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MIC

MISSION NEWS



Sr. Cecile Martel, M.I.C., receives a warm welcome from a young friend.

The theme of the 1980 Synod of Bishops — "The Mission of the Family in the Present World" — has aroused particular attention and pastoral initiatives for renewing the Christian life of the family, with special reference to missionary action.

"The Church's wish for herself is that she will truly be missionary: that she will know how to approach Christ in the difficult and complicated circumstances of our times, and will be able to indicate

to every man the way to Him. We wish all that to men and women missionaries. We wish all pastors of souls the same... It is our wish for every family and all the laity."

It was thus, too, that Pope John Paul II commented on the significance and the missionary call implicit in the mystery of the Epiphany.

The missionary obligation of the whole Church implies the missionary

obligation of the Christian family. The Family, as a "Domestic Church", the cell and basis of the People of God, has the same mission as the Church: to evangelize.

The missionary animation of the family requires the missionary animation of catechesis and of the pastoral activity for the family. Pope John Paul II affirms the missionary calling of the family, saying that "the family's catechetical activity has a special character, which is in a sense irreplaceable... This special character has been rightly stressed by the Church, particularly by the Second Vatican Council... Family catechesis therefore proceeds, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis."

This important catechetical education of the family implies that the family itself has a concrete responsibility in the formation of the missionary conscience of its members. We may also add that the missionary animation of the family will give assurance to the Church of the mission awareness of every community, as well as the support and cooperation of every local Church.

The young Churches with a mature awareness of pastoral and missionary responsibility urgently ask the assistance of missionary men and women; at the same time, they ask their communities to promote priestly and religious vocations as well as the apostolic service of the laity.

The progressive participation of lay people in the missionary activity of the Church is frequently expressed in the service of young married couples, and of entire families who with their testimony of a Christian and missionary family life are a strong call to married life in communion with Christ. Missionary persons such as these are a powerful inducement to families to a life of missionary involvement and sharing.

**MAY FAMILIES
BE FILLED WITH
THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT**

(Turn to inside page, column 3)



*We thank You, Father, for the gift of life,
For limitless space beyond the skies.
We thank You for the depths of Your creation
May it be a reflection of our commitment to serve You.*

*We praise and thank You for fruitful years,
Years of building bridges toward universality
Under the guiding hand of Our Immaculate Mother.
We thank You for our renewed hope,
For letting us touch it in our need for each other.*

*We thank You for the lights of wisdom that shine
In the eyes of those who hear You,
For persons in our lives who challenge us to grow;
For sufferings that make us compassionate,
And friends who bring us joy and comfort.*

*We thank You, Father, for calling us to Yourself,
May we ever accept Your will joyfully.
May we be streams of unity among Your people,
Finding our Source and Nourishment in You,
As You send us from pole to pole! ♦*

*Excerpts from A Hymn of Thanksgiving
by Patricia Pelletier, M.I.C.*

Facets of Delia Tetreault's Personality

Her

by Madeline Maillet, M.I.C.

When we pore over the chronicles of the early years of the foundation of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, we are pleasantly surprised to find what a friendly atmosphere reigned among the first members who assembled at the little house in Cote des Neiges, on June 3, 1902. We might even make bold to say that our missionary family was founded on friendship. The first three members, Delia Tetreault, Josephine Montmarquet, and Ida Lafricain were staunch friends who had collaborated in the lay apostolate. The three remained deeply attached to one another, as may be gathered from notes and letters exchanged along the years. But each new member who arrived at Cote des Neiges was received with open arms and open hearts, and felt the warmth of true friendship. This friendly atmosphere of the first little house drew like a magnet quite a number of young pupils from the neighbourhood who later became good friends and even benefactors.

What cordial relations bound the first members together in their common goal! Josephine Montmarquet was timid by nature. With her usual tact and finesse, Delia excelled in putting her friend forward. Josephine, whom Archbishop Paul Bruchesi called "a hidden pearl" later became Delia's right hand as first Assistant General. Never robust, she died an ultimately death in 1917. Although Mother Foundress deeply mourned the loss, her only comment was a prayerful one, "Thank you, Lord. All that you do is good..."

