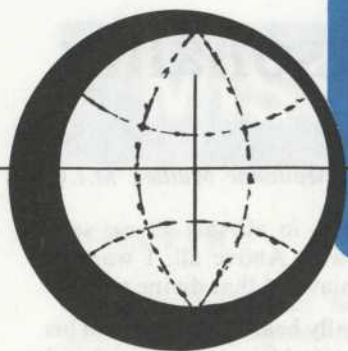




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KATETE, MALAWI, C.A.

Devotion to Mary in Africa

by Marguerite Legault, M.I.C.

Africans cherish a deep love and veneration for our Blessed Mother. The Legion of Mary established several years ago in Katete, our first mission in Africa, is still flourishing. Every year, during the months of May and October, the Legionaries see to it that our Lady's statue is carried from house to house to be honoured by each Christian family in turn. They organize meetings during which the Rosary is prayed, and Marian hymns are sung. This is a sure way of drawing down God's blessing on Katete's Christian families.

The Assumption, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, and of the Immaculate Conception are celebrated with great fervour. On the feastdays, the Marian hour which precedes the Eucharistic celebration is always well attended. On several occasions, processions to the grotto, at a distance of

about one mile, are organized in honour of Mary. This grotto set up against the background of wooded hills is a favourite haunt for Christians and catechumens alike. We often see women kneeling before the statue of our Lady, a bundle of firewood balanced on their heads. They have paused for a short prayer on their way home. The children love to scatter wild flowers all around the grotto. They often deck the statue with a necklace of wild roses or of fragrant violets.

For their part, the men keep the grounds free from the ever encroaching bush. Everyone likes to do his or her share to honour the Mother of Christ. The Christians have built this grotto on their own initiative and they love it all the more as a prayerful haven of peace and solitude.



For the people around here the grotto is a prayerful haven of peace and solitude.

Photo credit: Pawek



Happy Mother's Day!



Happy Father's Day!

Facets of Delia Tetreault's Personality

Submission to God's Will

by Madeline Maillet, M.I.C.

Loving and unconditional submission to God's will manifested through persons or events was the keynote of Delia's personality. Nothing else mattered to her. So much so, that she could write in a personal note, towards the close of 1901, "My dear Master, I surrender myself entirely to your divine will. Lead me wherever you will. Give me life or give me death, but do not refuse to grant me your love... To love you, never to offend you, this is the sum of all my desires."

Like many another founder or foundress of religious communities, she did not at first understand exactly God's plan upon her life. We find in a personal notebook, kept in the year 1903, the following prayer: "My God, what is it you really want us to do?" She had recently opened an apostolic school attended by an increasing number of students. To this work she refers as follows, "Do you merely desire the establishment of this school or do you want us to become a regular religious Community? Uproot all that might prove an obstacle in the accomplishment of your will. I feel certain that whatever you allow to happen will be for the best."

In the autumn of 1904, the little family of Cote des Neiges met with a heavy trial. On November 20, God summoned to his eternal reward the priest who, to all appearances, was destined to be a pillar of strength for Delia and her companions. Reverend Gustave Bourassa, entrusted with their direction by Archbishop Bruchesi, suffered a fatal accident. His death deprived the budding Community of its chief support. The desolation of the foundress and her companions can easily be imagined. Might not the untimely passing of their protector signify the collapse of all their hopes? Delia had so often begged the Lord to cut, to uproot... Evidently, she had been taken at her word. But even in this trial she recognized the harmony of his plan and firmly hoped that from death life would spring, full of promise.

Shortly afterwards, Archbishop Bruchesi on a visit to Rome, presented Pope Pius X documents relating to the foundation which Father Gustave Bourassa had carefully elaborated. In

presenting them, the Archbishop remarked, "The priest who fostered this undertaking has just passed away. I am perfectly indifferent with regard to the foundation. Whatever you decide, I will accept as the manifestation of God's will in this regard." Immediately, without having recourse to the usual procedure, the Pope declared, "Let this Work be established. Celestial blessings will descend upon this new Institute which will be called 'Society of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception'."

