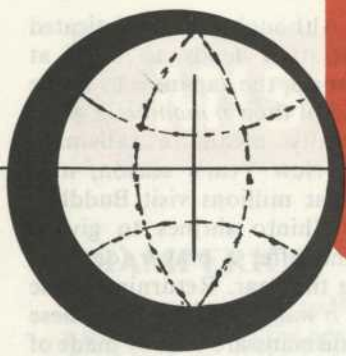




Happy New Year!



May Christ,
God's gift to the world,
lift every shadow
and fill all your days
with his joy
and peace.

New Year's Around the World

BOLIVIA

No special customs mark New Year's in this part of the world. However, an annual festival called *Alecita* is celebrated towards the end of January. On this occasion, hundreds of Aymara Indians flock to La Paz, the commercial and governmental capital, where a colourful fair is held. On January 24, the principal day of the festival, Mass is offered in the cathedral in honour of our Lady of Peace. The chief attraction of the fair is Ekhekho, the god of prosperity, joy, and health, as old as the Inca civilization itself. He is represented as a chubby figure, arms outstretched, round face wreathed in smiles. Decked out in brilliantly coloured poncho, cap, trousers, and sandals, he carries, slung from his neck, a horn of plenty, a guitar, money bags, cigarettes, paper money... In front of him are laid a basket of coca leaves, a bottle of alcohol, a bag of dehydrated potatoes, small sacks of flour, sugar, and spice.

Little figures of Ekhekho used to be honoured throughout the empire, from the grandest palace to the poorest hut. His noisy festival was held in the month of October. After the coming of the Spaniards, however, without entirely losing his prestige, he had to stand back while a Christian festival replaced pagan festivities. This was held on January 24, in honour of our Lady of Peace, patroness of La Paz. But the Indians secretly kept on making small clay or metal statuettes of Ekhekho which they sold at the fair. The new festival was called *Alecita*, an Aymara expression meaning, "Please buy!" A specialty of the fair is that only miniature objects are sold. Tiny

Ekhekhos, houses, trucks, mules, etc., figure what the Indians dream of possessing during the new year.

Juliette Ouellet, M.I.C.

HAITI

New Year's in Haiti marks the anniversary of the country's independence and is celebrated on a national scale. On this occasion, even the poorest insist on wearing their best clothes. The day begins with a solemn High Mass. A festive atmosphere reigns everywhere.

A typical Haitian New Year dish is a thick savoury soup called *giromon*. On the eve, housewives flock to the markets to buy various cuts of meat and plenty of vegetables. The *giromon*, a kind of pumpkin, is the chief ingredient. As early as 3:00 a.m., kitchen fires are lit and housewives set big pots of water boiling. Meat and vegetables are diced, noodles and rice added with appropriate seasoning. The soup is then left to simmer until all are ready for breakfast. New Year's without *giromon* is unthinkable. It signifies a plentiful year ahead. For once, even the poor can eat their fill.

On January 2, Haitians celebrate another festival, this time in honour of their courageous forebears who won independence at the cost of their blood. In the cemeteries, rallying points for every family, tombs are swept and garnished with plants and flowers. The favourite dishes of departed ones are laid out on the graves. Although the celebration is in honour of the dead, gaiety is not entirely ruled out. Surely, the dead rejoice to know they are

(Continued on page 2)



This little Chinese boy wishes you Happy New Year!

NEW YEAR'S...

(Continued from page 1)

faithfully remembered by their numerous progeny.

Annette Gouger, M.I.C.

JAPAN

The most popular of annual events celebrated by the Japanese is the New Year. The New Year holidays are currently considered the period when *toshi gami* (deities of the New Year) visit every household. To welcome them, people place tiny cups of rice wine, and round mirror-shaped rice cakes, either on home altars or on shelves hung up especially for this purpose. Pine branches decorate both places. Originally, this custom developed as a means of welcoming the souls of the dead. In former days, people believed that these souls visited their old homes on New Year's Eve, and stayed until New Year's Day or even for two weeks. This belief gradually became outmoded and was superseded in some areas, by the visit of the deities of the New Year, represented by a white-haired man and woman. In other regions, an old man called "Old man New Year" used to distribute gifts of rice cakes to children on their best

behaviour. Although the sophisticated young generation tends to scoff at ancient customs, the Japanese as a rule are still fond of their *o mamori*, a word which literally means a talisman. During the New Year's season, it is estimated that millions visit Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines to give a donation and offer a prayer for good luck during the year. Returning home with a few *o mamori* is a must. These Japanese talismans are usually made of wood, cloth, or paper.

