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MIC

MISSION NEWS



JAPAN

Year-end Customs

The biggest annual event for the Japanese is New Year's Day. After the middle of December the people become more and more excited about the approach of New Year's Day and begin preparing. They are careful to complete any unfinished business before the new year approaches. Everyone gets busy sorting out personal belongings, paying accounts, completing social formalities, and shopping in preparation for approaching midwinter. Just as people in the west exchange Christmas cards, the Japanese exchange New Year cards. Writing these is regarded as the most important job to be completed towards the end of the year.

Perhaps the busiest day is the 31st of December. Preparing traditional New Year's dishes and delicacies, cleaning house and garden, furnishing rooms with New Year decorations, arranging best clothes for New Year's Day keep everyone busy. In the evening of the last day of the year, when all the domestic work is finished, the entire family relaxes.

It is a widely followed custom to eat *Toshikoshisoba* or buckwheat noodles on New Year's Eve. This gesture is meant as a plea for the well-being and long life of all members of the family.

The year-end Grand Musical Parade broadcast by NHK television and radio is a spectacular musical show including all the leading popular singers. It takes place at NHK Hall, in Shibuya, Tokyo, and is regarded by the Japanese as an indispensable part of the New Year's Eve Celebrations. Barely has this gala music festival come to an end with its grand finale, when you hear the solemn melodious sound of bells being tolled at Buddhist temples. The bells are struck on New Year's Eve to ring out the old year, and to pray for the removal of evil passions from everyone's heart.

Apart from these general year-end customs, various other customs, peculiar to each district, have been observed for

many centuries. One example is the Namahage festival observed in Oga peninsula, in Akita Prefecture. On December 31st, a group of young people wearing ogre masks, gather at the Akagami Shrine. After a ceremony in which the shrine priest prays before a bonfire, the young people visit the homes of villagers. Shod in straw-sandals, with bells around their waists, they knock on the doors,

saying, "Is there any wicked person in this house?" Even though they wear grotesque masks, strange enough to frighten almost anyone, they are welcomed into every house where they pray before the family altar. Then they are offered refreshments before they leave and go on their way.

Condensed from Radio Japan News



新年おめでとう

HAPPY NEW YEAR

CHILDREN OF OUR LAND

Loving Messages

The children of Vancouver send the following messages to the children of our M.I.C. missions in 15 countries of the world:

- God bless you to eternity!
- I'm glad the girls are being educated.
- How do you like living where you are?
- God has faith in you, children afar.
- We wish you a good life.
- God loves you.
- We're glad you have Jesus for your friend.
- It's nice to see children of the world.
- I like the mountains, the huts, and the animals in Africa.

Contributed by: Sr. Adeline Mead, M.I.C.

A little boy of Trois Rivières, Canada, wrote to Bishop Laurent Noel about the sacrament of Confirmation he hoped to receive: Dear Laurent Noel, my name is Steve. I'm sure you know me. If not, here is a hint. Do you remember six years ago when you came to Marielle's kinder-

garten? I was the curly-headed boy standing beside Luke and Yves... I do hope you remember them and me more especially. Of course I want to be confirmed because I want to come closer to our Lord. Dear Mgr. Laurent Noel, thanks a lot in advance.

(signed) Steve

Always a Missionary!

Sister Odile Malboeuf, M.I.C. visits a class of sixth graders in Jacques Cartier School, Chelmsford, Ontario. Upraised hands tell how eager these children are to hear about the missions. Sister met over 2,723 pupils during her tour of this region. "Always a missionary" seems to be her slogan. Born in Sudbury in 1907, Sister entered the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Montreal, in 1929. She spent forty-four years as a missionary in Manchuria, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and continues her apostolate among the young, with dynamic zeal and enthusiasm.

Sister Odile, M.I.C. meets sixth graders interested in the missions.



Sisters Adeline Mead and Teresa Fung, M.I.C., with their happy little band of apostles.



Facets of Delia Tetreault's Person Her Con

In his talk to members of the World Congress, Pope John Paul II stressed the importance of the massive immigration problem of our times, and the necessity for the Church to become more missionary. "From the very first centuries, hospitality profoundly characterized all the ecclesial communities. The Church said to be Catholic, that is, universal, finds here a fundamental aspect of her mission..." (Osservatore Romano, May 1, 1979).

