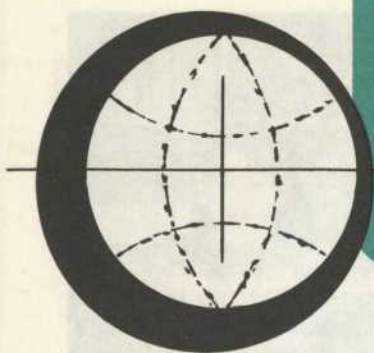




Facets of Délia Tétreault's Personality

A Compassionate Heart

There never was any heart truly great and generous that was not also tender and compassionate. Such was the heart of Mother Foundress. Even before she inaugurated her missionary Institute she had, for ten years, worked among the needy of Montreal. They knew the way to her door; she knew the way to their hearts. She gave herself whole-heartedly teaching the illiterate and the retarded, visiting the ailing, helping the poor in their necessities as far as her means allowed.

The first of her missionary foundations in Canton, China, was made chiefly in favour of unwanted babies, aged and handicapped people, patients suffering from the dread Hansen's disease. Her heart went out to the latter more especially. She wrote to the Sisters in charge of the Shek Lung Lazaretto, "Cherish these suffering members of Christ entrusted to your care. I envy your privilege... Treat them as you would treat me if I were in their place." In order to improve their lot, she begged funds from her Canadian friends. She wrote, "I am sending a cheque for \$200.00 to buy medicine and food for your patients." Later, another generous amount was sent so that warm winter garments might be prepared for the patients. Having received a gift of \$250.00, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of her religious profession, she immediately forwarded the sum to the Shek Lung Lazaretto. "Use this money to buy mosquito nets for the patients' beds. I am also enclosing \$50.00 to provide a good Christmas dinner for all."

Her love of the poor was made clear in a letter to Mgr. de Guébriant, Vicar Apostolic of Canton: "Our

Institute was founded especially for the sake of the poor. We may care for the rich, but only in so far as the destitute have been well provided for." On another occasion she stressed this point in a letter to her Sisters in Canton, "Do not be afraid to tell everyone that the poor are my favourites."

While her compassion reached out to the poor overseas, she did not forget those who lived closer at hand. A Sister who had spent the day doing missionary animation in Montreal, once called up Mother Foundress on the phone, telling her about the plight of a family on the verge of starvation. She had found a baby crying out of sheer hunger. The mother, showing Sister her empty cupboards, told her she had sold everything to buy food for her children. She herself had had nothing to eat for the last few days. "This morning I tore up the last bit of linoleum on the floor to heat some water for the baby..." She spoke patiently, but her face and the faces of her children were masks of desolation. Sister wanted to know what she could do to help. Mother told her to go out immediately and buy milk for the youngest. Meantime, she herself prepared a big parcel of food and clothing to be given to these people in need. In it she placed a bottle of tonic for the mother. The Superior of one of our Canadian houses once told her she had given a certain amount of money to a poor woman in distress. Mother Foundress not only approved, but deplored the fact that Sister had failed to note the person's address so she might be able to contact her again. She added, "Never miss an opportunity of relieving the poor."

There was nothing petty or mean in this noble woman's character. She wanted even domestic animals to be treated with kindness. She told the Sister in charge of the kitchen about to feed the cat: "Feed it well. These poor animals have a right to our kindness. Since they will enjoy no eternal reward, we should make their short life as pleasant as possible." One day she met the sacristan with a pail of partly wilted greenery and flowers she was about to throw away. She carefully picked some out remarking, "Why deprive these blooms from giving all their beauty to the Lord?"

Nothing gave her more satisfaction than a call to serve the poor. She wrote to the Sisters entrusted with the direction of a school for needy children, "How happy I am to hear you are teaching the children of the poor. This was the first task I performed before the foundation of our Community and how dearly I loved it!" An oft repeated advice of hers was, "You may not always be able to give financial aid to those who are hard up, but you can at least give them kind words and loving smiles."

