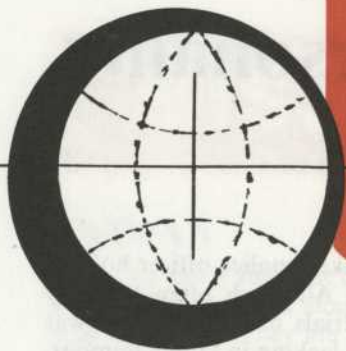




HONG KONG

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Of all the Chinese festivals, New Year is the most important. People prepare a week beforehand, cleaning, decorating their houses. As a rule, nobody goes to bed on New Year's Eve. Crowds are out, shopping until the small hours.

When the shoppers return home, they share with their families the very first meal of the new year. Afterwards, each child offers his parents a cup of tea and wishes them the best of health. In return, the parents give their children

red packets containing money and wish them luck through the coming year.

Around the noon hour, people begin visiting friends and relatives wishing one another a Happy New Year. Married couples give their children what is known as lucky money. Unmarried people need not give any but are offered presents from married couples instead. This is because the Chinese consider only those who are married as adults.

No one is allowed to sweep floors on the first day of the New Year. Otherwise, the year's luck might inadvertently be swept out. Likewise housewives must be careful not to spill any water for fear the year's wealth might flow away.

Business men usually have a big feast on the second day of the New Year as the day is considered to be the beginning of a new business year. On the third day of the lunar year people stay at home. Why? Because this is "Quarrelling Day" and they risk quarrelling with whoever they meet on their way out.

The seventh day is everybody's birthday. It is believed that humans came into being on the seventh day after the creation of the world. On the eighth day, the new year begins in earnest. People go back to work and schools are reopened.

The feeling of newness about the year gradually fades away. Most people stop distributing red packets at this time. After the fifteenth day, people forget all about the new year festivities and time runs on as usual.

Condensed from
"Sunday Examiner"



Wishing you a Happy New Year, Chinese style.



*These children
from all around the world
wish you and all people
everywhere
A Happy New Year
overflowing
with God's blessings.*

Facets of Delia Tetreault's Personality

Joy and a sense of humour

by Madeline Maillet, M.I.C.

In the Old Testament, laughter and joyous play are alluded to in a positive way. "There is an appointed time for everything... A time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to rejoice..." (Eccl. 3: 1-8). The Bible further relates that eternal Wisdom is joy and play in the eyes of the Lord. We read in Proverbs (8: 30-31) "Then I was beside him as his craftsman, and I was his delight, day by day, playing before him... And I found delight in the children of men." Play, delight, and humour are thus indicated as positive dimensions of God. Since human beings are created in his image, are not play and humour part of a human way of life?

A few reflections on Delia's delightful sense of humour may help us understand her better. Although of a dignified and serious nature, she was quick to perceive the humorous events and situations which permeate everyday life. Her humour was of the kind a modern humorist defines as the kindly contemplation of the absurdities of life. It always remained within the bounds of a delicate regard for the feelings of others.

On one of Delia's frequent visits to the Novitiate, a novice had told a story of a class of catechism she had once held for a group of youngsters. She had explained how each Christian was made a temple of the Holy Spirit through baptism. Among the children sat a little hunchback. A mischievous companion patted his hump whispering, "You lucky guy! You've got a 'sacristy' tacked to your temple." All found this story funny except Delia who remained pensive. Afterwards, she called the novice and gently warned her; "Never joke at a cripple's expense. Remember that all your life. You don't know how deeply such a person may be hurt."

Her sense of humour flowed from her ability to relate to others, her ability to love. One of the older Sisters in charge of the vegetable garden and of the hen run had boasted about one hundred chickens recently hatched. Mother was then absent or she would have been the first to congratulate her and admire her brood. Thanks to the Community grapevine, however, she

soon learnt of the happy event and of the 'tragedy' that followed. (The chickens had eventually all sickened and died.) Sister was in for a lot of goodnatured teasing. When Delia returned from a rather prolonged journey, she met the "afflicted one" on her way to the garden. What was not the latter's surprise when she heard herself gravely addressed as follows, "Dear Sister, I offer you my heartfelt sympathy..." At first she was nonplussed. Then she saw the twinkle in the wise old eyes and she could not help laughing at her own discomfiture.

Once Delia came upon a novice who was upset because she had broken a dish. "Why worry?" she asked. "You'll never break that same dish again! Don't fret about such trivial happenings..." She sent the novice away more inclined to laugh at her blunder than to worry.

