesan pastoral catechetics;
5. visiting families of their pupils or helping and giving hope to the refugees.

While distributing food, either material or intellectual, the M.I.C.'s of Kowloon are attentive to each and everyone and do their utmost to help people. It is very often through these human contacts that the Evangelical Message is proclaimed. Once challenged by the disinterested charity of the missionary, the desire to know the *Why* of such totally dedicated lives is often awakened. This is now the propitious moment to reveal the One who came and Who comes constantly to liberate all men. For all missionaries this is always the moment of plenitude *par excellence* because this is why they have left their homeland and have come to their brethren in the Far East.

1954



Taiwan

1977

The Most Recent Page in the M.I.C. History in Insular China

The last Canadian M.I.C.'s in mainland China have to leave in 1953. On the other hand, since 1947, it is on the island of Hong Kong that missionary life has recaptured its zest with an overflowing dynamism of hope. In 1954 an appeal for help arrives at the Motherhouse. It is from insular China again: Formosa or "The Beautiful" will benefit from the presence of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception.

When Formosa, renamed Taiwan after World War II, is given back to China following the defeat of Japan in 1945, some 8,000 Catholics out of a population of 16 million are found in the island. The year 1949 inaugurates an era of progress for Catholicism, thanks to the arrival of numerous missionaries expelled from Communist China. Social services and educational activities then make remarkable strides.

Twenty-five years after this massive arrival of missionaries, the Church of Taiwan counts around 300,000 Christians distributed in one archdiocese, six dioceses and two Apostolic Prefectures. All the bishops except the one in Taichung are Chinese.

In Kuanshi The Small Ones First of All...

The first three M.I.C.'s from Manchuria arrive in Taiwan on August 15, 1954. Mandarin, the official language in Manchuria is also spoken in Taiwan. This happy fact facilitates the apostolate of our pioneers who get to work immediately.

In response to a request from the Jesuit Fathers, they first settle in Kuanshi, the small chief city of a district in the prefecture of Hsinchu with 35,000 inhabitants. Not a single Catholic! At Christmas of the year 1954, the Sisters have to go to the capital to find godparents for the first five neophytes.

What better means to establish contacts with the people than attending to their children... The Jesuit

Fathers, having opened a Kindergarten for the very purpose of meeting the families, entrust its administration to the Canadian missionaries. Our Congregation then undertakes the construction of the building which up to this day serves the same needs. It is really a pre-evangelization work which allows us to make numerous contacts with the population. Once the missionaries are well known, this means of introduction is no longer so indispensable. However, it always remains a means of approach that does not lose its effectiveness.

Then the Adults

As early as 1957 the Catholic Mission has sufficiently radiated and its impact is such that one has to think of providing periods for intense prayer and reflection for the new converts. During the Chinese New Year holidays the kindergarten classrooms are converted into a dormitory and a dining hall for the retreatants. From 1957 to 1967, thirty groups of women and girls, 527 in all, benefit from a closed retreat.

The movement answers so well the need that a retreat house with 30 rooms is built in 1967. This center for retreats and sessions is very much appreciated. People come to pray, meditate and get spiritual refreshment. It proves to be the most convenient place for an ever deeper faith experience.

Besides their educational and retreat work, the Sisters also engage themselves in different parish activities: liturgy, catechetics, visits to pupils' homes, to the sick and the aged. A Student Center opened in 1967, is appreciated by the people; it also facilitates real evangelization among the youth thirsting for truth. Soon, in the neighborhood, other schools more accessible to secondary students are opened. The Center is thus closed in 1974.

Shih Kuang Tze: 1955

The Institute had intended to open a dispensary in Kuanshi. However, the Sisters soon become aware of the well-organized medical services in this area and they decide to open a dispensary in the nearby village of Shih-Kuang Tze, a place not well equipped for health care. There, the Canadian missionaries cater to the less fortunate population whose confidence they quickly win through their kind and selfless receptivity. The quality of the care and the sympathy of the religious nurses constitute an excellent approach which in itself is first proclamation of the Gospel Message.

A kindergarten is opened and remains in operation till 1974 when the personnel could no longer keep up with all the demands of this educational work. Priority is given to pastoral work in the parish. In a place where Christianity is so young and in minority, it is very important to follow up the growth of faith closely. To penetrate into non-Christian areas is also the aim of the continued efforts of the local Church. At present an M.I.C. Sister assists the parish priest in his pastoral work.

Taipei, the Capital: 1956

Taiwan is no longer an underdeveloped country. The State is now able to meet the needs of its people in the fields of education and health except, perhaps, for a small portion of the population in certain far-off regions.

At present, the Church of Taiwan is able to direct its efforts towards the specific task of evangelization. Our Congregation founded essentially for the evangelization of non-Christians enters fully in the different aspects of the overall pastoral program.

Since 1956, our missionaries have been giving their best in all spheres of activities: parish pastoral work, insertion at the national level of the local Church, language courses in the University, private courses in French, English and other languages. Through these they can witness to Christ for whom they have come. All these varied activities have but one purpose: the spreading of the Word of Life which brings an adequate answer to questions so many youths and adults are asking themselves.

A dispensary that was opened in 1956 is still operating. Set in the midst of a prosperous population, this dispensary helps to provide subsistence for the M.I.C. Community and to maintain its works while allowing contacts with people of all ages and social conditions.

Suao: 1958-1972

A fourth mission in Taiwan is opened as early as 1958. At the request of the Jesuit Fathers, the M.I.C.'s come over to a fishing port along the Pacific Ocean, called Suao, in the archdiocese of Taipei.

As in the first missions on the island, the Sisters devote themselves to the care of the sick and to the education of small children. They operate a maternity clinic and dispensary from 1958 to 1968. At this time Monsignor Philippe Côté, S.J., had a hospital built in Nan Ao for the aborigines living far away from the centers, in almost inaccessible mountains. Having already known the M.I.C.'s in Suchow, he appeals to them to undertake this humanitarian work. As they are unable to ensure the operation of two missions due to lack of personnel, the Sisters leave Suao to concentrate their energies in Nan Ao.