But many years before this, the circle of friends had already been broken. As early as 1904, the Lord called Ida Lafricain to another vocation, far from Cote des Neiges and its familiar surroundings. Bishop A. P. Langevin, of Saint Boniface had obtained to cast her as guide of the young community of teachers he had founded in the West. The parting was painful on both sides. The Cote des Neiges group was losing one of its well beloved members. Ida herself was parting from a dear friend, and from loving companions, for an unknown destination where she knew not what trials awaited her. She was eventually to become the first superior

er gift for friendship

*A true friend is a gift of God
and only He who made
hearts can unite them. South*

general of the community founded by the Bishop of Saint Boniface. All appreciated her sterling character, her gaiety, her qualities as a teacher. In the letters exchanged between the two, we see how their friendship helped each to shoulder courageously the burden of responsibility placed upon her shoulders. Mother St-Viateur, as Ida was called in her community, visited Montreal several times on business matters. On these occasions, she was sure of a hearty welcome at the MIC Motherhouse. How touching it was to see the two friends together, recalling the happy old days at Cote des Neiges! The letters exchanged between them express the tender feelings which united them through the years. In a letter penned shortly after the initial departure, Delia promised, "I have always remained deeply attached to you and I hope that in heaven at least we will be allowed the joy of living close together."

But even outside her own Institute, many friendships enriched Delia's life. Among the most devoted was Mother St. Anne Marie, C.N.D., who took to heart from the first the apostolic work initiated by Delia. After the unexpected death of Father G. Bourassa, the priest who had guided the Foundress, Archbishop Paul Bruchesi hesitated in approving the establishment of a missionary Community in his archdiocese. Mother St. Anne Marie knew of this, and being anxious about her friend's future wrote to him while he was in Rome: "Miss Tetreault wants nothing but God's will... she is a noble-hearted person whom you will surely appreciate as you get to know her better... I confess that her Apostolic School is a project very close to my heart. I persist in predicting that it will develop into one of the greatest works undertaken under your aegis, one that will bring you deepest consolation at the last hour... Father Gustave Bourassa offered his life that it might live. You will not allow it to perish, will you, dear Father?" The Archbishop's answer to this touching plea was a promise to be ever a devoted friend and protector, a promise that was faithfully kept. Many years later (1931) we find in another letter a proof that this friendship endured. Mother St. Anne Marie wrote:

"How many things have happened since the far off days when we lived together at Mount Saint Marie... Believe me, dear Mother, nothing can alter my affection for you. I enclose my modest annual contribution to your missionary works. How happy I am to send it to you who are always so dear to me, and whose apostolic work I admire so much."

An Association to help the foreign missions was formed in 1905, in order to encourage the laity to do their share in the work of evangelization. Of its 18 initial members many were good friends of the Foundress. Most remarkable among them for her zeal was Mrs. M. McKenzie who remained all her life a staunch friend and a generous benefactor. Even before this Association had been organized, lay collaboration had not been lacking. A very special mention goes to Miss Céline Montmarquet. As soon as her sister Josephine joined Delia in her undertaking, Miss Céline offered her assistance and spent the rest of her life at the Motherhouse. She taught music and singing to the Sisters, provided many a feastday treat, devoted the rest of her life to the Work in her unassuming way. Help also came to Delia in the persons of two good friends the older Sisters knew as Miss Catherine and Miss Marie. Both gave a life of faithful unstinted service, and helped in their modest way to make the tasks easier and more fruitful.

Delia Tetreault's letters to her Sisters working in distant mission fields abound with expressions of tenderness. How she missed everyone of them! There was never a departure for the missions but her eyes filled with tears. She literally tore herself away from those who were leaving. In a letter to Canton, China (1911), she wrote: "How fortunate you are to be all together! I would give anything to be able to see you even for a few moments. In heaven, we will never be parted." The word "friendship" frequently crops up in Delia's correspondence with the members of the MIC Community. Whenever she exhorts to fraternal charity, to mutual affection, to the "most tender cordiality", she is extolling the value of true friendship. ♦

"If you would be a friend to a wounded person, you must take time to listen to the heartbeats of his existence."

Dr. Jean Vanier, one of the most sensitive poets and prophets of our time, spoke thus about the needs and feelings of handicapped persons. It is not easy to escape the challenge... and the listening will lead into many mind-stretching, heart-searching experiences. Actually, one does not have to listen very hard to hear the rising tide of "disabled persons" voices today.

At a public forum on the unmet needs of blind Canadians there was one recurring demand, expressed in a variety of ways: "Let us speak for ourselves! Only those who are blind really know what it is like to be a blind person". We hear the same deeply-felt demand from handicapped Canadians of all ages, regardless of the nature of their disability. "Let us speak for ourselves, and have the grace to listen and to learn from us."

The *Man Alive* program on CBC television which received unusually warm and voluminous response from

San Francisco, U.S.A.

Pierre Remembered

by Patricia Blanchet, M.I.C.

In a sense, he belonged to our missionary family as do the many generous friends and benefactors who enable us to carry on our apostolic activities. I count it as a privilege to have known him and his friend Larry. Both were always on call and freely and cheerfully gave of their time and strength whenever we needed them — burdens to be lifted, a banging door to be fixed, parcels to be carried...