KOREA

In some regions of rural Korea, people have a curious New Year custom. Wishing to forget unpleasant events and make a fresh start, each person determines what bad habits he should eliminate, what past deeds he wants forgotten.

The names of these evils are then written on a kite which he flies high into the air. When it is almost out of sight, he severs the string. As the "paper bird" takes a nosedive and disappears, he thinks all his faults and previous transgressions are forever removed. He can face the new year unashamed and unafraid.

MALAWI, C.A.

Happy Return to Malawi

by Madeleine Loranger, M.I.C.

You are no doubt wondering about my impressions upon returning to Malawi after thirteen years of absence. What impressed me most was the immense progress realized on the level of pastoral activities. Instead of doing the work themselves, as they used to, the missionaries are encouraging the Africans to do it. Good leaders are being trained. To them, various apostolic activities are now entrusted.

In every parish, there is a council composed of representatives from the various sectors. It includes persons appointed to call the Christians to church, to preside over weekly gatherings, and to teach catechumens. The work of these councillors is supervised by a catechist who has had a formation of two years at the Catechetical Centre

of the Mzambazi diocese. Catechumens are taught the doctrine according to the programme presented to the Parish Council by the Catechists, Fathers, and Sisters. Thus all are encouraged to assume their respective responsibilities. Another advantage of this method is the awakening of Christians to the need of sustaining their local Church and of fostering vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life in their milieu. In this manner, the Church truly becomes "their Church", not merely the Church of the Fathers and Sisters.

Our role as missionaries is to urge them to express in new and local forms the ever fresh mystery of communion with God. The parishioners are called upon to give their opinion to their pastor about the advisability of

accepting candidates to the catechumenate. Living closer to the people, they know them better and can give pertinent advice regarding their family life, that of their clan, and the example candidates give in their village. They are also consulted with regard to the young who wish to enter religious or priestly life. I was amazed at the sincere dedication of these leaders who really take their role to heart.

Up to now, Mzuzu Diocese has given nine priests to the Church. Thirty young men presently attend the Kachebere Major Seminary. The Rosarian Sisters, a Malawian Community with over fifty members, exercise a fruitful apostolate in the parochial, educational, and nursing fields. When we first came to Katete, in 1948, there were no African priests, no seminarians, and no Sisters. We were the first nuns the people had ever seen. The Lord has truly blessed the work of the missionaries, and has bestowed abundant graces on this part of his Vineyard.

Another thing that greatly impressed me, was the sight of large

Facets of Délia Tétreault's Personality

A Loving Heart

Délia's relations with others were never cold or impersonal. She urged her Sisters to love people not only for the love of God, but because each person being unique and irreplaceable deserves to be loved personally. On this subject, she wrote, "Our love of others should be at once truly supernatural and tenderly human." In her talks with the Sisters she was often heard to say, "On the Day of Judgment, we will not be asked how severely we fasted but how deeply we loved."

She loved the members of her family and her Sisters with a warm understanding heart. A radiant spirituality beamed from her whole person and inspired confidence. Her vigilance, her concern for the welfare of others, her tender care of the sick, revealed the delicacy of her feelings. As long as her health permitted, every morning during the summer months, she could be seen diligently making her way to the garden to pick flowers which she delighted in presenting to the sick Sisters. She inquired after their tastes, trying to

plantations of tobacco, coffee, tea, maize, rice, etc. Agriculture is being especially encouraged as Malawi does not possess important mines or industries like some of its neighbours. Experts regularly visit farms and plantations to advise and encourage farmers to use the best methods of tilling the soil. These things may seem very ordinary to you, but here they denote laudable progress. Having more money at their disposal, the farmers can eat and dress better. There are not so many diseases caused by malnutrition and lack of hygiene.