Though giving it up is painful for those who have put their heart and efforts to organize and maintain the Suao dispensary at the cost of big sacrifices, they are, nevertheless, happy to hand it over to other missionaries animated by the same apostolic zeal. What is essential is that good be done and that Jesus Christ be known and loved, is it not?

The kindergarten which has a big enrollment and which is very much appreciated is also handed over to another Congregation at the same time as the maternity-dispensary. At present the Carmelites of Charity are in charge of the school.



The chapel in Taipei serves as a parochial church.

Hsinchu: 1964-1971

In the suburb of the bishopric of Hsinchu, is a parish composed mostly of the wives and children of Taiwanese military men. In 1967 our missionaries install themselves in this special milieu and organize a workroom in order to help the poor families by providing jobs for the women of that area. A twofold aim is thus attained: improving the standard of living and strengthening the religious convictions of the Christian families.

For lack of M.I.C. personnel, this timely project has to be handed over to the Auxiliatrix Sisters in 1971.

Nan Ao: 1968

Nan Ao is situated on the eastern coast of Taiwan, 100 miles away from the capital and nestled in the mountains, some of which rise to nearly 10,000 feet. This beautiful village, enjoying sunny days most of the year, is often hit by typhoons bringing sudden changes in weather, thereby causing sickness especially tuberculosis. A medical report shows that half of the student population in the upper forms is afflicted with this disease. Besides, many car accidents occur due to the winding roads along the mountains and cliffs. Landslides at times isolate the hospital from the area it serves. Considering this situation, Msgr. Philippe Côté, S.J., decides to build a hospital in Nan Ao. Appeals are made to Rome, to the Society of Jesus and to friends; finally, the necessary funds are obtained for this enterprise. The government for its part donates an adequate lot for the building.

What yet remains is to find the personnel to run this non-profit hospital surrounded by people living in poverty. Msgr. P. Côté then decides to contact the M.I.C. Sisters. After deliberating on the project and seeing it as a humanitarian work, the M.I.C. authorities accept the invitation. However, owing to lack of qualified medical personnel, a radical solution has to be considered: to pass on to other hands the maternity dispensary of Suao already well established. Indeed, it is no small sacrifice but does this decision in favor of an underprivileged population not answer the desire of the Church of Vatican II, so concerned with the welfare of the poor?

Since 1968 six M.I.C. Sisters have been giving themselves without stint to the care of the sick and the injured of the region of Nan Ao. They reside in the hospital. The house offered by the diocese is used for the kindergarten directed by an M.I.C. Sister.

The Dream Continues

In Taiwan there are 25 Canadian and 7 Chinese M.I.C. Sisters. In Hong Kong, 18 Canadian and 10 Chinese M.I.C.'s. Let us not forget our brave Sister Lucia Ho who is still in Canton, the only M.I.C. Sister in Communist territory. Today, a total of 61 Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception are working in China.

Six M.I.C.'s left Canada for China in 1909. Since then others have followed. Notwithstanding the numerous storms that have beset China since 1909, the daughters of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit have held on. The foundress had accepted the challenge of laying the foundation of the first essentially missionary Institute of women in French-Canada. And this happened at the beginning of a century when crossing seas was long and perilous, when human and financial resources and available personnel were insufficient. But she accepted the challenge because she harbored a great dream in her heart. She was all taken up by this dream.

And it continues to live in the hearts of her daughters. This vision is to make Christ and His Mother the Immaculate Virgin known from pole to pole. It may seem strange, old-fashioned, in our times of religious indifference; the facts are there, nonetheless. In the year of 1977 as in 1902 some women are still urged on by this vision. They believe in it with their whole mind and heart. They live it.



Women of '77 are still obsessed by this dream.

1921

Philippines

1977

The M.I.C.'s in the Philippines

A Historical Retrospective



Christianity has come to meet the peoples of Asia. By most of them, especially by the Philippines, she has won the acceptance of her presence. The Church must be planted and it is the missionary's work to plant it. Indeed the ultimate test of the work of the missionaries is the fact that three centuries later, towards the end of the 19th century, the Philippine Islands are almost entirely Christian — such is the missionary achievement.

The Chinese General Hospital

Why did the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception come to the Philippines?

The witnessing of authentic service became the bridge that linked a non-Christian group in the Philippines and Délia Tétrault whose missionary zeal predominantly reached out first to those who had never known Christ and the poor.

The medical services of the Sisters stationed in Hong Kong and Canton pleased Dr. Jose Tee Han Kee who later became the director of the Chinese General Hospital, in Manila. He requested from Monsignor J. O'Doherty, Archbishop of Manila, for the M.I.C.'s to assume the administration of the hospital. Délia Tétrault, responsive to the need of the Church particularly disclosed by the Archbishop, (the service of the Chinese in Manila that totalled 40,000) accepted the apostolate at the Hospital.

The Team of Five

The pioneers of the first M.I.C. mission arrived in Manila on August 8, 1921: Sisters Marguerite-Marie, Superior (Marguerite Latour), Marie-Angelina (Mary Donawan), St-Pierre Claver (Adee Hebert) Claire-de-Jesus (Exilda Cote), and Marie-Immaculee (Alice Vanchestein). With courage and enthusiasm, they began their work. Their previous knowledge of the language and Chinese mentality helped them very much in their work. They also had to learn the medical techniques used at that period in order to carry on their administrative responsibilities. Above all they remembered the first objective of their coming

to this far away country: the diffusion of the Good News.

The friendship that developed between the families of the patients and the sisters initiated the social apostolate of the M.I.C.'s. Home visitations in view of catechetical instruction of children were zealously undertaken by Sisters Marie-des-Victoires (Josephine Bolduc) and St-Louis-de-Gonzague (Anna Girard). Every Sunday, the catechumens and converts met at the Chinese Parish in Binondo, where the Dominican Fathers offered their pastoral services with devotedness and generosity.

From the Hospital to the School

The young converts, fruits of the catechetical classes conducted by the Sisters, eventually inspired the foundation of Immaculate Conception Anglo-Chinese School in 1936. The upper story of a hardware store modestly housed its small population of 40 students.

