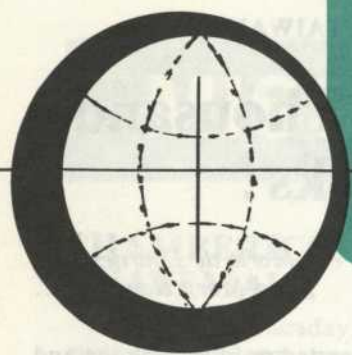




MADAGASCAR

Marian Devotion in Madagascar

by Marie Odila Plante, M.I.C.

Upon his arrival in August 1844, the first Prefect Apostolic of Madagascar, Father Pierre Dalmond, placed the island under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception. He and his companions soon discovered that the Malagasy felt a marked psychological attraction to the Mother of God, attraction which flowed from their deep sense of the family as a social unit, their respect for motherhood, their love of children. One of the first missionaries wrote, "We notice that the Malagasy seem naturally drawn to Mary. How can she help drawing them to her divine Son?"

A great number of churches and chapels are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The first little wooden chapel built in 1862, was placed under her protection. So was the cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Andolako, Tananarive, whose foundation stone was laid in 1873. In the capital alone, seven churches bear one or other of her titles.

When we first came to Madagascar, in 1952, we noticed how deeply attached the faithful were to our Lady. Every morning before Mass, took place a reading on our Lady de la Salette, followed by an appropriate prayer. This particular devotion was introduced by the Missionaries of La Salette at work in different parts of the Island. Every Sunday afternoon, the faithful returned to church to pray the Rosary and to sing Marian hymns during almost one hour. Many of the assistants had walked several miles in order to be present. Every day, during the month of May and of October, our Lady was honoured in a special manner.

Charline Zafison, M.I.C., describes in the following manner how the people of Mahabo celebrate the month of May. On May 1, an inspiring Marian celebration is held in the parish church. Afterwards, six statues are brought forward. Three are carried from house to house every day of the month, while the other three are assigned for the same purpose to the suburbs. Each family considers it an honour to receive the statue for a few hours or for a day. The family invites friends and acquaintances to join in honouring our Lady. When the assigned period is over, the statue is escorted to another house, until all in turn have been able to welcome and honour the Queen of Heaven. To close the month in a worthy fashion, early on the thirty-first, empty baskets and other recipients are placed in front of the church to be filled in favour of the less affluent members of the congregation.

The catechists in formation decided, in 1972, to promote Marian devotion after their own manner. Every evening they met in a different home, bringing with them a large picture of the Holy Heart of Mary. The Rosary was prayed with great fervour. Before their departure, they left one picture of our Lady in each house visited. Malagasy people of every age and social condition have a great love for pictures, especially those representing our Lady. Every Christian house has at least one which is daily honoured.

Mary is revered more particularly under the titles of Our Lady of Victory, Our Lady of La Salette, and Our Lady of Lourdes. Special mention should also be made of Our Lady of Vocations attached to a statue of purely Malagasy



Our Lady of Madagascar wearing the traditional lamba or shawl.

inspiration. Due to the clever work of the seminarians, this statue is honoured more especially in the Betsileo region as patroness of all Christian callings, but more particularly of religious and priestly vocations.

Placed under the patronage of Mary Immaculate even before its inception the evangelization of the Great Isle has progressed to the rhythm of the Marian devotion of its people and under her evident protection. Filial piety to her whom they call "Holy Mary, our Mother" has always characterized the religious physiognomy of the Malagasy people.

Facets of Delia Tetreault's Personality

A Marian Soul

All her life, Délia cherished a filial devotion to our Lady. She had recourse to her in all her needs, spiritual or temporal, as a child has recourse to its mother. The dearest of her occupations, even before she became the foundress of a missionary congregation, was to make Mary better known and better loved, especially among the poor and the sick whom she regularly visited.