What I find most encouraging is the active generous collaboration of both missionaries and Christians. Much work remains to be done. Thousands are still ignorant of God and his love for all men. But immense progress has been realized. The Africans of our region are as open-hearted, kind, hospitable, courteous, and grateful as I first found them. We are privileged to live among such cheerful people who know how to take each day as it comes, and who look at the right side of everything.

tempt jaded appetites with dishes she herself carefully prepared. When Sisters from our other houses visited the Motherhouse, she thought nothing of climbing two flights of stairs at night to make sure they had a comfortable bed and all they needed.

Our parents, who gave their daughters to God, she considered our greatest benefactors. She encouraged the Sisters missioned in foreign lands to keep their families informed of their doings. "Cherish your dear parents. Write to them as often as you can. Do not be afraid to let them know how dearly you love them." On visiting Sundays, at the Novitiate, she enjoyed making the rounds of our families who happened to call. Much to our surprise, she managed to remember the names of each one and to recall it on occasion. Of course, the relatively small number of Sisters at that time allowed for this. Whenever there was death in a Sister's family she went out of her way to express her sympathy. A Sister who had laboured in the missions of Canton and of the Philippines was surprised and deeply moved to find Mother Foundress waiting for her at the railway station when she arrived in Montreal on home leave in 1926. The father of this Sister having died in the course of the year, Mother had insisted on meeting her at the station, in order to soften the blow.

Everyone of the Sisters, from the youngest to the eldest, felt the warmth of her motherly solicitude. One of them recalls how, when she was leaving for the missions, she had stood alone at the railway station, while the other Sisters were surrounded by groups of relatives and friends. As she came from another province, none of her family had been able to take the trip to see her off. Mother Foundress who accompanied every departure, in those early years, noticed her standing alone. She immediately came forward and stood by her side until she boarded the train.

She excelled in bringing out the best in those who joined her Community, urging them to appreciate their God-given gifts and develop them for his greater glory. In teaching them the art of self-acceptance, she trained them in the practice of self-giving. From her examples they learned to use their trials

as so many stepping stones to heaven. She liked to remind them that "An eternity of happiness is certainly worth a few years of trial."

In a familiar talk with a group of Sisters, she once remarked, "Love breeds happiness. We sometimes hear people complain, 'Nobody loves me', and they wallow in self-pity. I think the real reason behind their complaint is that they do not know how to love. If they did, they would surely be loved in return." To a superior in Canton, she wrote, "My dear Sister, let your principal, I would even say your sole occupation be to render your Sisters happy. I am sure you have experienced that happy people find work much easier to do. Of course here below, there will always be some pieces missing to ensure our happiness..."

Despite her numerous duties as foundress and superior general, she found the time to share in the community chores. During the first years of the foundation, she often cooked the meals while her companions taught or studied. As long as she was not incapacitated by illness, she visited the kitchen every morning to make sure substantial meals were being prepared for the Sisters. Excellent housekeeper that she was, she turned everything to account, and taught others to do so. When she visited our Apostolic School in Rimouski, she delighted in taking her share of the vegetable peeling bees. She encouraged the young students saying, "Our Lady loves simplicity. When she appeared to Bernadette, she spoke the girl's mountain dialect. She chose Bernadette because she was humble and unaffected. Pray to her in order to obtain the virtue of simplicity." Sharing in common tasks was to her a practical way of showing her love for others.

In the hearts of her Sisters, Délia Tétreault remains the mother whose love reached out to them in all events of their lives — sad or joyful. If at times their behaviour called for rebuke, they felt it was given in a spirit of charity, as a token of her concern for their welfare and happiness. She was at once firm, loving, and serene. Grace deepened by suffering, had softened and tempered her sterling character in such a way that it became that beautiful and holy thing — sweetness built upon a rock.

AFTER MANY YEARS

by Jeanne Brassard, M.I.C.