Délia Tétreault's evangelical ideal is maintained by her Sisters around the world. Their missionary works today are performed mainly in favour of the world's underprivileged classes. But they also keep in mind that, as she often remarked, if many are poor in worldly goods, many more perhaps are poor in love and happiness. These also have the right to be helped and taught the Good News of God's tenderness for all creatures great and small.

How God's Call Came to Me

by Teresa Fung, M.I.C.

I was born in China, of Taoist parents, on March 20, 1915. My father was called Fung Hi which, literally translated, means "Happiness"; my mother's name was Sim Pom Pang, a term which conveys the idea of "Precious Peace". For my part, when I was one month old, I was called Suck Tching which means "Purity". My parents gave me life, a happy and carefree childhood, and firm principles. To them first of all goes my filial gratitude. We were a family of nine of which I was the third. Ours was a closely united and loving family. Father and mother were kind, generous, and broadminded.

Influenced by a Protestant neighbour, my mother and I grew deeply interested in Christian doctrine. So much so, that we were both eventually baptized in the United Church. I was then ten or twelve years old. The ministers, wishing to have me trained as a missionary, enrolled me in one of their mission schools. Oddly enough, it was there that I first heard about the Catholic Church. I made friends with Ming Sing, a Chinese girl from Australia, who had studied the Catholic doctrine but who had not yet been baptized. As a pledge of her friendship, she gave me a medal of the Blessed Mother which I have treasured ever since. She introduced me to the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception who, at that time, conducted Holy Spirit School for girls in Canton. The upshot of all this was that I obtained my parents' permission to transfer from the Protestant to the Catholic school. Something or Someone was drawing me in an irresistible manner. Ming Sing also enrolled as a student. As her parents were about to return to Australia, taking her with them, she obtained their assent to her baptism in the Catholic faith.

My time had not yet come. On the one hand, my Protestant friends were doing their best to hold me back; on the other, I was beset with personal fears and doubts. It was only in June 1935 that I finally became a Catholic. Much as I admired the Missionary Sisters and their work among the poor, I did not then feel inclined towards religious life. In the China in which I lived, the state of virginity was looked upon favourably. I therefore made a private vow of chastity. Thus, when my parents would

no longer be able to provide for their own needs, I would be there to help them, being free of other obligations.

Little did I know that the Lord had other plans for me. In 1936, Sr. Marie Céline, my teacher and counsellor, told me that the M.I.C. Sisters in Vancouver were organizing a hospital for Asian patients. They needed a Chinese who could teach the patients catechism and visit them in their trials. Would I be interested in going to Vancouver to help the Sisters in this capacity for five years? She took me by surprise, and I had no ready answer. The first thing to do was to consult my parents. We were, as I have already said, a closely united family. My mother relied on me as the eldest daughter to lend a hand in household duties. My brothers and sisters were as fond of me as I was of them. Nevertheless, none opposed the project. "Our children belong first to the Master of Heaven," my father remarked. "You may go if you wish. All we want is to see you happy. If you do not like it over there you will always be welcome back home."

I found it hard to leave my parents and homeland. However, I left willingly, secure in the thought that I was doing God's will. I sailed from China March 19, 1936, and arrived in Vancouver in April, after a rough sea voyage. Adaptation to my new situation was far from easy. How I missed my dear ones! Canadian customs seemed very strange; the food was different; I knew little English, and I had at first no one to confide in. This forced me to turn frequently to God in prayer for strength and solace. The Sisters were very kind to me and took pains to teach me English.

Shortly after my arrival, someone lent me the life of my patron saint, Teresa of the Child Jesus. It was while reading this book that I realized the Lord was calling me to religious life. There and then, I made up my mind to become a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception. Alas, at that time, the Community did not yet admit Chinese members. Many years were to elapse before my project could be realized, but I never gave up hope.