The problem of immigrants is very much in the news nowadays. Thousands of people uprooted from their homelands by political upheavals, are looking to America more specially as to a haven where they may regain their dignity as human beings and live up to their faith and ideals. Our Bishops urge us to open our hearts to these unfortunates and help them rebuild their shattered lives.

Delia Tetreault had early grasped the importance of this aspect of the mission of the Church. Even before the foundation of her Institute, she had worked more especially among Italian immigrants who at the turn of the century had begun to pour into Montreal. We read in the few personal notes of hers in our possession, how she strove to learn Italian in order to be able to dispense religious instruction to children and illiterate adults.

In 1916, she urged both civil and Church authorities to set up a school exclusively for the Chinese children where these could be taught English, Chinese, and French. She placed two Sisters she had recalled from China and one lay catechist from Canton at the service of these children. However, because of the great exodus of Chinese immigrants to their homeland towards 1925, this school was closed down in 1931 for lack of students.

Two years after the above school was started, in 1918, Delia again approached civil and Church authorities to provide a hospital for Chinese residents. A small building was acquired for this

Concern for Immigrants

Angelina Yap, M.I.C.

purpose on 66 Clark Street. Temporarily closed in June of the following year, the hospital reopened its doors in 1920, on Lagauchetiere Street. The Sisters still assume the direction of the hospital today.

The usefulness of this project was expressed in the word of thanks published in the Chinese newspapers of the time and addressed to Archbishop Paul Bruchesi, Rev. Romeo Caillé, and the Institute. It read: "During the few months that the hospital has been in operation, many of our countrymen have been cured. Our Association does not know how to express its gratitude. That is why we have written these few words to make known to our people the great virtue of the religion of the Heavenly Master..."

Delia's missionary zeal extended her services, through her daughters, to other Chinese immigrants living in Quebec City, Vancouver, and the Trifluvian regions of Three Rivers, Grand'Mère, and Shawinigan. In all these areas, spiritual and temporal help was given in the form of language courses and in the case of Quebec, even accounting. Delia used whatever means was available. She made an appeal through the press when she saw that there was an increased interest among the people for the welfare of the immigrants: "The Catholics of Montreal are urgently requested to make known to the Chinese living in their districts, the existence of a Sunday school entrusted to the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception by the diocesan Authority. French, English, and Chinese are taught. Individual teaching will be later given by competent young people, while group-teaching will be handled by the Sisters and dedicated lay women..."

Her works for immigrants initiated in these various places met with success, but in the face of such accomplishments, Delia always gave the same advice: "For a time we have come across many difficulties threatening to jeopardize this work; but it is God's work and for its sake

we have suffered. Let us thank him for the success granted to us at present, and let us not draw pride from it lest we spoil the whole thing. Obviously, it is God who did everything and it would be ridiculous to attribute anything to ourselves..."

The Archbishop who saw the importance of this work urged the Sisters to "be conscientious in learning the Chinese language. You have before you, a field vast as the world, waiting for you to produce marvelous fruits of Christian apostolate."

In re-evaluating the original charism of Delia Tetreault, the Chapter of the Institute in 1976, urged the renewal of an apostolic thrust among the immigrants. Montreal alone has around 700,000 immigrants of the first and second generations. About 70 per cent of the immigrants in Quebec City are non-Christians; in Three Rivers, 50 per cent; the majority in Ottawa are also non-Christians.

Twenty-four of Delia's Sisters are working full or part time among the immigrants of different ethnic origin, dispersed throughout the provinces of Quebec and Ontario. As of old, these Sisters are engaged in giving language courses and catechesis; making home visits to the sick, the elderly; working in hospitals and with the Bureau of Immigration...

There is no doubt that if Delia were still alive today, she would avail herself of every opportunity of serving her foreign brothers far and near because "we all have one Father" and the universality of salvation constantly calls forth for a response. "God has given us everything, even his own Son; what better way of making return — in as much as a weak creature can in this world — than to give him children, chosen ones, who will sing his goodness for all eternity."

The seed of the parents lives on in their children; the apostolic dream of Delia Tetreault lives on in every MIC who vows to spread the zeal of her foundress in every generation.

MEETING

SISTERS CHARLINE AND ISABELLE

by Rejane Gaudet, M.I.C.