On one of her visits to our Quebec convent in 1928, she had a bad fall and broke a shoulder. While she was hospitalized, after the accident, she suffered a great deal from the injured limb, but her visitors found her always in a cheerful mood. A priest who knew her well, called one day. She was sitting up with her arm in traction. Her face was lined with suffering, but she gave him a welcoming smile. "How are you feeling?" he inquired. She answered in a bantering tone, "With my arm up like

this, I feel like a police officer holding up traffic!" Although often beset by illness and trials of all kinds, she was never found lacking in kindly humour.

Convinced that joy was what was most lacking in this world of ours, she assigned her daughters to distant mission fields as messengers of joy. The word crops up hundreds of times in her letters to her Sisters. "Joy is an homage to divine goodness... Joy is the sister of gratitude... Joy causes the flowers of all virtues to bloom in our hearts. A missionary must be a joyful person... What sweeter joy can there be than to try to make those we live with happy... Take the resolution of scattering alms of joy everywhere you go, each and every day..."

Delia fully understood the significance of joy and humour, a treasure which seems to have been all but forgotten in the course of daily living. Our era has been called "the era of lost laughter". It seems as if the precious gift of humour is fast disappearing. The German mystic Eckhart once explained the importance of laughter in a theological manner. "Laughter," he affirmed, "is the smile of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity." The happy smiles of Christians are a reflexion of this godly smile. Through laughter and humour, Christians advance closer to God and at the same time spread his joyfulness everywhere.

I Have My Mission

God has created me to do him some definite service.

He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission — I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for nothing. I shall be good, I shall do his work. Therefore, I will trust him, whatever, wherever I am, I cannot be thrown away.

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him.

He does nothing in vain; he knows what he is about.

He may take away my friends; he may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me — still he knows what he is about.

Cardinal Newman

ALWAYS READY

Sister Françoise Pageau entered our Community in 1947 and was assigned to our missions in Zambia, Central Africa, in 1954. It did not take long for her to literally fall in love with her African mission. Her work consisted chiefly in pastoral animation and in teaching the young. Having greatly benefited by the Scout movement, in her homeland, she was eager to share these benefits with her students. She inaugurated the Girl Guides in Zambia, and had the honour of being decorated by Lady Baden Powell in person. During twenty-three years, she realized her motto, "Always ready!" Ready to help anyone in need of her services, ready to spread the Gospel message far and wide...

In 1976, upon her return to Canada on home leave, the doctors diagnosed a malignant tumour for which she underwent surgery. In the early days of 1977, she judged herself sufficiently recovered to return to her beloved mission. Notwithstanding her strong desire to go back, she was ready to bide by the doctor's advice which, to her, would be a manifestation of God's will. After a conscientious checkup, the surgeon gave his assent and she gladly left for Zambia in mid-January 1977.

A few months later, she wrote to the members of her family, "I have gone to a European specialist, in the capital, who took X Rays and made a thorough examination. He assures me that I am in fine shape. Thank the Lord with me. I had hoped for this happy result." However, in June 1977, she had to admit she felt her strength declining. Alarmed, the superiors urged her to take a complete rest at a neighbouring mission post. Apparently, at this date, Sr. Françoise still did not realize that the old enemy was at work again, and that she was nearing the end of the road.

On July 6, she wrote to her sister Pauline, also a M.I.C. Sister, what was to be her last letter: "I have come for a rest at Chikungu where the climate is milder. A certain nerve in my neck is getting more and more painful... But there is really no need to worry as it probably is only a twinge of rheumatism. The X Rays taken recently show nothing wrong. I'm hoping to go to Lusaka to greet Sr. Jeannine Forcier who is coming on a visitation of our African missions..."

Sr. Jeannine was struck by the look of utter exhaustion on Sister's face, and advised her to consult immediately the specialist whom she had formerly consulted in the capital. The verdict this once was fatal. Cancer was spreading so fast that the doctor himself was surprised. "There is nothing we can do for you here," he told Sister who insisted on knowing the truth. "Go back to Canada as soon as you can."

She bowed to God's will and returned to the homeland where she arrived late in July. During the first few days, she was able to sit up to greet the members of her family who visited her. She spoke of her approaching end with serenity as of a journey we must all take at one time or another. To two of her sisters who had been unable to come on account of their own serious illness, she sent affectionate regards. Pauline, her M.I.C. sister, was at her side almost night and day, trying to bring her relief, surrounding her with delicate attentions. During the last few days, she seemed to be drifting into another world, although she was not completely unconscious. Sr. Pauline spent the afternoon of August 7 at her side. Towards evening, it became clear that life was ebbing fast. When a group of Sisters gathered around the room to sing the *Salve Regina*, one of Françoise's favourite hymns, she suddenly opened her eyes wide and seemed to contemplate a radiant vision. A final gasp and her soul flew like an arrow to the target — Christ Jesus her beloved Spouse.