She made her own, Grignon de Montfort's teachings on true devotion to Mary. One of her favourite books was the *Treatise on True Devotion to Mary* which she enjoyed offering as a gift to her friends and acquaintances. In Delia's personal notes we find this avowal, "The Blessed Virgin has done everything in the work of our foundation. She was always my guide and my inspiration. I dedicated myself to her service by the vow of Holy Slavery (after the method of Grignon de Montfort) on the feast of the Immaculate Conception (1892). I have never called on her in vain."

One of the initial recorded acts of the nascent community at Cote des Neiges, in 1902, was to consecrate itself to the Blessed Virgin. From the very beginning, December 8 was considered the patronal feast of the Institute. That first year as well as in the years that followed, a triduum of prayerful recollection prepared the Sisters to celebrate it with joy and fervour.

A great number of familial customs introduced in those early years referred to our Lady: a Hail Mary recited before meals; the daily Rosary; the singing or praying of the *Magnificat* three times a day; the *Salve Regina* sung before retiring at night; monthly processions to domestic Marian shrines; the *Ave Maris Stella* chanted before each departure for the missions; the singing of a hymn to Mary every Saturday, etc.

With what joy and gratitude she learned in 1904, that Pope Pius X had given her Institute the name — Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception. In later years she wrote, out of the fulness of her heart, "We were placed under the protection of Mary on the occasion of the Jubilee of the proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The Holy Father himself entrusted us to Mary's maternal

care. Many are amazed upon hearing of this extraordinary fact, almost unique in the history of religious Congregations. Let us try not to be unworthy of such an honour..."

There is scarcely a letter or a personal note written by Delia in which no mention of our Lady is made. She introduced in her community the custom of heading all letters with the motto, "May the Immaculate Virgin be known from pole to pole!" In her own letters to her missionary daughters, she urged them to have recourse to Mary on all occasions. It would be too long to quote every excerpt. A few will suffice to show how close she kept to our Blessed Mother in all things. To the pioneers assigned to Canton, China: "Let us constantly renew our devotion to Mary Immaculate. Who more than we, Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, should be devoted to her? We should think about her, work for her, live for her. We should consider her always as our Mother, our only Superior, all others being but her delegates." To the first group of Sisters leaving for Japan: "Upon your arrival, let your first act be to renew your consecration to Mary Immaculate. This was the first thing we did at the time of our foundation. Our Blessed Mother will watch over you... The measure of our devotion to Mary will be the measure of our holiness. We need her assistance in all apostolic activities." She urged a Sister-Catechist: "Before beginning your work among the non-Christians, never omit the Hail Mary so that our Lady may speak through you and dispose the hearts of your pupils to hear the word of God." To a group of Sisters about to leave for the mission field: "Always keep your eyes fixed on our Blessed Mother in order to imitate her virtues. At Lourdes she did not say, 'I am Immaculate' but 'I am the Immaculate Conception'."

May true devotion to Mary and perseverance in endeavouring to make her better known and loved obtain for the Institute the realization of Délia Tetreault's prophetic words as she lay in danger of death, October 3, 1933, "Our Community will forever sing the praises of Mary Immaculate!"

KWANSI, TAIWAN

Ten Thousand Thanks!

Marie de Lourdes Lwo
and Mary Han, M.I.C.

Our hearts are filled with joy and gratitude as we write to you, dear Canadian friends. During the past three years you have greatly helped us through your prayers to persevere in religious life. Ten thousand thanks!

After a triduum of recollection and prayer, we were finally admitted to take our vows on September 8, 1977. The ceremony was simple and inspiring. It seemed to us both that all the world shared in our happiness. The three years of preparation went by like a flash. Thank you again and God bless everyone of you for your spiritual assistance. In the afternoon of the great day, we spent an hour in the chapel with our animator Sr. Gabrielle, praying for all your intentions.