After almost twenty years of dedicated service at the Chinese General Hospital, the Sisters joined the community of the temporary Immaculate Conception

Anglo-Chinese Academy (ICACA) in Tayuman, in 1939.

During the Japanese War (1941-1945), the school was closed; some of the Sisters were sent to a concentration camp outside Manila.

In 1947, Immaculate Conception Anglo-Chinese Academy (ICACA), was reopened at Narra St., this time offering the complete secondary education.



1949. The teaching staff, lay and M.I.C. Sisters, of the Anglo-Chinese School in Narra, Manila.

From Narra to Intramuros to San Juan

Constant increase of student population gave birth to ICA in Intramuros which was blessed by Archbishop Rufino Santos in 1957.

The Jesuit Fathers in-charge of the Chinese males' education transferred their school from Echague to San Juan, Rizal. To accommodate the families, a decision had to be made regarding the building of another M.I.C. school near the Jesuits'. To maintain Intramuros and construct another school in San Juan became

a heavy financial responsibility. Providence never disappointed the confident missionaries. Friends and benefactors, mostly from the Chinese families, responded generously for the new school construction. Since 1960, I.C.A. has been offering elementary and secondary education; in 1975, Intramuros was fused with San Juan. More than two thousand students frequent this school under the direction of Sr. Teresita Canivel, M.I.C.



Playing is part of learning. Little tots of ICA, Intramuros.



There is joy in learning! ICA students, San Juan.

Las Piñas (1946-1973)

The Post-war M.I.C. services in the Philippines inevitably shifted to the educational field. The Sisters who survived the prison camps of Fort Santiago, Santo Tomas University and Los Baños, although they were offered to return to their home country, chose to resume active missionary service in the Philippines. Among these heroic apostolic women were Sisters Yvonne Routhier, Agnes Guenette, Irene Pinsonneault, Ida Carriere, Aurore Racette, Brigitte Auger, Marie-Alice Houde and Marie-Angeline.

In 1946, Sisters Yvonne Routhier, Ida Carriere, Brigitte Auger and Aurore Racette took over the administration of Saint Joseph Academy, a parochial school, opened by Fr. Renato Vernacht, C.I.C.M. For twenty-seven years, the M.I.C.'s offered their services to the students, faculty, parents and the poor of Las Piñas, Rizal.

Immaculate Conception Academy of Manila (1947)

In 1946, Sr. Marie-Alice Houde and others undertook the task of forming a school for the children of Gagalangin, Tondo, Manila. Rev. Fr. Pajarillo, parish priest, wholeheartedly supported the construction of ICAM in 1947, the first Catholic school for his parishioners totalling 90,000. Sr. Madeleine Payette, newly arrived from Canada, was the first superior. The school with a student population of more than 2,000, is serving the local Church through its elementary and secondary program of education under the direction of Sr. Ma. Anthea Raso, M.I.C. The co-operation of the parents in the task of community building has been solicited.

Due emphasis has been given to the Christian formation of the youth, not only in ICAM but also among the youth of the nearby public schools through catechetical instructions zealously carried on by the M.I.C.'s and lay collaborators.



1946. Fr. R. Vernacht, c.i.c.m. (2nd row, left) welcoming the first group of M.I.C.'s at his parochial school (St. Joseph, Las Piñas).



Sr. Yolanda Oducado, M.I.C., and some teachers lead the campus "Living Rosary" procession (ICAM, Gagalangin).



An award . . . what a joy! Sr. Primitiva Panesa, M.I.C., giving an award to a deserving pupil (ICAM, Gagalangin)



A trip to Lawigan, Mati for mass and confirmation. Msgr. Joseph Reagan is accompanied by Srs. Digna Magtibay, Bernadette Gagne and Luisa Tan.



Sr. Ditma Luz Trocio, M.I.C., and student-catechists for public schools in Padada.



Sr. Therese Beaudette, then High School Principal, tosses the first ball for a volleyball tournament. (Boys' Dept., Stella Maris Academy).

Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy of Mati (1947)

On March 3, 1947, Msgr. Maurice Michaud, P.M.E., then parish priest of Mati, Davao Oriental, and his parishioners warmly welcomed the first group of M.I.C.'s sent to the Southern Philippines. These pioneers were Sisters Rachel De Mars, superior, Georgine Beneteau, Irene Nadeau and Jeanne Thiboutot. During the first months, a small clinic was opened to the people under Sr. Jeanne Thiboutot.

In September of the same year, Msgr. Clovis Thibault, P.M.E., blessed IHMA, a significant event for the Bishop, who for many years, wanted the presence of the Sisters to advance the service of the Church in his widespread diocese.

Now, in 1977, this co-educational school serves a population of 1,500 elementary and secondary students, under Sr. Justina Villagrancia, M.I.C.

Saint Michael's Academy of Padada (1954)

Upon the request of Fr. Paul Gravel P.M.E., the Institute accepted to open a secondary school in Padada, also in Southern Philippines. The first group comprised Sisters Claire Fontaine, superior, Genevieve Saint-Pierre, Cecile Kirouac and Lorraine Laflamme. As in all our schools the first objective for their coming to the country was not forgotten. The christian education of the students remained a priority. The sisters extended their services to the public schools through catechetical instructions. The missionaries were deeply impressed by the great Marian devotion of the parishioners. Daily family rosary was recited in every home. In such a well-prepared milieu the work of the Missionaries could not but be fruitful.

There are more than 700 boys and girls in the High School directed by Sr. Lolita Villagrancia, M.I.C.

Stella Maris Academy of Davao (1952-1977)

The M.I.C.'s undertook the direction of Stella Maris Academy in 1952. The school began with a small group of students under two Rosarian Sisters, founded by Msgr. Lapierre, Bishop of Szeping kai, Manchuria. At that time, both sisters were separated from their Congregation after the communist invasion of Manchuria so they decided to integrate with other religious communities. One of them, Sr. Thecla joined our Institute in 1956, and her companion Sr. Madeleine, joined the secular Institute of Our Lady of Life. (Notre Dame de Vie).