The following lines penned by one of her African friends tell how deeply she was cherished by the people of her adopted country.

There is a city with foundations
Just beyond the sunset glow,
With pearly gates and walls of jasper,
Where the ransomed
Wear garments whiter than snow.
Its paving stones are made of purest gold.
Sr. Françoise is awaiting Regina
Lukwanda's coming.
I'll miss you for a while. Then we'll greet.
Each other once more. I shall hear your voice.
I shall shake your hand and respond to your smile.
We will praise the Lord together.
As we gather at his feet
Our eyes will only see his lovely Face.
Rest in peace, my precious loving Sister Françoise.
Distance will never part us.
I'll someday come and see where your body rests.
I'll remember the three Hail Marys.
I'll keep the rosary with maximum care.
O my God, I don't understand
Why it had to happen
To you especially, dear Françoise...
Till we meet in God's bosom.

Regina

* * *

Sr. Françoise, Amayi Franceska to her African friends, will long be remembered in the hearts of the people she loved so well. The Christians of Chipata, where she worked for several years, have decided to give her name to a new Christian community recently established. It will be called the Franceska Parish.



Sister Françoise with her African friends.

JAPAN

Out of the Mouth of Babes

The following nuggets of wisdom were all provided by little non-Christian pupils — between the ages of five and nine — who attend our Wakamatsu primary school. Some of these reflections will make you smile; others will doubtless render you thoughtful and fill you with admiration for the work of the Holy Spirit in these souls instinctively reaching out for Truth.



A Japanese Sister was telling the story of Christmas to her pupils of the first grade. Unfortunately, she had chosen to illustrate her lesson a foreign style picture with fair curly-haired angels, clustering around the Crib. "Why is their hair so pale and drab?" a little girl wanted to know. "Don't they

have vitamins in heaven?" Another piped, "They don't seem to have any combs either... Their hair is a mess!" Then a quiet child solemnly asked, "Sister, aren't there any Japanese angels in heaven?"

During recess one day the children engaged in a lively discussion. "What is God's favourite colour?" Opinions varied widely. One urged it must be blue

since the sky and the sea are of that colour. Another insisted it must be green. "Look at the grass, the plants, the trees which are of that colour..." The argument was finally clinched by a pupil declaring, "Of course it's blue. Why else should God have bought a blue sash for his mother?" (All the children had seen

the statue of our Lady with a blue sash).

A worried look on her pretty face, a little girl once confided, "Sister, Papa says our life is like a lighted candle. Once the wax melts down and the light goes out, there's nothing more to it..." Sister gently explained that at the moment of death, God joined the flickering flame of our life to his own great flaming candle and it would then go on shining forever. The child heaved a sigh of relief. "How happy Papa will be when I tell him about this..."

Lively, fun-loving Taro suddenly stood in front of Sister, his arms opened wide. With sparkling eyes, he burst out, "Sister, tell me why are we *alive*?" For him to be alive, to be able to see, to speak, to walk was truly a miracle.

Hanako was perplexed. She asked her teacher pointblank: "Are you a Japanese or a foreigner?" Amused, Sister bantered, "I'm half of both since I spent 25 years in Canada and 25 in Japan." The little girl seemed relieved. "Now I understand why you can speak Japanese, although you have blue eyes..."

The class had prayed hard for a fine day on which to have their class picnic. But when morning came, rainy and windy, they were all downcast until a bright little boy remarked: "Look... In heaven, things must go on just as they do on earth... At home, when Papa says 'No', it's 'No'! God probably had other things on his mind this morning..."

A Sister had arranged a "prayer corner" in her classroom... One day she noticed a little girl kneeling, deeply absorbed, in front of our Lady's statue. "I suppose you had lots to tell the Blessed Mother," she asked when the child finally rose. "Well, you know, Sister, it will soon be Mother's Day. I was just consulting our Lady on what gift I should offer Mamma..."

The following verses were written by eight-year-old non-Christian children in our primary school:
Jesus was born in a cold, bare stable...
Outside, a light snow gently fell.
It surely heard the angels
Telling of Jesus' birth.
If I had been the snow,
I also would have softly slipped down
From heaven to peek at Baby Jesus...
O Jesus, where are you?
You must surely be in heaven.
I would like to meet you, at least once.
Tell me, how does one get there?

Mission Intentions of the Apostleship of Prayer for 1979

JANUARY —

That the efforts of Christians for the welfare of children be everywhere recognized, promoted, and improved.