We are now in Taipei pursuing our professional and religious formation. It was a big sacrifice for us to leave Kwansi where we spent three happy years and made many good friends. But we will be better prepared to serve their needs more efficiently after further studies.

Our fondest memories of Kwansi are those we carry of the children we were privileged to instruct in the doctrine. They made such a deep

READ THE LIFE

OF

DELIA TETREAU

foundress of the first Canadian
Missionary Institute of women:

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Marie de Lourdes Lwo and Mary Han on their profession day.

impression on us by their eagerness to listen to the word of God and to learn how to pray. Their spontaneous prayers came straight from the heart and surely reached the heart of our all-loving Father.

CUBA *Yesterday and Today*



Visiting the sick and the aged.

Upon the earnest request of Bishop Martin Villaverde, the M.I.C. Sisters arrived in Cuba in 1948. During the next ten years, they organized seven flourishing educational establishments, promoted spiritual animation in rural centres, and worked at the formation of catechists.

From 1958 to 1961, the troubled state of the country brought worry and difficulties. Finally, with the nationalization of all private schools, in May 1961, twenty-seven Sisters were repatriated, only ten remaining behind. Confronted with a totally different situation within a society rapidly being transformed, and a Church looking

MALAWI, C.A.

Golden Jubilee in Malawi

We seldom meet together for an anniversary like the one we are celebrating today: Sister Alice Pepin, Marie-des-Anges, better known in Citumbuka as Amayi Wangelo, celebrates fifty years of religious life, fifty years of devoted service to the Lord. Of these fifty years, thirty were spent in the service of the Church of Malawi, more especially of the diocese of Mzuzu. This feast takes on particular significance from the fact that Amayi Wangelo is not only the senior of the M.I.C.'s in Africa, but also of *all the missionaries of the diocese*, Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters included.

She has been a pioneer in the diocese because she has seen the progress of the Vicariate of Mzuzu from its humble beginnings to the diocese we are presently proud of. I cannot speak as a personal witness of all that she has done, having come to Malawi quite recently. But the archives mention that Sister was here at the very beginning, and that in 1948 she was put in charge of the temporal affairs of the Congregation here, in Katete. She was responsible for the building of almost all that exists to this day, and that, at a time when her Tumbuka vocabulary consisted of very few words; she was architect, contractor, builder, and carpenter all in one. In Katete she oversaw the building of the big dispensary. She started the orphanage in Mzambazi. From there, she moved back to Katete. Later, she went on to Lunyangwa where she opened the school "Marymount".

Such a record would certainly be outstanding for a master-builder Brother. Is it not still more remarkable for a sister who came to Malawi, after she had worked twenty years as a cook at the Mother House in Canada? Amayi Wangelo had a natural talent for manual work — from gardening to carpentry, from construction to preparing bricks. Her energies were mostly spent on "building sites".

And that is not all. In the midst of already too numerous and pressing occupations, she managed to travel to out-stations for pastoral work. She was a good cook and taught the women around the mission how to prepare balanced family diets. She also found time to organize sewing classes. Such constant and arduous work was performed quietly, peacefully, like the angels after whom she is named. Like them also, she did all things for the greater glory of God. He had endowed her with great gifts which she generously dispensed throughout the diocese. She was at one and the same time Mary and Martha: Mary who found time to sit quietly at the feet of Jesus; Martha, who attended to so many things... Dear Sister Alice, we thank you for all the good work you have done for us here, in the diocese, and for the magnificent missionary example you have given to all of us.

*(Excerpts from the homily of
Mgr. Jean-Louis Jobidon, W.F.,
August 8, 1977)*

ahead into a none too bright future, they resolved to keep the fires of faith and hope burning at any cost.

An unexpected door to the apostolate eventually opened to their zeal. They had their hands full with pastoral activities such as visits to the sick and the aged, preparation of young couples for marriage, formation of catechists, etc. From their convent, in Matanzas, they radiated into neighbouring towns and villages. Their very presence was an encouragement and a challenge to the Catholics who learned to assume their responsibilities as committed followers of Christ.