With heartfelt joy I heard, in 1942, about Sister Lucia Ho's admission to the M.I.C. Novitiate. I immediately wrote to the Superior General asking to



Sister Teresa Fung with one of her youngest catechumens.

be admitted and I received a favourable answer. On account of World War II, I had been unable to visit my family for the past ten years. It was therefore arranged for me to return for a visit before entering the convent. Having sailed from Vancouver in December 1946, I arrived in Canton in early January.

I spent several weeks with my family. How happy we were to be reunited once more! My mother was still firm in her Protestant beliefs, but she willingly accompanied me to church for Mass, every morning. As it was a good forty-minutes' walk, we had plenty of time on the way to discuss religious subjects in which we were both interested and to talk about our Immaculate Mother. Gradually, she came to see the truth of Catholic teachings. To my delight, she asked to be baptized in the Catholic Church. This took place on April 26, 1947. Now that I had met my dear ones, I felt it was time to go West again and follow in the way the Lord had indicated. I left China in July 1947.

On February 1, 1948, my ardent wish was at last granted and I entered the Novitiate. After the usual formation period, I was admitted to make my vows. Never can I thank God enough for the priceless grace of my religious and missionary vocation. I have little hope of ever seeing my loved ones again on earth, as they are living in Communist territory. News has been

smuggled through that my dear father died after being baptized by my younger sister. No Catholic priests can exercise their ministry.

In Vancouver where I have been at work for over thirty years, I have had the privilege of teaching the doctrine to 1,000 Chinese of all ages and conditions. Four of these catechumens were baptized on their 100th anniversary. Spreading the Good News among my Chinese friends, visiting the sick, such is my apostolate. The days always seem too short to do all there is to be done, and my happiness deepens as the years go by. How I wish many others could share my happiness!

A Woman of God



Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit
(Delia Tetreault, Marieville, Que.)

A woman ardent, perceptive
Who foresees things to come
And creates wellsprings of
Light, life, zeal.

A woman
Whose being is yes,
Whose heart is set on the essential
Whose commitment is to the
Challenge of life.

Her name:
Délia Téreault.

1976 Years Book,
Good Hope School, Hong Kong

GUATEMALA

Everyday Life in Rural Guatemala

by Alice Labelle, M.I.C.

In rural Guatemala where modern gadgets are practically unknown, woman's work is never done. It begins as early as 5:00 a.m. and ends when the family retires around 9:00 p.m. The first chore upon rising, is to start the fire from the embers carefully kept the previous evening, and to brew the morning coffee. About an hour later, the men folk begin to stir. They squat around, sipping coffee and munching a cold *tortilla* (sort of pancake) or two, leftovers from the preceding day's evening meal. After their meagre refectation, they go out to feed animals, chop firewood, hoe the corn patch. They return for another light meal at 9:00 a.m.

Meantime, the housewife starts preparing for the evening meal, usually served around 6:00 p.m. The corn, steeped in lime and water on the previous afternoon, is washed several times until it is perfectly free from hulls; then it is strained. Now comes the tedious task of grinding and mashing this mass on the *metate*, (an oblong stone with a concave upper surface). A stone roller flattens it into a thin paste. Wetting her hands, the housewife gathers the mashed corn into a lump, kneading it again and again until a fine paste is produced, ready for the making of the *tortillas*. These pancakes are baked on a flat clay griddle set directly over the open-fire stove, built on the floor or on a small platform. *Tortillas* are the Indians' daily bread. A pot of freshly infused beverage, made out of corn added to boiling water, and a stew of potatoes cooked with beans, herbs, wild plants, and occasional chunks of meat complete the meal. The average workingman can put away ten *tortillas*, a bowl of stew, six or seven small potatoes seasoned with chili and salt,

and a gourd of beverage at a sitting. Men and women seldom eat together; the men eat first, the women and children later. Corn, beans, and potatoes form an inseparable trio as staple foods.