Malagasy Sisters Charline and Isabelle are two young Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception who have come on a short visit to Canada in order to get acquainted with the country where their Institute has its roots. I met them at the Mother House and had an encounter with both. The following are excerpts from a very pleasant interview.

- R. What were your first impressions upon reaching the Mother House and meeting the Canadian Sisters?
- C. Isabelle and I were very favourably impressed by the warmth of the welcome extended to us. We felt as if we were coming "home" to the house where Mother Foundress spent most of her life.
- R. Could you tell me what it was that first drew you to our Institute? There were so many others in Madagascar that you might have chosen...
- I. A friend of mine who was a student at the M.I.C. school in Antsirabe, often spoke to me about her teachers, but nobody ever invited me to meet the Sisters. I just felt drawn to them in an irresistible way. Eventually, my friend offered to introduce me to Sister Agathe Durand, in charge of M.I.C. novice formation. It did not take long for me to make up my mind. I met Sister Agathe, told her about my aspirations, and entered the Novitiate. There was nothing very mysterious about it all.
- R. Nothing mysterious perhaps, but a genuine personal call from the Holy Spirit...

C. For my part, I was a student in a M.I.C. school during thirteen years but did not bother much about the Sisters. In my heart, I did feel the faint stirrings of a call to religious and missionary life, but I turned a deaf ear. Active in several youth movements, I enjoyed the dynamism of such groups. Far from me the idea of entering a convent! I wanted to devote myself to a noble cause but at the same time, I did not want to give up my liberty. "A girl like me could never become a Sister," I reasoned.

R. *You finally found out how futile it is to struggle against a divine call, since you did become a Sister. How did it happen?*

C. I admired the M.I.C. Sisters for leaving their homeland to come to this remote Island to help us know and serve God. Theirs was a life of humble service cheerfully and freely given. Why should I not follow their example? I finally made up my mind to join their ranks.

R. *How many years have you been with us?*

C. I entered the Novitiate in 1970. Sister Isabelle entered three years later.

R. *Both of you have entered an essentially missionary Institute, called to spread the Gospel message outside of your own country. How does this idea of leaving your homeland for the foreign apostolate affect you?*

I. When I first entered, I did not reflect much on this aspect of my vocation. I just wanted to dedicate my whole life to God. However, during my noviceship I understood that we, Malagasy Sisters, must be like those of other nationalities. Even if our local Church is sadly in need of its priests and religious, we must be ready to go to the ends of the earth to evangelize in our turn.

R. *What about you, Charline?*

C. I agree with Isabelle. We are members of the Catholic Church and as such, we must have a universal heart just as Mother Foundress had.

R. *Isabelle has already mentioned the needs of the Church of Madagascar in the field of evangelization. Are there many non-Christians in your homeland?*

C. The centre of the Great Isle has been evangelized let us say at the rate of eighty per cent. Half of these Christians are Catholics; the rest belong to various Protestant sects. Seventeen priests are engaged in pastoral animation. Only two are Malagasy. Our fourteen Malagasy bishops and the two foreign bishops want to establish a greater number of religious congregations to make up for the penury of priests.

I. The work of evangelization in our homeland is rendered more difficult because of poor communications. Our people are scattered over vast areas without any good roads linking one district to another.

R. *Are there many purely Malagasy religious Institutes?*

C. There is one in the diocese of Diego. According to recent statistics, it is doing well. Two others have been founded: one in the diocese of Tananarivo, and the other in Antsirabe. Their future looks promising.

R. *What about vocations to the priesthood?*

C. They are woefully few compared to the immense needs of our local Church. But we have hope for brighter tomorrows. This year, for instance, there have been ten ordinations to the priesthood.

R. *Can you tell me something about lay participation in the apostolate?*

I. Special schools are being organized for the formation of catechists. The latter can make up, to a certain extent, for the lack of priests in remote rural areas which the priests can rarely visit. There is a national school for catechists in Tananarivo where aspirant catechists are trained. After a two-year course, they are awarded a diploma allowing them to function as full-fledged catechists.