In 1965, a novitiate was opened in Colon, which immediately welcomed three aspirants. To God, nothing is impossible. Our M.I.C. group in Cuba now numbers six Canadians and ten Cubans. We have three local communities in three different dioceses: Camaguey, Matanzas, and Habana. All the Sisters take part in direct evangelization, through the animation of small basic Christian communities. Pastoral activities have to be constantly reinvented because of changing situations in a very special milieu. The M.I.C. Sisters in Cuba cannot but marvel at the birth of a new and heroic Church solidly based on essentials.

A Short Course in Human Relations

The Six most important words:

"I admit I made a mistake."

the Five most important words:

"You did a good job."

The Four most important words:

"What is your opinion?"

The Three most important words:

"If you please."

The Two most important words:

"Thank you!"

The One most important word:

"We"

The Least important word:

"I"

HONG KONG

"Good Hope Project" in Bolivia

During the 1977 Easter season \$500.00 (U.S.A.) were sent to Sr. Anita, a M.I.C. missionary working in Bolivia. The money was raised from a 'hunger meal' held at Good Hope School during Lent. Here is an extract of a letter received from Sr. Anita:

To the Good Hope Central Board:

Our grateful thanks to all of you, who are so full of dynamism and so open to your brothers of the world, especially to those of Bolivia. We appreciate your generous offering of \$500.00. To experience such a sharing is to experience something of the social dimension of the Gospel.

You will be interested in knowing what we plan to do with your gift:

1) With the money received we will extend medical care to many adults and children and improve their health.

2) We will help poor students to pay their board, books, and equipment.

3) We will also foster the promotion of women, especially of the miners' wives. These women want to help themselves by following classes in sewing, knitting, cooking, and also courses in health-education, social sciences, etc. If we can manage to do so, we will open our doors to young girls unable to pursue their studies because of money problems.

This project will be called "The Good Hope Project". We thank you all for everything.

With love,

Sr. Anita

TAIPEI — TAIWAN

Taiwan, the Busy Island

by Monette Ouellette, M.I.C.

My thoughts often travel back to you all whom I have left in the homeland. I thank God for the happy years he granted me to live in your midst. How was your last harvest on the farm? Here in Taiwan we had a plentiful crop of rice in spite of four blustering typhoons accompanied by high winds and heavy rains.

Soon it will be Mission Day. Please remember in your prayers the Church of Taiwan. It needs your support and your solidarity, for it is still a very young Church. The first missionaries arrived here less than a century ago. Although young in the faith, it is full of goodwill, but submerged, so to say, in a world which ignores God.

This small island is a beehive developing at an incredible pace. People work day and night, seven days a week. Their chief ambition is to secure more



We missionaries need to feel you behind us as a powerful rear guard.

material comfort. They are hardworking people, undaunted by difficulties, but their spiritual values are gradually being eroded in the race for material gain. The Christians who are a small minority are caught in this materialistic atmosphere where it takes almost super-human courage to live up to the teachings of the Gospel. This is where you can help them through your prayers.

We missionaries also need to feel you behind us as a powerful rear guard. Thank you for the prayers and sacrifices you offer to further the great mission cause. Thank you for your solidarity with our brother Christians all over the world. The same Gospel is preached everywhere, urging us daily to become a little kinder, a little more forgiving, a little more attentive to the needs of the poor, the oppressed.

Golden Jubilee

The Catholic Medical Mission Board observed its Golden Jubilee on February 9, 1978. It was formed in 1928 by Father Gareshe, S.J., and Paluel J. Flagg, to answer the urgent needs of Catholic missionaries for cost-free medical supplies with which to relieve the physical ailments of the poor throughout the world.