Later, referring to this momentous occasion, a Sister remarked, "Mother, how anxious you must have been not knowing what the Pope's decision would be." But Delia replied, "I was not worried. Having placed the issue in God's hands I never doubted of the outcome. He had already granted me so many graces..."

While she elaborated various enterprises at home and abroad, she continued to be haunted by another requirement of God's will. Even as a young girl she had glimpsed the pattern of her vocation as enfolding a double purpose: The foundation of a missionary congregation for women and the promotion of a similar society for men. From her writings and from scraps of remembered conversations with the Sisters, it appears that the inner Voice urging the opening of a Foreign Mission Seminary had become more insistent towards the year 1912. But long before this date, such a foundation was the object of her constant and prayerful solicitude. In notes dated as far back as 1901, we find the following prayer: "Dear heavenly Mother, I offer you my daily Rosary and the little that is mine to do and suffer in order to obtain through your powerful intercession the establishment of the two Works... a passionate attachment to divine will, and an unswerving trust in divine Providence..."

Gleanings from her personal notes and those of her first companions, allow us to follow her search for God's will, through the setbacks and incomprehensions of the twenty years during which she pursued the realization of her project. In 1913 she wrote, "I feel urged to promote the development of our Congregation and to foster the *other*

Society... But, in all this let me seek only God's will. Above all, I want to become the slave of that divine will..."

God finally heard the prayers of his zealous servant. After years of trial and error, the *other Society* was established. On February 2, 1921, the Archbishops and Bishops of the Province of Quebec unanimously decreed the founding of a Canadian Foreign Mission Seminary. A large tract of land was purchased at Pont Viau, in the vicinity of Montreal, as the site of the Seminary buildings.

"To work with all my strength at the foundation of a Foreign Mission Seminary appears to me as the complement of my vocation," Delia had written in 1914. Now that her plan had been realized, this great and truly humble woman sought nothing more ardently than to withdraw into hidden life. She bade the Sisters to keep strictly silent regarding the role she had played in this latter foundation. Enough for her that she had been instrumental in bringing about this project to fruition, according to the designs of God's will.

In proportion to her self-annihilation, her work both at home and in the mission field afar continued to be blessed with a remarkable expansion. Archbishop Bruchesi could write in 1938, "To my knowledge, no other community has, within the space of a few short years, flourished so much as your missionary Institute." The equally rapid development of the Foreign Mission Seminary caused her to magnify the Lord who had willed to make her his instrument. Scores of young men from all over the province were drawn to this apostolic training centre, eager to cooperate in the Church's missionary endeavour.

Meantime, these years of intense activity had taken their toll on her frail constitution. The first symptoms of a serious decline appeared in 1936. In spite of her heroic efforts to keep on with the task, she was forced to take to her bed on September 28. Her condition rapidly deteriorated. She received the sacrament of the sick with her habitual serenity and loving submission to the will of God.

After this touching ceremony, the Assistant General gently urged her to

ask God to cure her. So much remained to be done. The Society needed her presence for many more years... Such were the arguments advanced. But, true to the tenor of her whole life, Delia replied "I cannot do such a thing. God's holy will... his holy will... If he wants to take me Home, let him come... I am ready."

But several painful bedridden years were to pass before the Lord beckoned his faithful servant Home. She accepted her apparent inactivity as she had accepted her labour-filled years, with childlike submission to God's will. One last act of detachment required of her generous soul was the transfer from the old Mother House in Outremont to the new Mother House at Cote des Neiges. Hearing her companions joyfully discussing the advantages of the new site, she had suddenly unburdened her heart, "How I apprehend moving into the new house... I shall die there..." But, this was the only sign she gave of her inner struggle. When the Assistant suggested waiting for a few weeks, she quickly replied, "No, no... Right away." As always she would brook no delay once God's will was clearly manifested.