In between meals, the women are never idle. Babies must be cared for, the washing must be done, the chickens must be fed, wild herbs used as seasoning must be gathered. The children help a good deal, as soon as they are big enough to do so. They are given responsibilities early in life, and assume them cheerfully. Theirs is not a pampered lot. In order to reach school, many have to walk barefoot for miles over stony, narrow, winding paths. Thanks to the help received from the government grants and donations from kind friends, we can serve each of the children who attend our school, a generous portion of hot oatmeal porridge fortified with powdered milk and sugar, once a day.

Around 6:00 p.m. the men return from the fields and the children from school. The housewife then serves a hot meal, often the only substantial one of the day. The Indians' daily round of activities is unrelieved by play or modern distractions. Only in listening to the radio and in talk do they find some measure of diversion. In Guatemala, useful work is treated with respect and all tasks are performed with dignity. While the men exchange their impressions, the women busily spin cotton or yarn to be used in weaving garments or offered for sale at regional markets. Later in the evening, a local kind of beer is passed around, along with a few *tortillas*. At 9:00 p.m., the fire is banked and all go to bed. They certainly have earned their rest.



Housewives busy at their primitive laundromat.

In Our Mail Bag

These naive "letters" to God were written by pupils of the first or second grade in our primary schools of Koriyama, and Wakamatsu. The children who are mostly non-Christian, learn to pray in our schools. They often slip into the chapel at recess and place "letters" like the following, on the altar step, or on the altar itself.

Dear God,

Hello! Thank you for giving us such nice weather. Because you helped me in my classes, I won a gold paper reward for writing my impressions about my reading. Mamma was very proud and pleased when I showed it to her. So was Papa. Dear God, I have another request. Please cure my father's illness. Well, dear God, do take care of yourself.

Dear God,

Please, won't you cure Sister Igarashi's leg? It hurts so badly. I have two other requests. You know how I like to fight... Stop me from having another fight. Help those who are poor get what they need. Take care of all the people in the world.

Silent Saint

Saint Joseph was a silent man who believed in deeds rather than in words. He preferred to do his work rather than to talk about it. Not a single word of his has been recorded in the Gospel, yet his silence does not make us feel uncomfortable. It conveys warmth, understanding, and a gentle strength which inspires confidence. We know instinctively he is a man we can trust.

In all things his judgement was sound. No glib sales talk could have tricked him into buying flawed or inferior wood. The work of his hands needed no useless recommendations, for its worth was evident and its quality unquestionable. He worked to provide Jesus and Mary with a happy home. Their happiness and safety always came first. When his plans for them were upset, he trusted in God's providence even in his disappointment.

Is it any wonder then that the Universal Church is entrusted to such a saint as Joseph? Thousands of people turn to him with their human problems, and seek his help in material and spiritual difficulties. They confide in the man to whom God himself entrusted the care of his Mother and of his Son. How could their trusting prayers remain unanswered?

KORIYAMA, JAPAN

You Are My Sunbeam

by Lucille Adam, M.I.C.

When a missionary returns to her homeland for a year or so, she is in for a lot of surprises. Without ever really forgetting those she left behind, she is kept on her toes trying to cope with new situations and to adapt to a changing world.

However, when the newness has worn off, her thoughts are apt to turn more often to her adopted land. This is particularly true of one whose health problems are such, that she wonders whether she will ever be able to go back to the friends made all along the years. This is my case at present. More and more, I feel haunted by the sweet cheerful faces of my pupils, of my dear Girl Scouts and Brownies. The many little happenings when I lived among them have become precious memories. One of these I would like to share with you.

As a Girl Scout and Brownie leader, I was privileged to share the joys, trials, and aspirations of my young girls. Fresh in my mind, is the memory of a note left on my desk one day, by one of my Brownies. At first glance, I knew it was not of the usual kind, for I found scrawled across the paper, the address — To my Sunbeam!

Puzzled, I opened the note and found the following little poem written in an awkward hand. Freely translated it read as follows:

TO MY SUNBEAM

I'm happy to be a Brownie,
I'm happy to have met you.

Every time you speak to me,
My heart leaps for joy.
To me you're really like the sun,
For when you tell us about God,
I feel all warm inside.