FEBRUARY —

That the Church in Uganda, one century after the arrival of its first missionaries, make progress in the work of evangelization.

MARCH —

That missionaries who have had to withdraw from direct work because of age, health, or other reasons continue nonetheless to fulfill their missionary vocation.

APRIL —

For the Church in Southeast Asia.

MAY —

That in Africa and Asia the role of mass media in the service of evangelization be solidly established.

JUNE —

That God lead members of young Churches to missionary vocations as priests, religious, and laity.

JULY —

That Christian youth in India, especially those belonging to tribal communities, lay the foundations for a vigorous life of faith, even when they are confronted with an urban life permeated by consumerist values.

AUGUST —

That family life in Africa be inspired by Christian principles.

SEPTEMBER —

For the Church in Papua New Guinea.

OCTOBER —

That a vigorous missionary spirit be nourished by catechists in children, youths, and adults.

NOVEMBER —

That in Latin America a continuing missionary formation be promoted among both priests and people.

DECEMBER —

That through the intercession of Saint Francis Xavier the Church be renewed and flourish among all Chinese communities.

MISSION BRIEFS

TAIWAN

Two new Taiwanese novices began their noviceship in a simple ceremony held in Taipei. They are at present in Kwansi. In the course of this year, they will help part-time with the teaching of catechetics in the parish, although they will not be regular members of the pastoral team. The most important thing for them just now is their initiation into the religious life. So far, our two novices are enjoying what they pleasantly call their "desert" experience. Being city girls both find Kwansi a sort of desert compared to the Taipei hectic scene. They will devote several hours each day to the study of English, the common language adopted in Asia for communications between the various groups of M.I.C. Sisters. Until now, either Mandarin or French was used on the provincial level. Neither language proved very practical as our Sisters in Hong Kong do not speak Mandarin. Therefore, the best way to solve the problem was to adopt English for all our Sisters, and to drop Mandarin and French except on the day-to-day community level. Our Taiwanese Sisters will have to take time off to learn English in order to communicate with their Sisters in Asia.

LIMA, Peru

Graduates of Maria Providencia High School have selected the picture of Delia Tetreault as their mascot. A few girls even had her photograph with veil and guimp, printed on the back of their blouses according to a prevalent fashionable trend!

CATAVI, Bolivia

Mgr. Bernardino Reveras lately conferred the sacrament of Confirmation on fifty young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-two. For several days beforehand, they were given a series of intensive instructions in order to prepare for this great event in their lives as Christians. The following testimony was given by one of the participants: "Right from the start, I realized that being a dynamic Christian was not easy... I came to understand more clearly my most serious obligations. From this moment, my conversion was initiated, an event which I consider an important milestone in my

life. Before receiving instructions, I did not have the courage to forgive. Now I know that forgiveness must come from the depths of one's heart. That is why I feel ready to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. I believe in Christ Jesus and I want to let the Holy Spirit inspire me in my daily life."

KATETE, Malawi

January 21, National Planting Day in Malawi, was established three years ago. On the given day, each person is asked to plant a tree so as to participate in developing and beautifying the country. In Katete, the Minister, Mr. R. Chirwa, presided the ceremony in the name of the President. The gathering was made up of heads of villages, teachers, students, and hundreds of other persons. After several talks stressing the need of preservation of the soil, each person planted a sapling at a spot indicated beforehand. Songs and dances brought the rural ceremony to a close. In a letter to S. Marguerite Legault, M.I.C., Minister Chirwa stated that so far 2,946 trees had been planted.

ESPINAR, Peru

The Espinar region is waking up! It all began with a two-day strike staged by the farmers. Their aim: 1 - to protest against the rising costs of life while the selling prices of their products remain the same; 2 - to request more reasonable prices for their products. Sentinels were posted at the entrance of villages to prevent people from bringing in their wares. This move proved to be quite an eye-opener to exploiters who whispered among themselves: "The farmers are no longer what they used to be. They now seem to know their own rights and are not afraid to stand up for them..."

TROU DU NORD, Haiti

Sister Madeleine Bolduc relates an apostolic jaunt which brought her deep-felt joy. A decision had recently been taken to visit the remote outpost of a catechist stationed in Akulkoni. Sister left early one morning with Gracia Auguste, another catechist. Riding their bicycles at a moderate pace, they reached the point where the road peters out into a crooked trail that can only be tackled on foot. Both were pleasantly

surprised when they met a group of about forty young people coming forward to meet them. A few minutes later, groups of children and adults joined in giving them a hearty welcome. The evening celebration and prayer sharing unfolded in a spirit of joyful participation. These people had never had the visit of a priest nor of Sisters. They have to walk miles in order to occasionally attend Mass.