LISTEN TO THE HEARTBEATS

1981: Year of the Disabled Persons Canadian Concerns — Christian Response

the viewing public was an interview with Miss Sandra Diamond, a practising psychologist who is cerebral palsied. "I am not what you see", she insisted. "Inside of me I am not a disabled person. I am a woman inside of me... a woman with professional drives, — with all kinds of drives." The audience response indicated that "the woman inside" came through to them as an attractive, inspiring person. What a loss for all concerned when we do not listen long enough to get to know the person inside!

The manager of an Ontario cable television company and a minister who was working with him in program planning **listened** to some of their deaf viewers who were reacting to the tendency of "hearing" people to do everything **for** the deaf. The result was a pioneering venture in which deaf persons were trained to plan and present their own weekly television program. Since then, a team composed of the minister, a technician from the cable company, and a deaf young woman interviewer have conducted workshops to train deaf communicators in major cities across Canada. Travel expenses have been funded by the

church, and cable television facilities have been donated. Several weekly television programs **by** the deaf have resulted, and the ability of deaf persons to use television with competence and effectiveness has been demonstrated most convincingly.

We have assumed that those among us who are mentally retarded cannot speak for themselves. They have been living too long with the well-meant, but damaging concept, "eternal children". In community residences and in a few well-planned conferences they have demonstrated a surprising ability to express feelings and ideas and to share in decision-making. In a letter to a social worker in a large institution where she had spent twenty of her twenty-four years, a resident of a small group home said, in part, "Thank you for helping me to get here... I have never felt so good and happy... I am not afraid now to meet people because I have been shown that I am as good as anyone else... my plan for the future is to have a place of my own... I know I can do it." Within a year, that young woman was a tax-paying citizen, with a whole new sense of her own worth, instead of as a pension-

receiving "disabled person". Even those retarded individuals who are seriously limited in their ability to speak or to live independently have much to teach us in terms of sensitivity and truly human values — if we will but take time to listen and to learn.

"Listen to the heartbeats of their existence." It is a beautiful sentence, a fragment of poetry. But it challenges us to a demanding, difficult commitment.

Can we deny or ignore this challenge? Can we continue to claim God as our Father without acknowledging all of His children as our brothers and sisters? We who are the living church on earth at this time are called to be a community of people who provide healing for the wounded, fellowship for the lonely, and release to the captives... a community in which all persons are accepted and valued for themselves, just as they are. ♦

Excerpts from The Handicapped

*Paper prepared by Genevieve Carder
for the Inter-Church Mission
Education Committee, Canada*

Pierre first met a M.I.C. Sister when attending a Montreal primary school in the fourth grade. This Sister visited the class to explain the work of the Holy Childhood Association — how the less fortunate children of the world could be helped by the more fortunate. Pierre who was nine was fascinated. The name of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception became significant to him.

The years went by and the boy grew into a young man eager for adventure. Like many youth at that time, he yielded to the lure of the West, and left Montreal for Vancouver. He had not yet determined on any special job when, looking up ads, he came across the name — Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. They were, he found out, in charge of a hospital and a home for the aged Chinese. Jotting down their address, he lost no time in looking them up. He felt very happy when they accepted him as an orderly and in this office he gave them full satisfaction. Kind to the aged, always cheerful and hard working, he soon became a general favorite among the patients. This went

on for two years. Then government-imposed changes occurred in the establishment and Pierre could no longer measure up to the new standards. He regretfully left Vancouver and made his way farther West.

God indeed "moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform". After some months spent in San Francisco where he easily found a job, Pierre again met the M.I.C.'s. He discovered that a small group of these Sisters taught at Sr. Mary's Chinese Mission School. How happy he was to meet us and to offer any assistance we might stand in need of!

When we moved from the top floor of the old Chinese Mission building, Pierre and his friend were on hand, in the evenings, to help us out. How many trips the pair made, moving furniture, cleaning up the place, sharing chores...

These friendly and helpful relations went on for eight years. Then we missed Pierre for several months and felt something must be amiss. We finally called his friend only to learn that Pierre had been in and out of the hospital for treatments and blood transfusions.

Something serious seemed to be the matter.

From then on, whenever we could do so, we visited him after school hours and on Sunday afternoons. We were aghast at the change already wrought by what developed to be cancer of the liver. He was a mere shadow of his former self, but was very happy to see us. When I suggested that the priest come for a visit, he demurred. His friend told us the doctor had not yet informed him that his condition was desperate. Pierre hesitated in accepting the priest's visit. He seemed restless and upset at the very thought of death. I did not press him any further but we kept on praying for him.