One last episode in the life of Delia will stress her loving and courageous submission to God's will. On a hot summer day, the nurse had momentarily lifted her to a sitting position on the far edge of her bed in order to ease her aching back. The patient suddenly experienced a spell of dizziness and before anyone could reach her, fell headlong on the hard floor. A Sister who visited her a few days later, found her in a pitiful condition, unable to make even the slightest movement unaided. Stirred with compassion, she suggested, "Mother, why don't you ask our Lord to give you some relief?" Delia replied with surprising energy in one so spent, "No, no. Our blessed Lord had no relief when he was nailed to the Cross..." The nurse remarked, "Mother probably fears to go against God's will if she asked for relief..." The visiting Sister intent on discovering the spiritual riches enshrined in the heart of the foundress boldly pressed her point, "Mother, something tells me you have made the vow of always seeking the will of God in all things and then of accomplishing it at all costs..." A meaningful smile and a nod were the only answer.

The will of God — this was indeed the lodestar lighting up the way for the noblehearted woman to whom Canada owes two Foreign Mission Societies.

YAURI, PERU

by Agnes Bouchard, M.I.C.

Devotion to the Cross

The people of the province of Espinar manifest deep devotion to the cross. At short intervals along the roads leading to villages or towns, large rustic crosses can be seen. During the first two weeks of May these crosses are decked with bright artificial flowers. People come to Mass carrying smaller ones and return home still carrying them, in a recollected mood.

At first, I was puzzled by their behaviour and somehow inclined to believe that this devotion might hide some sort of ancient superstitious belief. However, the people explained that for them what they call the festival of the cross is a festival of love and thanksgiving. They believe that Christ is somehow present in the cross. This is why they treat it with the greatest reverence, carrying it along the way, thanking the Saviour for saving them through it.

Our people firmly believe that it is a safeguard against thunder and lightning. According to them, it works miracles, rewards good deeds, and punishes evil deeds. They expect it to protect their flocks, to favour plentiful harvests. Many weddings are held in the first two weeks of May, because the cross is supposed to ensure harmony between couples.

After much research, I have found out a legend behind this May festival. A man called Juan Tenouo was caught in adultery and doomed to eternal

damnation. One dark night, he made up his mind to flee the scene of his misdeed. He was hastening along a narrow winding path when he came face to face with a cross circled by a sort of burning bush. Terrified, the poor man threw his arms around the blessed symbol. Just then, a thundering voice hailed him severely, "Juan, you must die and be buried in hell fire." But Juan clung all the more to the cross as to an anchor of salvation. His faith and repentance were rewarded. The sinister flames disappeared, and he was saved. I relate this legend just as it was related to me by the people of Yauri.

It reminds me of other ancient legends of other lands about the cross. As a symbol it dates back to unknown antiquity. Before the Christian era, Buddhists, Brahmans, and Druids utilized the device. Egyptians held it in reverence. We find it engraved on the tiles of old mansion roofs in southern Japan. Indeed, God has organized the world in such a manner that there is very little we can do without its intervention. Have you ever noticed how the wings of birds in flight trace this blessed sign? So does the man who swims. It also symbolizes the four winds and the four directions. I leave you to make other discoveries of your own... The people of Yauri are wise in revering the cross of Christ which in its length points to heaven and earth, reconciling both, and in its breadth to former and following ages as being salvation to both.

HAITI

by Rachel Blanchette, M.I.C.

Forgive as we Forgive

Mesure l'Homme Mesure (man's name) arrived at the Refuge one day in a pitiful state. For some time past he had been suffering from painful ulcers on his legs. However, he stubbornly held on to his tiny plot of land, his three pigs, and his docile little donkey. According to Haitian countryside standards, he was a man of substance, and was reluctant to leave his "fortune" in the hands of others.

Eventually, his illness drove him almost frantic. He then made up his mind to seek remedies and care at *La Charité S'il Vous Plait*, a place where he was sure to receive needed medical assistance. Before leaving home, however, he called his only brother in

and entrusted him with the upkeep of his little property. The brother solemnly promised to keep things in shape.

So it happened that Mesure l'Homme Mesure came to us asking to have his ulcers cured at once. This of course we could not promise, but we assured him he would receive the best of care. At first, he shied away from all religious ceremonies and instructions. Eventually, he joined his companions and took up again the practice of the faith he had long neglected.

This went on for a few months. Appropriate medication, tender loving care, and wholesome food improved his physical condition, without curing completely his long standing ills. He

Land of the Young

by Felicidad Dacayanan, M.I.C.