MONTREAL, Canada

Sr. Charlotte Duhamel has got a brand-new assignment! Sister's work consists in teaching immigrants. One day, as she was passing by St. Catherine Street, at the corner of Union Street, she heard someone calling out her name. She turned and realized the call came from a woman who held the corner newspaper stand. "Sister, I wonder if you would replace me for a few minutes so I can warm up a bit..." It was a nippy winter day. Sister was glad to oblige. Encouraged by her obligingness, the woman repeated her request fifteen days later. So, Sr. Charlotte kept on selling the Star, the Devoir, etc. etc. Upon her return, the woman thanked her with a warm hug and a hearty kiss. Mother Foundress must surely have been pleased with Sr. Charlotte's good deed. Had she not herself taken care of little newsboys in the years before the foundation? Sister was simply going back to her "Roots" by doing this good turn.

In Our Mail Box

The following are excerpts of letters from committed Christians in a socialistic society: A wife and mother writes, "During morning prayers, I called to mind all my brother Christians who are going through a crisis. I begged the Lord to teach my husband and me how we should behave in this town, so as to radiate the light of the Gospel, and how to help our children do the same."

From the pen of a young university student: "When I am alone I have deep thoughts. It seems to me that I am really not the one who does the thinking, but that there is Someone who thinks in me. For a long time, this proved a real mystery. Now, I find the experience strangely helpful. For instance, I'm no longer afraid of letting them know that I am a Christian. Thank you for introducing me to that wonderful book — the Bible. Thank you for including me in your prayer groups. They are a precious preparation to life as it should be lived."

Come to Katete!

by Marie Marthe Terrien, M.I.C.

My gratitude goes out to all of you who remain so faithfully interested in our apostolate. Prayer is the bond which unites us, wherever we may be, and this spurs us to bring the Good News to as many people as possible.

In Katete, our missionary activities are more numerous than elsewhere. This was our very first African mission, founded over thirty years ago. Baptized Christians are more numerous and better equipped to help their fellowmen as catechists in the outstations, as well as at the mission itself which extends over a radius of fifty miles.

The climate of Katete is mild, compared to that of other regions. Even during the hottest months — October, November, December, and January — we always enjoy a refreshing breeze. True, the winds can at times grow fierce enough to blow off flimsy roofs, but we have no real tornados as in other parts of Africa. The weather becomes colder in May, June, July, and even August, although we never have snow and the ground never freezes. However, as the houses are not heated, we have to wear woolens. This is the time when poverty really pinches. The people shiver in their all too scanty clothing. We try to help them as much as we can, exchanging warm clothing or blankets in return for firewood, maize, groundnuts, eggs, etc.

Catechetical activities take up most of our time. For my part, I am very happy to prepare adults and children for baptism and first communion. We usually try to have these ceremonies held on feast days, at Pentecost and at Christmas more especially. This is the type of work I have performed for several years past and of which I never grow weary. I consider it a privilege to help these good people prepare to receive their Lord for the first time.

One of my other tasks is to teach the native language to our tyro missionaries. After I have taught the basics to the best of my ability, I rely on practice to enable them pick up genuine

idiomatic expressions from the Africans themselves.

Other groups of M.I.C. Sisters take a hand in pastoral work, collaborating with the African Rosarian Sisters. Some travel to out-stations spending a few days at each place, catechizing adults, distributing Holy Communion, giving assistance to the poor, etc.

Our Sacred Heart Hospital is really a Health Centre comprising dispensary and maternity units along with two prenatal and 0-5 clinics. The government of Malawi encourages this sort of preventive medicine which helps decrease the death rate, especially among children. The M.I.C. Sisters are in charge, helped by African nurses, midwives, and auxiliaries. All show generous devotedness to their task of caring for the sick.

Another of our Sisters conducts a Domestic Science School where women and girls can learn sewing, mending, housekeeping, hygiene, etc. In this field as well as in many others, the government helps by establishing many such domestic science centres, thus raising the women's standard of living. At the Teachers Training College, the M.I.C. Sisters teach an average of 120



Sister Marie Marthe Terrien is happy in her tasks as missionary in Malawi.

young men and women, preparing them for their task as educators.

Organized here in the early years of our apostolate, the Legion of Mary is flourishing. Africans have a deep love for the Mother of God. During the months of May and October the rosary is prayed every day. Another movement for women called "The Women of Charity" resembles the Legion. Its members visit the destitute, comfort the sick and the dying, help people in tight spots, etc. I could go on and on describing our wonderful missionary life but time is lacking. Come and see for yourselves. You will be heartily welcome.

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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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