You're always smiling, kind to us all,
This is why I like you so,
I know you like me too.

Japan needs more sunbeams like you.
More children would then be happy.
I'll ask God to send many more Sisters
To be our sunbeams.

Yuko Abe, 4th year Brownie, 1st pack

Need I tell you how deeply moved I was by this child's trusting love? All the more so, that Yuko was not what could be called a bright pupil. Although she worked hard in class, her efforts were rarely crowned with success. Indeed, failures seemed to be the order of the day for her. At such times, she would come to my office in tears and tell me how hard she found this to bear. I always encouraged her, reminding her that God saw her efforts and that we loved her no matter how low her school marks might be. Reassured and comforted she would timidly smile, her eyes swimming in tears, and promise to try hard once again.

Little Yuko has grown up into a pretty, poised high school student. Sometimes I wonder whether she still prays and hopes for more "sunbeams" to warm up the hearts of young people in the Land of the Rising Sun.



Sister Lucille Adam with a group of Brownies.

LES CAYES, HAITI

Where There Is Charity...

by Beatrice Berubé, M.I.C.

One morning, as I was making my way from our little convent chapel to the old people's home, I wondered within myself what the day would be like. Caring for sick, crippled, and aged people is no easy task, even though I love every one of our patients dearly. "Charity If You Please", as the home is called, houses persons who no longer have anyone to turn to. Within its walls, the great number have found something like a heaven on earth. A few hold a grudge against a world in which they have been badly treated. Who are we to blame them? The majority are very grateful for the help received.

I had hardly stepped inside when I saw Luke waiting for me. "I'll put the drops in your eyes right away," I said as he came closer. But, he stopped me. "Mother, no, no. I haven't come for medicine this early. I just wanted to thank you for all you do for me, for all of us, with so much love and concern. God alone can reward you for this, but I want to say a special thank you, I couldn't sleep very well last night and I

had time to think about what you do for us day in, day out." I felt this was the answer to my morning musings.

At present "Charity If You Please" is home to over one hundred aged, sick, or handicapped persons. Among the latter, twenty-eight are blind. It does one's heart good to be a daily witness of the charity that reigns among these people who come from many stations in life, and for whom this is the point of no return. Here they find a warm family atmosphere; they feel loved and wanted; they are sure to be cared for with competence, flavoured with tenderness, until the time comes for them to leave for the Father's home.

In case you would like to know more about our work read the following account of this remarkable foundation.

CHARITY IF YOU PLEASE

It all started in the early years of the twentieth century, in 1923 to be more exact. In the good city of Les Cayes, hundreds of homeless paupers went hungry because they had no one to care for them. They slept in parks, in church vestibules, on the bare ground, in shacks... Famished, maimed, covered with running sores, they were a pitiful sight indeed.

For a long time, Mrs. Bermingham a lovely lady with a compassionate heart pondered means of helping these outcasts in a practical manner. She gave them alms, whenever she could, but she dreamt of doing much more — she dreamt of building a spacious home where they would find shelter.

Every Saturday she met with friends to plan what help could be given them during the following week. On one of these Saturdays, she proposed to broaden the scope of the work, and to organize an association which would be called "Charity If You Please". Her proposal met with hearty approval and a good number of Les Cayes' elite citizens gave their support. The foundress herself gave the example of generous devotion to the cause. Accompanied by helpers, she made the rounds of the city, begging alms for her beloved poor. Inspired by her charity, the people generously gave in money and in kind. Every Saturday afternoon,



Sister Beatrice with two of her friends both in their nineties.



Morisson Dutel, peeved at being left out of above photo, flashes a broad grin as Sister Beatrice soothes his ruffled feelings.

she gathered her protégés at a roadside shrine, and divided among them what she had received, seeing to it that each had his or her share.