R. *Since you may now rely on these trained catechists to make up in part for the lack of priests, do you think that foreign missionaries are still needed in Madagascar?*

C. Yes, I believe they are still needed. But one must take into account the social context in Madagascar. At present, our people strongly resent foreign interference of any kind. On the one, hand no matter how you may look at it, the missionaries are foreigners. As such, the Malagasy would like them to be eliminated. They continue to tolerate them

merely because at present their country cannot do without them. On the other hand, I think that as representatives of the universal Church, the missionaries will always have their place in Madagascar. They should never look down on anyone, never practise discrimination of any kind.

I. I think we will always need missionaries because they enrich our culture and represent our brother Christians from all over the world.

C. We need missionaries in the fields of pastoral animation, social service, education, development... They are welcome everywhere, as long as they agree to hold the second rank. This must be done to correct the mentality of the people for whom *vasa* (foreigner) has the same meaning as ruler. If the latter hold first rank everywhere, what can the Malagasy think?

R. *In the educational field, our Sisters still conduct private schools in Madagascar. Do you think it important to maintain them?*

I. Certainly. The Church must make sure of its influence over Malagasy youth. The main objective of our schools is to form dynamic Christians capable of being worthy witnesses of Christ. As religious we cannot hope to reach the young in state-sponsored schools, but our pupils can wield good influence in their own milieu. This is where the importance of conducting private schools lies.

R. *I admire the wonderful apostolic work you are doing. I wish we could have a longer chat, but time is lacking. Thank you for your collaboration.*

Watching the little brook that runs through the grounds at the Mother House. Left to right: Sister Charline, Sister Rejane, and Sister Isabelle.





Mission Briefs

ANCUD, CHILE

Summer in Ancud, which corresponds to our Canadian winter, is the right time for more intensive evangelization in remote islands which priests are rarely able to visit. This is called "mission time" for our team. It means that during eight days we share in rural family life. We visit families, the sick and the aged more particularly, join with people in prayer meetings, reflect with them, etc. This year, a number of Santiago teachers, with whom I had worked for six years, offered to accompany us on our journey. Before starting, we felt the need of more intensive prayer and made a two-day retreat. Then we examined the overall pastoral plan in order to concentrate on the theme of the year — *unity*. We agreed on certain criteria for our work summarized as follows: quality of service before effectiveness. On the morning of February 4, we left for the island of Quenchao. No missionaries had visited the place for the past five years. We were greatly encouraged to find people who walked for two or more hours in order to hear the word of God. Many came fasting, in a spirit of penance, so as to participate more fervently in the Eucharistic celebration and prayer gatherings. After a few days with these good people, we left promising to return next year. For their part they promised to live up to their Christian life, so as to be able to become apostles among their own.

Pierrette Belainsky, M.I.C.

HONG KONG

Sister Mary Olga would like to share with you all a vote of thanks she received from the 7A students of Good Hope School on the day of their graduation June 9, 1979. "Sister Principal says that joy should be the characteristic of 'Good Hoppers', for joy springs from hope, that hope which is rooted in the Lord... How can we not be grateful to the Lord of Creation for having filled our hearts with himself and for inviting us continuously to become his collaborators? What can prevent us from being grateful to him and how can we, 'Good Hoppers', not be grateful to M.I.C. members? From the 7A students of Good Hope School." One

great and lawful pride of Good Hope is that one of their girls was selected as "The Student of the year 1979" by the South China Morning Post. She won a flight to some South East Asian countries plus \$500.00 pocket money plus a scholarship of \$1,500.00. Her name is Sandra Li, she was praised for her accomplishments, namely in languages, and for her lovely personality as well.

Excerpt from "MIC Hong Kong Newsletter" courtesy of *Therese Le Blanc, M.I.C.*

LES CAYES, HAITI

Children can be very astute little diplomats when they have set their heart on something. A group of pupils recently spent two days of recollection at our school. The aim of the retreat was to help them adjust their actions to the teachings of the Gospel. Jeantuse, a ten-year-old, certainly got a good grasp of what this meant. She dearly wanted to have her younger sister and a little cousin of hers admitted to our school. In order to make sure of their admission she wrote, in her native Creole, a touching letter to the Principal, Sister Marie Reine, M.I.C. It loses something of its original flavour in the translation, but I think you will not fail to enjoy it, short as it is. "Dear Sister: I want to ask a favour. Please answer Yes or No. I would like my little sister and a cousin to come to Mary Immaculate School with me. I know you dearly love children and I am sure you cannot refuse my request because Jesus said, 'Let the little ones come unto me'. Your little friend, Jeantuse Saint Juste."