SMA is also a co-educational school, serving a population of about 1,200 Chinese mestizos. At the time of its turn over to the Hijas de Jesus, Sr. Aludia Rufin was in-charge.



The Novitiate of the '70's with Sr. Felicitas Tobias as Directress.



The Novitiate of the '50's with Sr. Rhea Bigras as Directress. At extreme left, Sr. Guadalupe Sempio, now a member of the General Council.



The first temporary shelter for squatters in Sapang Palay.

Mater Admirabilis Novitiate (1955)

The rate at which the M.I.C. apostolic works increased and the demands of the needs of the Philippine Church necessitated the establishment of the novitiate in Baguio City, about 250 km. from Manila. The Novitiate was opened not only for the M.I.C. works but primarily to answer the request of many young girls who wished to consecrate their lives to God in the Institute. It was blessed by Msgr. William Brasseur, C.I.C.M. Sr. Rhea Bigras became the first novice directress and superior. The first candidate to the religious profession, Sr. Guadalupe Sempio, also became the first indigenous provincial superior. At the last General Chapter of the Institute, Sr. Guadalupe had to leave the direction of the Province St. Joseph when she became a member of the General Council.

Since its opening in 1955, the Novitiate has welcomed many young candidates to the religious missionary life from Hong Kong, China and Africa, as well. To-date, 60 sisters have taken their vows of religion in the Institute.

The first Scholasticate established in 1957 in Galangin was later transferred to San Juan in 1960.

Sapang Palay (1964)

The service of the slum-dwellers at Intramuros was started by a dedicated apostle, Sr. Carmen Castonguay; she continued to help them when the Government transferred these poor people to Sapang Palay, Bulacan. With some benefactors, this help was continued.

From 1964-1968, a free clinic was opened to alleviate the suffering of a neglected sector of society and a sewing center was created to help the old as well as the young to earn a living.

The Sisters assigned to Sapang Palay contributed their best to effect gradual development of these people towards self-reliance; they struggled with the poor to confront the initial deplorable conditions. The situation did not deter the presence of and sustained apostolate by the Sisters whose hearts were first and foremost turned to the poor like that of Délia Tétrault.

Davao (1955)

In Davao City, the M.I.C.'s branched out into diverse works. The sisters in-charge of the Student Center (1955) at our Lady of Good Counsel Hall offered spiritual and moral guidance to a number of young girls. The Child Jesus Home (1958) is an orphanage for both boys and girls whose age ranges from one year to twelve years old.

In 1970, a parochial center, organized by S. Madeleine Alarie, was inaugurated on October 12. The Center helps a number of out-of-school youth and the poor to assume a responsibility through a program of practical education.

The M.I.C.'s temporarily shared personnel with the P.M.E.'s in the administration of Holy Cross of Hagonoy (1965) and Holy Cross of Kiblawan (1967).

Part of the Good Counsel Hall that served as a retreat house was transferred in 1967 to a separate building known as the Cursillo House where conventions and retreats are being held. Since its opening, this house has received different groups of all ages and social conditions. In silence and recollection, the people come to deepen their faith, strengthen their religious convictions and renew their spiritual life. Priests and religious also have sessions of renewals adapted to the needs of the times and of persons in view of better service to the Church.



The kids at the Child Jesus Home with Sr. Therese Boutin who is very proud of them.

Mindoro (1975)

The first Provincial Chapter (April 15-May 15, 1975) significantly redefined the priority of the Institute in the Province. This priority, initial evangelization of non-Christians, echoed with clarity and freshness the response of Délia Tétrault to Msgr. O'Doherty when she sent the first group of M.I.C.'s to the Philippines. Consequent to this renewed vision, Sisters Madeleine Alarie and Lucie Gagne were sent to Calamintao, Occidental Mindoro, to work with Fr. Dennis Flynn, S.V.D., for the human development and evangelization of the Mangyans, a cultural minority group. This was in August of 1975.



The Mangyans of Mindoro.

The Indigenous M.I.C. Missionaries Ad Extra?

Just like their Canadian Sisters, the indigenous M.I.C.'s aspire to bring the faith to places where it has not yet penetrated. In the Islands, there are a few primitive tribes which have not yet heard the Good News. The M.I.C.'s burn with zeal to go to them and also with courage and joy to other far places wherever they are needed!

A Question-A Hope

On the occasion of the Provincial and General Chapters as well as the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception, the Province of St. Joseph (Philippines), seriously reflects on the responsibility to participate in the universal missionary activity of the Church. The Philippines can fully be Church only when she can say that she shares in the apostolic mandate to make disciples of all nations.

The fact cannot be denied that the Church in the Philippines continues to offer a relatively large number of her youth to serve in the priestly ministry and consecrated sisterhood. What was planted in the past has certainly taken roots. Today, the Church in the Philippines shares the problems of other young Asian countries: to plan, labor and build a better world for the future.

Since the Philippine society has experienced the proclamation of the Good News, since the Filipino people have accepted it and have grown by that Good News, the Philippine society has become like the well-prepared ground for the sowing of the seed that is the call to share in Christ's Mission!

Return to the Sources

Present day Christian life in general and religious life in particular are necessarily affected by the changes occurring in the Church and in the world and are deeply influenced by them. In the case of the

M.I.C.'s, the last few years have marked for their Institute a sustained effort to "return to the sources" according to the instigation of Vatican II. The Institute recently lived through its eighth General Chapter. It was preceded by the Provincial Chapters in the different parts of the world where the M.I.C.'s work in the service of the Church.

One in heart and mind with the M.I.C.'s the world over, the sisters in the Philippines want the Institute's "aggiornamento" to be authentic. So that the Institute be not behind the times within the years, it has deemed necessary to introduce within its very structure an element of permanent evolution.

The members recognize the need to broaden the understanding of what is basic in religious life—each one's personal role as evangelizer. For the M.I.C.'s, as religious, it is the radiation of their faith in their lives both personally and as a community—a radiation that reaches out to others. The type of work and the use of methods may come and go, may change with the needs of the time and place; what Délia Tétrault has bequeathed to the M.I.C.'s remains. She said, "The Missionary of the Immaculate Conception must offer her life as a perpetual act of thanksgiving in her name as well as in the name of all men." The Foundress further stated, "The apostolate with the non-Christians has been given to us as an exterior means of manifesting our gratitude."