Thanks to the agency's good offices, medical supplies and equipment are regularly shipped to Catholic missions in developing countries. It also introduces professional medical people — doctors, dentists, and registered nurses — to overseas hospitals in order to assist in educating their staff and in improving medical care provided to destitute sick people. During the first half of 1977, its shipments, valued wholesale at \$83,751,729.00, went to 739 mission recipients in 39 countries.

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception welcome this opportunity of thanking the devoted personnel of the agency for its precious assistance over many years, in several of its missions mainly in Africa, Asia, Haiti, South and Central America. God bless all those who have thus contributed to the relief of the sick, Christ's suffering members.

MISSION BRIEFS

CHAMPERICO, GUATEMALA

On Holy Thursday, it is an old custom here to exchange freshly baked bread. Our doorbell rang as early as 6:00 a.m. as kind neighbours came in with symbolical offerings. People here deeply appreciate such tangible symbols of belonging to the great Christian family. Good Friday is a very busy day, for we must take part in the drama of the Passion vividly represented by the parishioners. We join the crowds as early as 9:00 a.m. to make the Way of the Cross through the streets of Champerico. The women carry the statue of our Lady of Sorrows shrouded in mournful attire, while the men escort a large effigy of Christ carrying his cross. Fervent prayers are said along the way and hymns are sung. At 3:00 p.m. takes place the ceremony of the Holy Burial. The statue of Christ is clothed in a white tunic, and placed on a dais decked with flowers and lights. Another procession takes place which can last as long as five hours. People never seem to weary as they march along in a recollected and prayerful mood.

KWANSI, TAIWAN

Our activities in pastoral work are a worthwhile initiation into our future mission of spreading the Good News. They enable us to grasp more clearly the difficulties of the apostolate. This experience has developed our ardent desire to make our local Church stronger and more dynamic in order to render the universal Church more relevant. When mainland China becomes accessible, we will be ready to help seekers after the Truth who at the present time, cannot manifest their faith openly. Our study of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* has made us understand how much the Church relies on us to translate the Christian message into a way adapted to the milieu where we live. We have greatly appreciated reading the document and assimilating its deep significance. It has increased our fervour to fulfill our missionary role in our Institute and in the Church.

For several months, Chen-Ming-Tsi, a young Christian girl came to us regularly for courses in preparation for

First Communion. She was always accompanied by a little non-Christian friend. The latter was as deeply interested in these lessons as Chen-Ming-Tsi herself. One day, as we were making the Way of the Cross, the two girls prayed their own naive prayers. I was surprised at the depth of feeling expressed by the non-Christian girl. At the eighth station she murmured, "Jesus, you alone can be our Saviour." When we came to the twelfth, she knelt and prayed, "O Jesus, because you suffered all this for us, I'm going to sing a song so as to comfort you and thank you. You must know how much I love you." Then and there she sang a touching little song. When we had finished, she added, "Jesus, I believe in your resurrection." This non-Christian child wants to become a Christian but she is not yet allowed to do so.

Marie de Lourdes Lwo, M.I.C.

YAURI, PERU

Excerpts from the diary of the Sisters working in Yauri sound like an actualization of the Acts of the Apostles. Instead of Paul, Barnabas, Titus, you might read Agnes, Pierrette, Irene; replace the boats of the Mediterranean Sea by the stout jeeps of Andean trails; instead of the Christian communities of Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome, picture those of Pumawasi, Urinsaya, Cuzco, etc. alternately visited by the M.I.C. trio. The team writes: "We three missionaries stationed in distant Yauri have experienced God's providence in a very special manner since February 1977. Thanks to the good people of Espinar, particularly Mrs. Engracia, owner of the house where we live, a week has seldom passed without appreciated practical gifts of cheese, eggs, meat, potatoes, etc., being laid at our door. We are all the more impressed since this was the first year during which no fixed salary had been allotted us. How true the words of the Gospel: "Look at the birds of the air... your heavenly Father feeds them (Mt 6: 26)"! In our lonely situation, it does us good to recall the first days of our Institute when poverty was the order of the day and when, at the same time, divine Providence never failed our Foundress and her first companions.