How could such a request be turned down?

Gisele Vachon, M.I.C.

NAN AO, TAIWAN

Do you remember the nursery rhyme about the "three little pigs that went to market..." In Nan Ao, three little pigs went not to market but to Room 2, in our hospital. It happened on New Year's Eve, just when the Sisters had managed to meet for the first time after a busy day with the patients. Someone rushed in announcing that three piglets had found their way into a room. Sister Antoinette headed the expedition out to investigate.

Neither the Nurse on duty nor the patients had seen the animals trotting past. These had simply pawed their way in through an opening in the flimsy wood paneling. Gently but firmly they were forced back through the same opening. The sisters were about to return to their quarters, when another surprise was sprung upon them. A monkey was entertaining the patients in a ward. Nobody could understand why the Sisters seemed so upset. But, then, you can never tell about foreigners...

CUBA

I have enjoyed the unique privilege of being the first M.I.C. to meet Pope John Paul II personally... A delegation from Cuba was sent to Mexico on the occasion of the Holy Father's visit to Puebla. The Bishop of Holguin where I do pastoral work chose me as a member of the team sent from his diocese to witness this great event. We were granted a twenty day exit visa to Mexico. I for one, enjoyed every minute. It was wonderful to meet the Pope. We owed this privilege to the good offices of the Nuncio, Msgr. Mario Tagliaferri. Our audience lasted for forty minutes. Our Holy Father really is a fascinating person. He spoke to us in a kind familiar manner. I think this was the way Christ must have spoken while he lived here below.

Marta Romero, M.I.C.

LIMA, PERU

As Sister Laurette Lapointe was returning home from the market, she noticed a little boy standing by the school fence. "Aren't you supposed to be in school?" she asked. "Only this afternoon, Sister," he replied. "Then, what are you doing here?" The boy pointed to a shrub with smooth shiny leaves. "Look how lovely they are... I'm caressing them." When Sister returned she said to us, "Do you know I've just been taught a great lesson by a little child, our Pablito? He taught me to look with a more wondering eye at persons and things. Thank you, Pablito, for evangelizing an old missionary."

"Rallye"



MUSIC IN AFRICA

*A boy sits strumming a crude guitar
fashioned out
of a Shell oil can. Photo credit: Pawek*

AFRICAN music is exceptionally flexible. It can be used as a mode of communication between individuals or groups, as an incentive to hard work, as a means of allaying fear... Expertly manipulated, it conveys various shades of human feelings.

Most Africans like to air their views on people and situations. However, aware that the truth often hurts, they prefer to bare their thoughts, and perhaps vent their grievances, through music. Attentive to nature's multiple sounds they draw conclusions and sketch pictures of their inferences in words which in turn are translated into song. This is how their music is made.

Every piece of African music has its significant meaning. A hunter, for instance, composes his music in such a way that you can feel the thrill of the chase and the overtones of victory if the hunt is successful. As you pass a village hut, you may hear young girls singing as they pound the millet or maize for the family meal. Their song is an occupational song. It captures and absorbs the girls' minds so that they do not feel exhausted by their task. In front of a village hut, a boy sits strumming a crude guitar, fashioned out of a Shell oil can, cut in half, lianas serving as strings. He is singing to himself and the words of his song have a wistful overtone.

However, Africa is not a land of sadness. Its people love to sing and dance. At village celebrations, drums boom, pipes blow, men's voices ring out loud and lusty, accompanying the dance. Each person has the right to raise his voice at any pitch he pleases. Yet the result is an unmistakable blending of voices, an air of jubilation.

The pride of place in African traditional musical instruments goes to the dance drum. It ranges in size from a small

hand instrument to the tall free-standing ceremonial drum. Most drums are fashioned from a hollowed-out log with a skin pegged tightly over one end. There is also the *bangwe* a sort of zither, the *mambilira* which resembles a xylophone, and the *kalimba* often called the African piano.

To enjoy African music one must not only use one's sense of hearing but also one's sense of seeing. African music is rich, warm, and original. It conveys the composer's own feelings and delves deeply into the imagination.

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