It is a common saying that truth is at times stranger than fiction. The life of Sister Louise Tang is a case in point. Forty odd years ago, sorrow darkened the happy home of a well-to-do Chinese family, somewhere in China. A little girl's birth caused her mother's death. Superstitious belief then existing doomed this newborn baby to rejection. Considered a threat to family welfare, she was abandoned into the hands of a person who fortunately carried her to our orphanage where she was tenderly cared for.

The only things the Sisters could find out about her were the date of her birth and her family name — Tang. In vain, they tried to trace the people to whom she belonged, but there are hundreds of Tangs in China. When no link whatever could be found, the child was baptized as a Christian under the name of Louise. She grew up, a lively and healthy addition to our large family of orphans. Sister Marie Anne Rompré, who loved these little ones with a mother's love, early discovered in Louise a remarkable talent for music. She was only three when Sister found her one day clinging to an open window and listening to a concert given nearby, a rapt expression on her face. From this time onward, the Sisters carefully cultivated this precious gift.

Like all our other orphans, she started attending primary school as soon as she had reached the regulation age. It was here that a first clue to her identity was brought to light. Mrs. Lau who often accompanied her own children to and from school noticed this bright but rather shy little girl. She was struck by a close resemblance to a brother of hers, and told the Sisters she felt sure Louise was her niece. As this lady was a perfect stranger, nothing much was said at the first encounter. But she kept on coming to the convent, claiming the little girl was her brother's child, exposed at birth, because the mother having died, superstition decreed she could not be kept in the family. The father had afterwards deeply regretted having allowed the baby to be abandoned. He had endeavoured to trace her whereabouts, but all his efforts had been in vain. Although her aunt tried to win her over and invited her to visit her home Louise, who was then eight years old, always refused.

She afterwards told the Sisters, "I do not want to leave you, for you are my family. Besides, I am a Christian and my relatives are not. Life would be difficult for me. I prefer staying here." She was left perfectly free.

She pursued the regular course of studies and was given music lessons. Several years went by peacefully enough. Then the Communists took over, and the Sisters had to leave their dear mission of Canton. They resettled in a small house in Hong Kong and Louise, then eighteen years old, followed them to this city. There she was once again approached by her aunt who renewed her entreaties to have her reunited to her family. She still refused to contact other relatives declaring "Now that I am of age, they will insist on marriage for me and I don't want to marry. I want to be a missionary Sister." Knowing that the members of her family were non-Christians, she was convinced they would oppose her project.

After the usual formation period, Louise Tang was accepted as a member of our Institute. She made her final commitment in 1967. Of a timid, reserved nature, she nevertheless made a deep impression on all with whom she came into contact. A person who often had the occasion of meeting her, once remarked, "Whenever I meet Sister Louise I feel closer to God." To someone who had inquired where she came from, she casually replied, "Why, I come from heaven, of course!"

In 1972-1973 she was once more approached by her aunt who suggested a visit to two grand-aunts of hers who lived in the city, and would very much enjoy meeting her. They would give her tangible proofs that she really belonged to their family. Louise went and was heartily welcomed by these old ladies who explained the circumstances in which she had been exposed as a baby. They gave addresses of the family now scattered, and showered her with presents. In spite of all these assurances, however, Louise remained irresolute.

In 1975 it was decided that Sister Louise would make a trip to Canada and visit the Motherhouse. It was my happy lot to accompany her. Before leaving, she was again urged to find out from her grand-aunts where Dr. Tang, one of her brothers, lived in the United States. We made a stop-over in San Francisco where she met him for the first time. It was then she learned her father had died in California two years previously. After several happy days spent at her brother's home she returned, her arms laden with flowers and gifts of all kinds and her heart full of joy. To her, the most precious gift of all was a copy of the only existing photograph of her mother. Gazing at it, she repeated with emotion, "Mother! Mother!" She never tired looking at it with tenderness.

Sister Louise is back in Hong Kong where she teaches music and radiates Christ all around her. She bubbles over with happiness now that she has found a family of her own: brothers and sisters, cousins, nephews and nieces who cherish her all the more because she was lost to them for so many years.