KANYANGA, ZAMBIA



by Irene Champagne, M.I.C.

Building a house in the bush villages is a simple affair. The men folk choose some solid tree trunks, stripped of branches and bark, which they use as poles. One of these they plant in the centre of the plot of land selected beforehand. Other poles are then set at convenient distances to serve as

CATAVI, BOLIVIA

You are no doubt wondering why I have not, so far, kept my promise of writing to you. I am quite busy with service at the hospital, the training of our *sanitario*, or "bush doctors", visits to distant villages, etc. Gabino has just completed his first stage of study at the hospital. I have to prepare his kit containing some medicine, tweezers, disinfectant solutions, bandages, etc: enough to give first aid to the people of the villages entrusted to his care. Usually, each *sanitario* is assigned to three or four villages. After going through two months of training at the Coposa Hospital, Gregorio will receive his first certificate. Besides the usual first aid, he has also learned how to draw teeth. Each *sanitario* has a right to several months of study and practice. Pension fees and board are graciously paid by "Peace and Development" (Canada). The hospital personnel teaches them free of charge. We are expecting two more *sanitario*. Each local community chooses its own candidates. For our part, we agree to give them the formation they need, but the villages must assume the charge of building their dispensary. As a rule, country people do not like to live away from their villages, even for a few months. Gabino, for instance, felt so homesick that he more than once threatened to take French leave. It took all my power of persuasion to keep him at his task. Once the time was over, he literally flew home!

Alice Berleur, M.I.C.



in the Bush

framework. Clay is thickly daubed over the walls and left to dry. Meantime, reeds and coarse grasses are gathered to provide thatch for the roof. All the members of the clan pitch in to help. Teenage boys and girls are encouraged to participate, in order to have them learn the community spirit.



The main hut. To the right a small storage hut.

The inside of the hut is rather dark as there is only one opening besides the door. This does not matter much during day time in a land where the climate is warm and where everything can be done outdoors. Houses are used chiefly as sleeping quarters. Cooking is done in front of the door. The big pots are placed over a fire of branches; it is thus easier to supervise the cooking. When passing by, I always admire how such pots, filled to the brim, never seem to boil over. Food is too precious to have it lost in this manner. It is the children's job to replenish the fire with branches while Mother does other odd jobs.

In villages which are more neatly kept, the thatched roofs are shaved

close thus giving better appearance to the whole. But, in the distant bush, no such niceties are observed. As long as the thatch affords shelter, nobody gives

a second look. At a short distance from the main hut, a smaller one is built for the storage of grain.

BUTARE, RWANDA

An African Prayer to Mary

O Virgin Mary, I have always dreamt of a mother like you. Our African mothers are loving and kind; but they always work so hard, that they have little time to talk to us, to listen to us.

On the contrary, you love each one of us as if you had only one child to see to. I think you must cherish your African children in a special manner. When you were escaping from the cruel Herod, did you not seek refuge in Africa? You might have gone North, or East, or West... You took the road to the South and you chose our Africa as a sure place of refuge.

When you cooked meals for Jesus and Joseph, you squatted over a small wood fire in the courtyard. You used plain earthenware cooking pots like those our women use.

You did not have any running water in your humble home. Just as we do, you went barefoot to fetch water from a pond or a water hole. A jar balanced on your head, you were careful not to spill any on the way.

When Saint Joseph was laid off, because work was scarce, you probably worried. Perhaps you even had to go hungry at times. For all these reasons, you understand how badly we need you. Like your other children we long for joy, not the noisy joy of our tribal dances, but the quiet joy that springs from the knowledge that we are secure in our mother's tender love.

O Virgin Mary, my heart tonight is bursting with desires. Gather them all into your motherly hands.

Thank you.

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