The mandate is clear; according to the aim of the Foundress, the spirit which animates each M.I.C. is THANKSGIVING. The means of expression: the EVANGELIZATION OF NON-CHRISTIANS, first and foremost, and also the conscientization of the Christians to their missionary responsibilities.

How To Live This Mandate Today in the Philippines

In the Philippines, as in all other Christian countries, the important and urgent task to accomplish is a deepening of faith in view of communicating it *more* and *better* to those who have not yet received it. The Filipino recognizes that to be a Christian is to be a brother to all men, and also to work for the mission of the Universal Church.

Schools

The main apostolate in the Philippines today is education; the majority of the M.I.C.'s are involved in this service. A question of relevance has constantly been raised from the various segments of the Philippine society concerning the schools. Recent significant changes paved the way towards a greater realization of the aim and objectives of the schools as an apostolate in the service of the Church. Considering always the needs and circumstances of contemporary society, the M.I.C.'s venture towards the actualizing of their mandate within the school apostolate: "to help the educands discover the Good News - Christ, while fostering total human development so that they become liberated and committed to bring about justice and peace in contemporary society."

Catechetics

The catechetical aspect of education in the M.I.C. schools in the country is not limited to teaching truths, but is geared also towards total human and Christian development. While improving the catechesis of adults such as the faculty, staff and parents, enrichment programs, liturgical seminars, scripture services, etc. are now undertaken. Evangelizing activities within the school context are thus oriented towards the formation of Christian communities. M.I.C. schools are gradually geared towards the community and Christian social living. The need is felt for an ongoing spiritual formation of the different sectors of the school community as well as the development of their sense of community, and so these are especially given primary emphasis.

Sister Luisa Tan, M.I.C., and a group of catechists for several barrios in Davao del Sur.



Social Service

In less formal settings, the missionary can be the animator of different groups of men and women, young and old. How does the missionary bring the spirit of Christ into the community to transform people who are part of it? So often, the presence of a religious community in a barrio or city slum may be seen as physical presence. As real enablers, they need to provide opportunities to develop the peoples' potentials. The missionaries learn to work with the people and not for the people; for this, an understanding of the spirit and psychology of the people is needed, starting from where they are.

It is in this context that the missionaries diffuse the Message in the diverse works they are in charge of: Retreat House, Students' Center, Children's House and Fatima Parochial Center in Davao; Social Service Center in Sapang Palay. A new mission work with the Mangyans of Calamintao, Occidental Mindoro has been undertaken.

Still others among the Sisters work in their specialized fields with non-M.I.C.'s institutionalized apostolates. They do pastoral work in the parishes, such as Christian community building, missionary animation and vocation promotion.



Sr. Berthe Beaumont, visiting a T.B. patient at Mati Baptist Hospital.

Conclusion

The M.I.C.'s continue to renew their attitude towards evangelization and the education of faith, where they are working. Their presence is still needed in Philippine soil. Their constant point of interrogation is their responsibility as MISSIONARIES dedicated to the extension of the reign of Christ. They are faced with a communitarian project defined by recent Chapters of the Institute, a priority for all M.I.C.'s: to reveal Jesus Christ and His Gospel to those who do not know Him. This project is no other than what the Foundress had desired.

This project is partially fulfilled by the two Sisters sent to the Mangyans, a primitive tribe of nomadic nature. Is this sufficient to answer that mandate to reveal Jesus Christ and His message to those who do not know Him? We do not think so.

The local Churches in the country are being called to self-reliance. The Philippines, like other Asian countries, has been moving in the direction of rapid

social change. In the light of this movement, it becomes necessary for the religious in the Philippines to assume a more responsible role in the Universal Church.

A Question to Pose A Challenge to Face

Can Asians go to other Asians as missionaries? This is definitely a possibility. Asian missionaries to Asian countries can bring to view the fact that the message of Christ not only lives, but is reproductive in Asian hearts. This is what is meant by a Church becoming adult.

The coming years will give answer to these. It is for us, M.I.C.'s, an immense hope. Délia Tétreault faced this challenge because of her hope and trust in the words of Christ: "I am with you until the consummation of the world." In 1977, her daughters in the Philippines take hold on the same solid rock. Like her, they also want to take up the challenge by bringing Christ and His Gospel to those who have not yet received them.

The Southeast Asia Interdisciplinary Development Institute

Three years from its initial establishment (January 1975) and after two years of operation (Sept. 1975-1977), it can be said that the SOUTHEAST ASIA INTERDISCIPLINARY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (SAIDI) has outlived its infancy stage.

From an intended graduate center of research for innovation in organization development, it has undergone a metamorphosis behind which lay much history. There is an innovative formal graduate program to which has been added a whole schedule of process-seminars — both in the Philippines and in other countries of Southeast Asia — and known as the SAIDI Process.

The Academic Program

The Institute is the only graduate school in Southeast Asia to offer recognized graduate and post-graduate courses in Organizational Development and Planning (OD & P).

The Saidi Assessment/ Decision-Making Process

In April 1976, a SAIDI team gave to the Philippine Women's University in Davao, the first of a series of experiential and process-oriented seminars in organizational development known as the SAIDI Process.

Since then, an impressive number of these sessions (over 30) has been offered to different kinds of participants: educators, administrators, organizers and planners involved in all kinds of development programs, priests, seminarians, bishops, religious, major superiors, etc. For the great majority, the participants were looking for a direction and for an answer to problems more or less identified. All were happy to leave sessions with a systematic plan of action in hands. The SAIDI Process has been given in countries of Southeast Asia: Bangladesh, Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaysia and the Philippines.

The SAIDI Process could be considered as the apostolic arm of SAIDI. The majority of the sessions bring about a self-renewal in the groups, whether personal or within the organization itself. And this change is not a one-shot injection; it has a far reaching effect if one is to believe the different teams met six months or a year later. When the group is one composed of religious or clergy, discernment and prayer are added to the scientific process. All agree to say that it is worth one of their best retreats!