If Delia Tetreault were alive and in the Philippines today, how would she concretize her dream of soul harvests in this particular country? The whole world was given her Community as mission field. The Philippines is certainly a concrete part of this great field. Its contrasting realities would doubtless impel her to search for more effective means of apostolate.

The Philippines consist in a cluster of 7,100 islands and islets, 40 per cent of which are still unnamed, while only 730 are inhabited. The rich natural resources of the country should be sufficient to maintain its 80 million

could now walk about the grounds and help the inmates with light garden chores.

One fine day he decided to risk a trip to his home village to see how his brother was making out. He left full of cheerful anticipation. That very evening he was back at the refuge in a very dark mood. Soon, he poured out his sad story. His brother had refused to allow him into the house, saying that he was now the master, and that Measure had no right to butt in. "The rascal!" Measure shouted. "I'll never forgive him." And he cursed long and loud.

No matter what I said, he refused to listen to reason. Again, he began to shun prayer meetings. When I inquired why, he answered, "Sister, I cannot say the Our Father because I can never, never forget..."

I was in the garden one day, when I noticed Measure weeding a plot close to the life-size crucifixion group at the end of the central alley. He looked up as I approached. "Measure," I ventured. "Have you ever looked long and hard at the figure of Jesus crucified? He forgave his enemies although he had been more cruelly wronged than you could ever be. Can't you also forgive?"

He threw down his trowel and squatted in front of the crucified figure, his face contorted with grief. I prayed silently for I felt that a terrible struggle was going on in his heart. At last he burst into sobs and cried, "I forgive! Forgive me too dear Lord." He sobbed for a long time, then he rose and turning to me, "It's all over. It was the toughest fight of my life, but now I am at peace. May God forgive my brother as I forgive him."

people in comfort. (National Geographic Atlas, 1975, p. 120). In this archipelago live the Filipino people composed of 24 ethnic tribes; the 8 major groups comprising 91.6 per cent are broken up into the 16 ethnic tribes, traditionally considered uncivilized. Besides Filipino, the national language of the country, approximately 100 dialects and languages are spoken by the different ethnic groups.

From this socio-cultural and ecological context, a gigantic Filipino population is presently emerging. Available population statistics reveal that the country is contending with a present population of more than 43 million. The yearly birth rate is 3.2 per cent. Social scientists foresee some 90 million by the year 2000, while others boost the figure to 110 million. Moreover, they surmise that a great majority of these will be young.

At present, the Filipino population may be characterized as young and poor. Scientists state that the social structure is such that about 1 per cent belong to the upper classes, 29 per cent to the middle classes, and 70 per cent to the lower classes. Of the latter, about 60 per cent live in a state of destitution. Such a stratified social structure reveals a threatening situation.

A scrutiny of the age profile of the present 43 million Filipinos, provides us with the following facts. Only 1 per cent of the total population are 65 years old; 40 per cent are of school age; 49 per cent are below 15 years old. Youth undeniably dominates the Filipino population. Moreover, 65 per cent of the total youth group live in rural areas and 70 per cent belong to families rated "poor". Statistics show that 50 per cent of the children who are of school age are presently out of school; of these, 10 per cent never went to school; 40 per cent are drop-outs. Most of these out-of-school adolescents are between 18 and 23 years old. The majority are girls who, moreover, are unemployed. Drop-outs come from poor and practically illiterate families of 6, 8, 11, or 14 children. Many admit they have left school because they were disappointed with the irrelevance of the academic knowledge imparted. It really had no practical impact upon their everyday lives.

Studies on these youths show that they have low personal competence,

because they are aware that their social status is lower than that of the children attending school. Since they lack training, they are discriminated from those who are formally trained and from those who are economically affluent. Unable to find jobs, they feel unproductive and unwanted. This situation explains their frustration and apathy, as well as their inclination to loafing and thievery. These are not national traits of Filipino youth, but are rather the consequences of an unfair and unbalanced social structure.