Never one to rest on her laurels, she continued to plan for a home where the poor could live in security. A kind-hearted engineer, Mr. Lepelletier Jeannot, offered a plot of land where the first buildings were erected. During the following years, several additions were made. Meantime, Mrs. Bermingham obtained grants from the "Assistance of Hygiene", and from the "National Lottery". The communal administration of the City of Les Cayes added its contribution. President Vincent, while touring southern Haiti, visited the establishment and was so favourably impressed that he donated wherewith to build the Saint Vincent Chapel where the inmates daily pray and meditate.

During twenty years, the work prospered thanks to the zeal of the foundress. In 1943, however, pressed by various circumstances, she decided to hand it over to Bishop J.L. Collignon, O.M.I. Wishing to ensure the continuity of the work, the Bishop asked the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception to undertake this delicate mission. And there they are still working as dispensers of tender, loving care to the homeless, the sick, the aged. For my part, I would not exchange place with anyone on earth.

MALAWI, C.A.

Of Language and Dialects...

by Bernadette Dumas, M.I.C.

Africa has hundreds of languages. Even today, no one has counted them all or found a satisfactory way of classifying them. In rough terms, it may be said that from a line of about five degrees north of the Equator to the southern tip of Africa, its languages, with few exceptions, belong to the great Bantu linguistic family. So far, more than 300 Bantu languages have been identified. Most of them are similar in grammar and vocabulary although not always mutually intelligible.

In our missions of Malawi and Zambia, each tribe has its own particular dialect, derived from Bantu. The people here are divided into tribes according to the dialect they use. The prefix *ci* tacked on to the name of the tribe indicates what dialect its members speak. Thus, the Wacewa speak Cichewa; the Watumbuka Citumbuka; the Watonga use Citonga to mention only a few.

With so many different dialects or tongues, the need is felt for a link of unity. In this region, it has been provided for by the English language. A knowledge of English is indispensable in the world of business, politics, and religion. Drawing on both European and African languages enables African leaders to mediate new truths to their own people.

Each country wishes to have an official language which can be used in its teaching establishments. Cichewa, spoken by the greater number in southern Malawi and Zambia, has been chosen as national language to be taught in primary schools. English is also taught from the lower grades so that the children may grow familiar with it when they reach the secondary level. In northern Malawi and Zambia, however, missionaries must learn Citumbuka, a more complex language

than Cichewa. As you can see, the task of communication is an arduous one.

A characteristic of Bantu languages is that the noun leads the sentence. Adjectives, the particle "of", the verb, all depend on the initial letter of the nouns called "class mark". In Citumbuka, there are 10 classes for singular and 10 for plural effected by changing the prefix. For example, the root *nthu* gives *munthu* "man" in the singular and *banthu* "men" in the plural. The Bantu verb has an abundance of moods and tenses. Its special richness, is a bright array of suffixes which can give a new twist of meaning to each word. A single basic word can be refashioned into scores of derivatives.

On the whole, African language is dynamic. For instance: a sharp tool has "teeth"; it "bites the wood". A useless, discarded article is "dead". A single tree standing on the plain is "sad" because it is alone. In times of drought, the parched earth "drinks" the rain. A

motor car "sees" at night because it has bright "eyes"... Such expressions are not merely picturesque turns of speech; they are vivid descriptions of a world that is intensely alive. The naming of a thing or action by vocal imitation of the sound associated with it adds to the piquancy of the language. Thus: a motorcycle is called *mutututu* from the noise it makes; a waterfall is called *chipopomo* imitating the sound of falling water, etc.

Pronunciation poses few problems if one is more or less familiar with Latin. As in Latin, the letter "e" is always pronounced as in *Dei*; "c" as in *ecce*; "u" as in *salutaris*, etc. Spelling is easy. All words are written according to sound and each letter has its separate sound. Canada, for instance would be written *Kanada* according to the sound "k". Many an amusing anecdote might be told on how missionaries adapt, more or less successfully, to the intricacies of tongues and dialects. This modest article is not meant to be a course on foreign languages. My aim is simply to tell you something of the difficulties of the apostolate, and to ask you to pray for those whose lives are dedicated to spreading the Gospel among people of all lands, tongues, and nations.

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