Formators' Training Team

During the June '77 SAIDI Process Session with the Major Superiors in Thailand, a unanimous request was made to the SAIDI Director: a course specially

designed for the preparation and training of people in charge of formation in religious communities and in seminaries. The pleading was genuine and the need was felt by the Director. Right there the Archbishop of Bangkok and the Bishop of Pattaya were met to find their own view on the problem. They were unanimous to agree that a Training Team dispensing a comprehensive and adapted program for the purpose of training all Asian formators in an environment of their own would answer a dire need for the country.

Later on, the Director discussed the said problem with Cardinal Sin for the Philippines. The Cardinal had the same positive reaction and his Eminence asked for a copy of the program to have it approved by the CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES, of which group he is the Chairman.

In December, while in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, the same need was discussed by the Director with Major Superiors of a Congregation of these countries.

The program will consist of a non-degree eight-month intensive course under a team of four to five specialists. The training will be given either in SAIDI or in another Asian country if the demand is great enough in that region to gather a group of twenty to thirty formators. There are already three members in the team. All are experienced religious working in Asia for many years and who have specialized fields of interest in this program. The tentative date for the beginning of the courses is January 1979.

Conclusion

As far as one can project at this moment, SAIDI, with a year or two of operation will be highly organized. Its growth is above normal. There are problems and the biggest is financial. There are struggles but there is a firm hope that the Institute in order to survive will overcome this normal process of growth.

Jacqueline Blondin, M.I.C.
SAIDI Director

1926



1977

The M.I.C.'s in the Land of the Rising Sun

50 Years Ago

In Nazé city on the island of Amami-Oshima, the M.I.C. pioneers work in a school for girls run by the Canadian Franciscan Fathers. Then in 1928, a second mission is opened in Kagoshima City, south of Kyushu, where private language courses enable the courageous Sisters to make friends with the people of the locality. Today, these sympathetic families still like to recall the "hot" cups of tea that were given them. . . some fifty years ago!

In spite of the encouraging words from a beloved Mother who watches carefully over this budding enterprise, the small M.I.C. contingent, realizing that the projects made cannot possibly be achieved, has to abandon the two mission-stations which have been in existence for a few years only.

We read in the community chronicles the following lines which reveal the sorrow felt by the departing Sisters: "Mission-posts full of memories where joy mingled with apostolic hopes together with painful apprehensions: hard-to-bear crosses for our youthful enthusiasm, but saving crosses capable of strengthening our own Faith which needed purification before our adopted brothers could benefit from it".

The founders of Nazé, 50 years ago. First row, from left to right: Sr. Florentine Dansereau, a friend, Sr. Lucienne Gagnon. Second row: Sr. Germaine Noisieux, Sr. Agnes Lavallée, Sr. Madeline Maillet, Sr. Marie-Jenne l'Heureux.



Atsuko Sagara, M.I.C., filled with the joy of a plentiful harvest.

As early as 1909, the M.I.C. Sisters are sent to China and to the Philippines. Finally, the first three departures for Japan take place on November 4, 1926, September 15 and September 21, 1927. These dates are unforgettable for they meant definite separation from country and beloved ones.



From South to North

With no regret for the past and full of hope and courage, four of the Sisters leave the small fraternity, this time for the northern part of Japan. On the 24th of March 1930, they arrive in Koriyama, a city in the diocese of Sendai. Their first dwelling is a humble Japanese house not far from the parish church of the Canadian Dominican Fathers. The building of a larger convent is soon materialized since the opening of a nursery school and the teaching of religion, language and piano courses are already considered.

During these first three years in Koriyama, the arrival of reinforcement is the best guarantee that the Good News is ready to be spread elsewhere. . . "Go and teach. . ."

Wakamatsu is chosen: a historic city situated in the mountains not far from the famous Bandai volcano and 65 miles from Koriyama. The Sisters are warmly greeted by the young Christian community — a few members only — as well as by its parish priest, Father Pierre Doi, who later becomes the first Japanese Cardinal. The works undertaken in this mission-station are similar to those started in Koriyama.

The apostolic work is not any easier but the difficulties encountered only intensify their hope for better days capable of bringing forth Life, Light and Love to these people. Moreover, these daring Sisters are convinced that an M.I.C. must have, like their Foundress, a heart with no frontier which, "in spite of its human limits, must always be ready to throw the seed of joy in another heart".

They know that joy can be experienced through their contacts with the patients, friends and parents of the pupils, the Christians, the catechumens, and better still, in the fraternal sharings of the little fraternity.

Each Sister must take time to assimilate a different mentality, to change her attitude, to search with those who are seeking a real meaning of life. In a word, is it not necessary to become like those among whom we are living?

We thought we had settled for good in Japan but in 1941, the sad news of a world conflict reaches us. We hear over the radio that Japan is at war with America.

Family ties in Canada are broken and in the last letters received, we learn of the death of Délia Tétrault, the Foundress, our beloved Mother: the heart of the Institute.

The Mission Of Suffering

Internment has come, which means that the apostolate of the M.I.C. pioneers necessarily becomes more silent and discreet. Confident that Providence is looking after them no matter what happens, they endeavor to adopt an attitude of complete peace and serenity.

While they are interned, kind friends bring them some sweets to add to their daily meager meal; however, to be deprived of the sacraments is the most painful to bear.

As a means of protection, the police authorities occupy the first floor of the convent of Koriyama on the 9th of December 1941. In May 1943, they order our four Sisters to leave for Wakamatsu where they have been preceded, four months earlier, by eight Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame of Fukushima. This long period of insecurity for the two religious congregations ends on September 15th with the exchange of war prisoners with the United States. Our eight missionaries are on the list, and they finally reach Canada after an exhausting three-month sailing.

Though it is heart-breaking to leave the interned Sisters behind, they are still happy to sing together: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

"My rock and my Fortress, it is YOU!" (Psalm 31:3).