The future of the Philippines is in the hands of its youth. Everyone concerned wants to do something to improve the situation. Schools and training centers are being put up. Unfortunately, as only those who are well-off benefit by these educational agencies, not more than 50 per cent of the young can be accommodated. How many people are really moved to dedicate themselves to the full development of these adults of tomorrow? Recently, Miss Irene Marcos, daughter of the President, has come out with a five-year National Vocational Preparation Programme for out-of-school children and adolescents in the 12 to 17 age group. Her programme is based on the rationale: "The government realizes its responsibility to uplift the situation of the vast number of out-of-school youth. It recognizes that the rising generation can help immeasurably in the progress of the country if given proper educational opportunities and employment".

Had these facts been unfolded and brought to the consciousness of Delia Tetreault, what conclusions would she have drawn? What kind of challenge would she have issued? What alternatives would she have offered for these millions of young Filipinos? Our country is not only young, it is also poor. How would Delia Tetreault respond to this situation, and manage to garner a harvest for God's Kingdom? Seeing the forces at work among these unfortunate out-of-school adolescents, what forms of apostolate would she have initiated in order to have them experience true Christian brotherhood? Filipino youth is a Christian challenge, a challenge to the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in general, and in particular to the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in this Land of the Young.

MISSION BRIEFS

LIMA PERU

Sister Constance was perplexed. School had just opened, and there were not enough chairs and desks or tables to go around. Frantic mothers besieged her, begging to have their own darling admitted. Finally, many were accommodated after parents had agreed to furnish desks and chairs, the school directress having no funds to provide any. There remained one disconsolate little lad left out because no extra chair could be found, his mother being too poor to provide any. Praying and mulling over the problem, Sr. Constance left her office. She went on her way, as usual after school hours, to carry Holy Communion to an aged incapacitated couple. In their humble home, four generations were crowded, plus relatives visiting Lima. Furniture was piled up, helter-skelter. After her visit to the old people, Sister chatted with the other members of the family. While they were discussing the troubled state of the country, Sister happened to mention how one little boy had no chair on which to sit in the schoolroom. One of the aunts jumped up and offered Sister a rather large chair. "It's not new," she apologized, "but it belonged to my late husband who painted it over nicely, some time before he died. I was keeping it in memory of him. It probably is too big for a child, but you might sell it and get a smaller one..." Sr. Constance was deeply touched by this kind and generous offer. The poor are always the first to help those poorer than themselves. On her way home, she sold the large chair and had enough left to buy a small one instead, with something left over for the poor mother. When she met the Sisters at the evening meal she related the incident and remarked, "this has given me food for meditation for several days to come..."

MADAGASCAR

For several months, a group of young aspirants to our Novitiate, had boarded with a neighbouring family, while attending courses at the convent. In mid-September, however, because of unforeseen circumstances, the family could no longer accommodate them. What to do? Our own quarters were

already crowded. We looked around searching for suitable lodgings but all in vain. Finally, someone suggested transforming a tool shed into habitable rooms. All the girls immediately set to work. The result — a neat new "home" consisting of two small rooms: sleeping quarters with three tiers of bunks, and a living room doubling up as dining room and study room. A mini kitchen was set up in an outhouse. Julienne Rasoarivelo, M.I.C., is in charge of the group. The girls are very proud of their new lodgings and happy to be able to keep on with their formation.

NAN AO, TAIWAN

Some time ago our hospital cook asked for time off to visit her family. Here is the reason she gave: "When I was 17, one of my baby sisters died. She was duly buried, in the usual manner. But, for some time past, she has been appearing to my parents, begging for clothes. She is all in rags and stands pitifully outside the house. According to our customs she cannot enter because she was never married. Now my parents want to make up to her. They have bought her new clothes and have burned them on her grave. But she keeps coming back. A husband must be found for her so she can rest in peace and be free to enter her home again as a married woman... My parents consulted a pagoda priest who cast lots. It so happened that the lot fell on one of my brothers-in-law as prospective bridegroom. Every preparation has been made for a splendid wedding. Furniture, bedding, food have been bought. We will have a banquet. The basket containing my late sister's remains will be taken home. On the evening of the banquet my brother-in-law will not sleep with my sister but with the ghostly 'bride'. Thus her ghost will have been laid and the family will be left in peace..." Other countries, other ways!

HONG KONG

Our MIC family has been handed a precious new gift: the Interprovincial Formation Centre organized in Hong Kong. This long-cherished dream has at last become a reality. With prayerful

hope we look down the vista of the years trusting in the Lord, "Prime Builder", to complete the work. A small MIC family finally gathered within the walls of the new centre on August 25.