Sister Jeanne Brassard; a group of friends; Sister Louise Tang

MISSION BRIEFS

TAIWAN

We often accompany our pastor when he visits nearby outposts. One of these holds a particular attraction for us because of its warm family atmosphere. Every time we visit these people, we are more and more impressed by their truly Christian love for one another. The Eucharistic Celebration takes place in the evening. We watch whole families as they make their way down from their mountain villages, swinging lanterns to light their path. As they emerge from the shadows, they are joyfully greeted by those who live close to the chapel. When all have arrived, the catechist calls for silence. Evening prayers are said, while Father hears confessions. Then after a short rehearsal of the hymns to be sung, the priest begins the Mass. The catechist fetches the chair used during confessions, the only one in the room. The last time Sr. Gabrielle and I visited this mission post, a comical event occurred. While Father was hearing confessions, a big brown dog entered, glanced around and finally crouched down beside him. Nobody budged as all knew it belonged to one of the families present. After the priest had vested for Mass, the dog jumped up and solemnly padded ahead of him to the altar, as if it were an acolyte! While Father kissed the altar, the dog quietly stood beside him, and seemed to know what it was all about. It then trotted back to the door, and was put out by its master. Nobody laughed during Mass, but afterwards Father was teased about his new "altar boy".

CHAMPERICO, Guatemala

In our mail bag today, we received a leaflet outlining the programme of the *Huelga de Dolorès* or "painful strike" organized by students all over the country. This custom was first introduced in 1898. It is held in almost all the cities and towns of Guatemala. On this day students parade in the streets manifesting their aggressiveness against religious and civil authorities, the government, the school system, etc. Persons in office are held up to ridicule and criticism. Some of these manifestations are bold and vulgar in the extreme. But none of those in authority have ever been able to prevent them altogether. The students are acknowledged "lords of misrule" on that day of the year.

HONG KONG

At our Good Hope School, the spirit of Délia Têtreault is kept very much alive. So much so that one of our teachers, Dominic Lee, undertook the venturesome task of writing a play in honour of our beloved Foundress. He found the book *When a Heart Sings* very helpful and a source of inspiration. At the end of March 1977, the play was performed by drama students, teachers, and M.I.C.'s. In April, the play was again staged at the "Caritas" building, in Hong Kong Island. On this occasion, the group participated in a play competition. The Good Hope Drama Group won \$500.000 (HK) for its excellent performance and another \$200.000 (HK) for participating in the competition. The play will again be performed as a means of fostering vocations to the religious life. Sister Mary Olga has every right to be proud of her students.

CAP HAITIEN, Haiti

Some time ago, Charles Beloved Son, breathed his last in our charity ward. He was seventy-five years of age. The whole family of our sick and poor mourned him as one most dear and precious. Charles was the friend of every inmate. How badly they miss his loving smile and good services! In my opinion, Charles never said "no" to God or to his neighbour. He was always

ready to answer a call for help. Gifted with a compassionate heart, he wept with those who wept and rejoiced with those who rejoiced. As he could never bring himself to refuse a good turn, he spent his time rushing about the wards, helping the sick or infirm. With over 100 of our 147 guests at the refuge needing assistance, Charles was kept on his toes practically day and night. His answer to a call invariably was, "I'm coming... Right away... What can I do for you?" To him all services rendered to his companions, were services rendered to Christ Jesus. Once I asked him, "Charles, don't you ever get bored with answering calls?" He replied simply, "Mamma, God made me like that. I'm happy when I can help someone, especially the sick. It's my greatest joy on earth". I prodded, "But, you're not paid for working like that, day in, day out. I'm afraid you are not even thanked at times..." Charles smiled a wise knowing smile. "I don't expect to be. I'm happy just being called." Charles Beloved Son surely lived up to his name. Beloved of God and man, he trod gladly and serenely the paths of service until God's ultimate call summoned him to his eternal reward. My deepfelt impression is that we have had the privilege of living with an authentic saint.

Rachel Blanchette, M.I.C.

Marie de Lourdes Lwo, M.I.C.