The War Is Over

Finally, the most dreadful nightmare that humanity has had to date is over. In October 1946, nine M.I.C. Sisters immediately sail off for their mission. They are enthusiastic but also worried about the condition in which they will find the country after such a disaster, the suffering and humiliated people, the brave Christians, the sympathetic friends who surely must be short of everything! In spite of all these apprehensions, they joyfully land in their beloved Japan. As soon as they reach their own missions, their first thought is to have a thanksgiving Mass said. With eagerness and enthusiasm they start again to sow the seed of faith in this Japanese land.

The sick who were left without care, medicament or attention, are the first ones to benefit from the solicitude of the Canadian missionaries. In these temporary clinics of Koriyama and Wakamatsu, there is opportunity for comforting words to all those who come, whatever their need may be.



*Aren't they lovely,
our little friends of
Maria En Kindergarten?*

Maria En

This is the name of the orphanage recently opened in Koriyama. It is still today a bustling center for children ranging from two to eighteen years of age who find at Maria En (St. Mary's Kindergarten) a second home. The main objective of this orphanage is to try to make of these children honest and good future citizens, open to the needs of the present society.

May 2, 1950, the Maria En Kindergarten welcomes its first eight girls. Most of them are orphans; they come from families torn-up by World War II. For seven years they live in the convent in rooms converted for this purpose. Gradually, newcomers join the first group and soon one must think of enlarging the premises. An ideal spot, a piece of land some ten minutes' walk from the convent is purchased. There is sufficient space to set up playgrounds and a garden. There is even a nice grove for picnics and enough ground for the building of a large house.

This dream comes true when the boarders of the old Maria En happily take possession of their new home on July 16, 1957.

Let us look at Maria En today. The house "built especially for us" as the boarders like to say, shelters thirty-nine girls ranging from two to eighteen years of age, and twelve boys, aged two to six; all of these youngsters are bubbling with life and are full of laughter.

But why are these children at Maria En? Why did the families entrust them to the Sisters' care? The following are some of the family situations which explain the presence of these children at Maria En.

Among the fifty-one children, only four have lost their mother. As for the remaining forty-seven, the reasons are the following: mental sickness of the mother; alcoholic fathers; divorced parents; parents who have disappeared, are abnormal, poor; personal problem of the child, etc.

After enumerating the reasons, it is needless to dwell on the moral sufferings that these dear children undergo. They feel different from other children and have difficulty in communicating with friends and are marked for life by their personal or family history.

Even in adulthood, the problems persist. "We try to instill in them sound moral habits which will help them face life with more confidence in spite of their painful past," say the Sisters.

Finally, as in the past, the same initial objective is met: to protect, bring up and rehabilitate these entrusted children, providing them with a normal home where they will learn to love and be loved, where their needs are met, and where they will be given a proper education.

Once their studies are completed, they are being helped to find a job in keeping with their talents. The "After Care" program consists of visiting them during the subsequent years to make sure that their employers are respecting the working conditions laid down when they were employed. Furthermore, it is a means of making sure that the conditions in which they are living enable them to meet their needs.

Needless to say that it is always a joyful event at the Maria En when these dear children later return for a visit, very often with their own family. They are always happy to see the Sisters who contributed to their well-being, the staff who remembers them dearly as well as the roommates of the group who were brought up with them.

Do You Know That in Japan...

- more than 21 million students go everyday to some 52,000 schools or universities - 68% of them are public - scattered all over the country?
- more than one million teachers give out the official teaching as coordinated by the Ministry of National Education?
- the Catholic schools directed by the religious communities are included in this structure?
- the term "Catholic School" must not be misinterpreted, for most of the teachers and the majority of the pupils are not Catholic?
- many of the students realize that when they leave the Catholic schools, though they are not baptized, they are different from the others because they have a rule of conduct that the others do not have?
- most students are in search of a sound philosophy which gives a real meaning to life?



St. Francis Xavier School (Koriyama).

The St. Francis Xavier Schools in Koriyama and Wakamatsu

(The following is a narration from Sr. Jeanne Roy, M.I.C.).

Pope Paul VI said that "to understand man, man as a human being and as a whole, one must know God". Prompted by these words, the personnel in charge of our schools in Japan try to make the 85 teachers (most of them non-Christians) understand that the purpose of a Catholic school is, primarily, to create an evangelical climate of liberty and charity and secondly, to develop the various aspects of the personality of the pupils: human, social, moral and religious.

In 1949, our St. Francis Xavier School in Wakamatsu welcomed its first pupils. In Koriyama, our school, bearing the same name, opened its doors in 1958. But, long before the war, our kindergarten schools had already welcomed its first clientele: Koriyama in 1932 and Wakamatsu in 1934.

Perhaps you are wondering if any work of evangelization is possible in a school where teachers and pupils are in the majority non-Christians. In answer, Sr. Louise Suavé, M.I.C., headmistress of St. Francis Xavier School in Wakamatsu, passes on to you the comments of one of the teachers of the school. Mr. Hiroshi Shigehisa is 47 years old; a graduate from the University of North Japan, he teaches social sciences and his three children are among our pupils. Here is what Mr. Shigehisa thinks of the impact of a Christian school in a non-Christian milieu:

"When I came to St. Francis Xavier School, I already had some knowledge of Christianity. Most of all I wondered if this religion could still meet the needs of modern times. Moreover, I must add that my

attitude towards religious life was very negative.

To me, this community life seemed an alienation of the human being. Furthermore, to find in a small feudal city of Japan, a Catholic school directed by Canadian Sisters seemed purely irrational. I had to come and see and make sure of what was going on. I did not intend to stay very long, maybe two or three years . . . I have been working here for the past 22 years!

I can only admire the missionaries; gradually, I have learned to like my role as a teacher and I would hardly contemplate another profession. I sometimes wonder what I would have become if I had chosen something else. No doubt my social standing would be better off and maybe I would have a little more money. However, all these possibilities leave me indifferent; I regret nothing because I realize that here I have found a real meaning to life, the only sure way to happiness. If I were to be born again, I would follow the same path, but I would try to do better for I realize that in the past I was not always an exemplary teacher.