A prayer service, welcome songs and greetings, and the cutting of ribbons by Sisters Aline, Nicole, and Asuncion ushered in our community life. Each member gladly assumed her share of responsibilities. Talents and gifts were generously invested in a spirit of trust and friendship.

KANYANGA, ZAMBIA

Out of a population of 45,000 inhabitants only 469 are at present Catholics. The mission covers an area of eighty miles, lengthwise, which means that the majority of the people live in bush villages. Over two hundred patients daily visit the clinic at our hospital. The most common ailments here are malaria, tropical ulcers, and worms caused by drinking polluted water or by malnutrition. A good number of lepers, live in separate villages. They come to the hospital once a month for a checkup and medication. Although no longer considered contagious, they are kept apart, no doubt because of the disagreeable appearance of their skin. We treat them always with utmost consideration and tender comprehension. The same goes for our TB patients.

Noella Frechette, M.I.C.

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CHILOE, CHILE

The Church in Chiloe

by Marie Paule Charbonneau, M.I.C.

The first team of M.I.C. Sisters arrived in Ancud, capital of the Island of Chiloe, on January 27, 1963. Their initial missionary activities consisted in the organization of primary and secondary courses and of a boarding school for girls called Immaculate Conception College. The latter was kept going for five years, until the decreasing number of students and the lack of government subsidies forced its closure, in December 1967.

From this time onward the Sisters' apostolate took a different course. A glance at the interior situation of the Island will throw light on the missionary tasks now assumed by our Sisters. The city of Ancud is not only the capital, but the seat of a vast bishopric extending over part of the mainland. Chiloe's main problem is emigration. Its youth, unable to forge a bright enough future on their native island, tend to emigrate to the mainland. This problem affects not merely those who leave but also those who remain behind. The whole family pattern is thereby disrupted. The head of the Church in Chiloe, Mgr Juan Luis Ysern, has set up a commission in order to cope with the needs of these emigrants. Sister Veronique Boudreau, M.I.C. is coordinator of the said commission. People may come to her office for needed information on Argentina where most of the emigrants go or on any other nearby country. She also contacts the dioceses where these persons wish to emigrate, so that they may not feel "lost" upon their arrival in new and often indifferent surroundings.

This is but one of the various activities assumed by the M.I.C. team in Chiloe. Another very important one is family catechesis. The aim of this work is to penetrate in the family, the core of

society, and to reawaken its members to their responsibility as dynamic Christians. To meet this challenge, we are training leaders of small basic communities. These will replace effectively the former *fiscal*, catechists who used to operate under Spanish rule. After the declaration of independence, they gradually disappeared from the scene. The formation of dynamic leaders is a priority of the local Church. Of the twenty-four churches, a mere eleven have a resident pastor. The other parishes and the 150 rural chapels are visited once a month; the remotest islands, scattered over the archipelago, may meet with a priest or a group of missionaries only once a year. Hence, the dire need of well-trained lay apostles.

Parents are encouraged to undertake the preparation of their children for First Communion. Until now, they have relied too much on the school teachers to perform this important task.

The young are organized into groups which participate in various parish activities. Thus, the whole family is called upon to take part in evangelization.

Another of our works of apostolate in Chiloe is teaching catechesis in a Catholic college. One Sister also has a counselling office. This is an important means of reaching out to the young and helping them in their search for truth and happiness.

These various apostolic tasks are more or less easy to perform in urban areas. But, like the great apostle Paul, if we want to reach the remotest spots of the diocese, we have to be in "journeynings often". Not on luxury liners, of that you may be sure. Chiloe being an island, we have to cope with the antics of a turbulent sea, in crude open boats. It often takes hours to cross coastal waters and reach one of the inhabited islands. We are fortunate when it does not rain and when the wind is not too high. These trips have to be taken every month to one or other spot of the diocese of Ancud. Our bishop often accompanies us on this journey for he insists on making regular rounds of his vast diocese. We rely on you, dear readers, to help us spread the Glad Tidings far and wide all over the Chiloe Archipelago.

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