PEOPLE ARE GIFTS

Persons are Gifts which the Father sends.

I am a person, therefore I am a Gift too:

A gift to myself first of all — The Father gave me to myself.

Perhaps I have never accepted the gift that I am.

Have I ever really looked inside the wrappings?

I love the gifts received from those who love me. Why should I not love this gift from the Father?

Besides, I am a gift to other persons.

Am I willing to be given by the Father to others?

Do others have to feel content with the wrappings and never to enjoy the gift itself?

Every meeting of persons is an exchange of Gifts.

But a gift without a giver is not a gift...

Friendship is a relationship of Giving.

A friend is a Gift not just to me but to others through me.

Persons are Gifts: Gifts received — Gifts given — like the Son.

Friendship is the response of Person-Gifts to the Father-Giver.

Flashback

by Rita Blais, M.I.C.

It was 3:00 p.m. I was replacing a Sister as receptionist when the door bell rang. A gentleman in his late twenties stood outside. He politely asked, "I'd like to have a chain with a cross. Do you have any on hand?" I ushered him into the parlour, and from the cupboard containing various religious objects, I took out the two or three chains that were left. But the man's face showed disappointment. I could tell that this was not exactly what he wanted. He described what I judged to be a bishop's chain and pectoral cross. "We have no such chain," I replied, and without even realizing what I was doing I took out my rosary from my pocket. His face lighted up. "That's what I'm looking for!" he exclaimed. I explained that it was a rosary and in no time I had a boxful on the table before him.

The young man then started recounting how he had attended our kindergarten when he was a child. He had since graduated from high school and from university, and was now

working for an electrical corporation. "We learned to pray at the kindergarten," he went on to say, "but all I can remember now is 'Holy Mary, Mother of God'..." He timidly suggested, "Why wouldn't you print that prayer in the Year Book each child receives when he leaves the kindergarten for primary

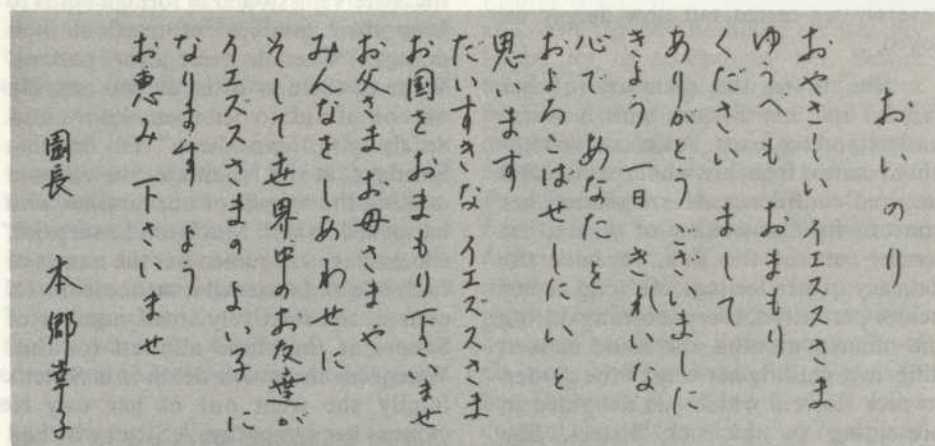
school? It would be nice to be able to repeat it in later years."

This suggestion from a non-Christian was greeted with joy. Ever since then, the morning prayer the children recite every day, when they attend our Catholic kindergarten, is printed in the Year Book.

THE CHILDREN'S MORNING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for having kept me safe during the night. Today, I want to do everything for your sake with a pure heart.

Dear Jesus, watch over our beloved country. Make Papa and Mamma and everybody else happy. Please make our friends all over the world become your own good children.



The children's morning prayer in Japanese characters.



Sr. Catharina Hongo, M.I.C. who has been teaching kindergarten children for several years.

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NAME

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MIC MISSION NEWS
is a bimonthly published by
the Miss. Sisters of the Imm. Conc.

Box 157, Laval Branch P.O.
Laval - Quebec, H7N 4Z4

Second Class Mail Registration No. 0358
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