I have radically changed over these twenty-two years. If I look for the reason for such a change, I must admit that the Sisters' way of living is the cause of this transformation. Seeing these women who have left their country, their parents and friends, who have even given up their maternal tongue and who live so simply, joyfully devoted to their work is for me a profound enigma, but I realize that they must have dedicated their lives to Someone; otherwise, how could they possibly go on living such a life of celibacy that is so self-denying?

I could write pages and pages on all what I have discovered through the lives of these women who have decided to live according to Christ's message. Over these twenty-two years I have realized that the Christian teaching based on the respect and the dignity of the person is the best solution to all the problems which are met in the field of education. And I dare hope that the Christian schools will save modern Japan from materialism which seems to be spreading more and more . . ."

This testimony speaks for itself and little can be added.

Still more impressive than the appreciation given by Professor Shigehisa seems to be the simple and deep faith of his daughter Naoko. She is seven years old and is in the first grade. Naoko is not baptized yet since her parents have not adhered to Christianity. However, the Christian atmosphere of the school and the positive attitude of her father towards Christ-

Apostolate in Our Schools

The Ministry of Education has given us full liberty to teach religion in our private schools. We take advantage of this liberty to create a really Christian atmosphere even if the great majority of our pupils are non-Christians. The doctrine taught is geared to practical life, and emphasis is laid on the formation of conscience and of judgment in matters related to religion and morals.

In the upper years, this teaching is given especially in relation with the study of the great currents of ancient and modern thought. Proselytism of any kind is forbidden. Confident that the outcome is the result of the work of grace and of the free and personal answer of each one, our role is simply to answer Christ's command: "Go, teach . . ."

Various religious activities contribute to create this atmosphere favorable to the growth of Faith: prayers before and after class, religious talks on the occasion of the opening and closing ceremonies of each semester, visits to Church, Sunday Mass for volunteers, retreats for graduating students and others.

The pupils who come from public schools are completely unaware of God's existence and of creation, truths that seem to us fundamental and capable of being discovered by reason alone. Divine law is not the basis of their morals but rather customs, traditions, social conventions, the opinion of the majority.

Our apostolate is not limited to our pupils; it extends also to the teachers as well as to the parents. Some means of approach are: monthly meetings with explanations on the objectives of the school; talks and forums on Christian education given either by the Headmistress or by some invited competent educators, two or three times during the school year; monthly distribution of leaflets on Christian education, religion courses, etc.

ianity have rendered her soul docile to the Spirit. Naoko loves Jesus with all her heart and to prove her love she writes him letters. Sr. Cecile Hayashi, M.I.C., her teacher in catechism, has willingly shown us one of Naoko's letters. It read as follows:

"Hello Jesus, how are you? I am fine, thank you, I am seven years old. And you, how old are you? I would like you to give me a little sister. Jesus, I would like very much to meet you . . . on what day? I will patiently wait for that day; I really want to see you! I am ready to wait for you. Will it be next year? Or the year after? Anyway, I'll wait for you because I want to see you!

I have only one hour of catechism a week . . . I would like to have more because I would like to hear a lot, a lot of things about you. Jesus, take good care of yourself. Bye Bye, Naoko."

What do you think of this? Do you think that Christian schools are still necessary in Japan today?



Naoko, writing to her great friend, Jesus.



Three of our Japanese students from the upper years.

And The Results?

Only twenty are baptized out of a total of 1,100 pupils in our school of Wakamatsu. Why are the results so poor after all the efforts made? First of all, we prefer that our pupils wait till they are involved in the university context or in the labor force before they take a really personal, objective and enlightened decision. Usually this is what happens. Some hesitate to acknowledge the divinity of Christ and of his Church; others believe in the teachings of the Catholic Faith but withdraw from the requirements of the Christian marriage because they foresee difficulties in complying with them with a non-christian spouse; finally, a certain number of them wish to be baptized but their parents object because they fear that they will not be able to find them a spouse.

The family milieu which is still closely bound by social conventions and ancestral traditions thus prevents the majority of our older pupils from becoming

Christians. However, when they are married, they will certainly provide their own children with a Catholic education and will easily give them permission to be baptized.

The apostolate in Japan is thus a long and exacting labor. While trying to instill in our youth a Christian mentality and helping them form the habit of acting in accordance with their convictions, we are convinced that in a generation or two, the soil will be ready for harvest.

We must add however, that today in Japan, each conversion proves to be an act of heroism and a precious milestone for the future! In Japan, more than in any other country, the missionary does not work for immediate results and he or she must keep in mind that "... neither the planter nor the waterer matters; only God who makes things grow," (1 Cor. 3:7).

Apostolate Through Private Courses

At the very outset of our missionary presence in Japan fifty years ago, we had already considered private courses as one of the most effective means of apostolate. It is with love and devotion that the first brave missionaries have given their time and energy to private courses for the advancement of the Kingdom. In 1977, the M.I.C. Sisters in Japan carry on the same apostolate with the same enthusiasm and the same hope.

The teaching of French, English, piano, typewriting, and of course, catechesis, permit personal contacts through which a number of persons — most of them non-baptized — discover Christ's love and mercy.

In our modern world, there is a greater need for persons who can listen than the need for human culture. For the missionary, time does not mean money. It is something to be given, to be lost in the sense of the Gospel: it is free.

Thus the M.I.C. Sister, by giving her time, tries to reflect Christ's joy and peace. She knows that these personal contacts, made possible by private

courses, are precious opportunities to enlighten, encourage and even radiate hope in these lives so often found meaningless.

In the final analysis, conversion is often the result of a personal contact with someone who is filled with Christ's love. A few years' stay in Japan is sufficient enough for a missionary to know the importance of these close contacts, contacts which the M.I.C. Sister is anxious to make through the private course she is assigned to give.

The results? She entrusts them to the solicitude of the One about whom his prophet has written these words full of hope:

"And as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and return no more thither, but soak the earth, and water it, and make it to spring, and give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be, which shall go forth from my mountain: it shall not return to me void, but it shall do whatever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it" (Is. 55:10;11).



A Japanese language class in the '50's.

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PHILIPPINES



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