On our next visit, Larry warned us the doctor had plainly told the patient his days were numbered. When I again suggested Father's visit, he gratefully accepted. After receiving the sacrament of the sick, Pierre fell, as it were, into a deep well of serenity and peace. His Bible and rosary beads were the only objects he kept close at hand. In all his wanderings he had always cherished a

(Turn to next page, column 3)

Toronto, Canada

Pilgrimage Of Hope

Upon invitation of the Youth Corps, during the last weekend of October, 1980, Sisters Claudette Bouchard and Anthea Raso had the privilege of joining other people across the province of Ontario to celebrate together the hope we share in the risen Christ. Through celebration, awareness, reflection, prayer and friendship, the MIC Sisters, explored with participants from different churches the timeliness of hope in Christ for today's world.

The weekend was initiated by the community of Taizé. For some years now, there have been thousands of young people from all over the world gathering each summer in Taizé, France, where there is a monastery of monks from a variety of Christian traditions. In this context, the monks and the youth have sought ways of doing something about the state of the world. The inspirational person at the heart of this movement is Brother Roger Schutz who has encouraged a pilgrimage of young people from different cultures to specific areas of the world. The pilgrimage aims at challenging people, especially young people, with the demands of our times.

The pilgrimage held in Toronto was participated in by 350 young people and adults. This event began with gatherings earlier in 1980 in Santiago (Chile), Barcelona (Spain), and moved from one

country to another. In the fall of 1980, "weekends" took place in Washington, New York, Montreal and Ottawa.

Making visible the Communion of the Church, the pilgrimage has been open to all generations. Each sister had the opportunity of spending the weekend with a group of ten people. Participants from other parts of Ontario were all accommodated for the night in several Church-basements. Each group was given an "inner city walk", which provided the members with a first-hand experience of meeting resource persons who are helping people in need. Sr. Claudette and her group went to the CBC television station for the *Man Alive* program; Sr. Anthea and her companions visited the *Ingles' House*, an Anglican residence-centre for young women. These and other activities prepared the participants for the pilgrimage of hope which was held in the evening in three different cathedrals in Toronto: Catholic, Anglican and United Church.

The weekend was filled with precious sharings and experiences, making concrete in visible ways, John Howard Griffin's message in his book, *Black Like Me*: "All that is necessary to triumph over evil, is that good men and women with integrity, living in the Beloved, do good over and over, again and again, together." ♦

MAY FAMILIES...

It is evident that the family is the nursery of vocation. The home is the place where, to a large extent, the question of vocations, and in particular of missionary vocations, is resolved. Missionary animation which arouses and nourishes the missionary spirit of the family, prepares the soil where vocations grow.

The family, animated by a missionary spirit is not something new. We can claim that the vocation of a large number of missionary men and women in the course of the centuries-long history of the Church, was formed and developed in the fertile soil of the home. The majority, too, of catechists, these pioneers in sharing the Good News, what are they, in great part, if not the expressions of families who feel and live in an attitude of missionary service. ♦

Condensed from the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, 1980

PIERRE REMEMBERED...

deep devotion to our Lady. His temporal affairs were put in order and he looked forward to his daily meeting with his Lord in the Eucharist, and to the Supreme Encounter.

From that day onward, those who visited Pierre were struck by his serene countenance. "What a peaceful man!" they exclaimed. He died a few days later, in his thirty-eighth year. Little did the M.I.C. Sister who had visited a certain primary school in Montreal twenty-nine years before, ever dream that her visit would have meant so much in the life of at least one pupil there! ♦



Sr. Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C., finds that in a circle of friends, all touch common ground and hopes blend.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION

ICMA

When Delia Tetreault launched the **Précurseur** in 1920 and **The Precursor** in 1923, she had a precise objective in mind: "to associate lay people with the missionary vocation of her religious community."

Since 1920, the contents of each issue of these missionary publications informed the readers of the apostolic work done in their name by the MIC's throughout the world, and invited them to be aware of their own responsibility as Christians in the spreading of the Good News.

ICMA as such dates back to 1973. Among the many ways of involving oneself in the service of the missionary Church and of responding to the call: "Go, therefore, to all nations", ICMA wishes to be one of these means. Delia Tetreault would surely recognize in this Association the realization of a project she bore in her heart ever since the beginnings of the missionary community she founded. ICMA is, therefore, a new shoot springing from the roots of the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

The great desire of our religious community to continue to draw our readers and friends into the mainstream of our missionary work gave birth to this Association.

How does one become a member of ICMA? One is a member simply by fulfilling the conditions for admission in the Association.

One can engage oneself still more, and many among our ICMA associates do this effectively in their capacity as MIC collaborators. For about seven years now, a team of lay men, women and parish priests more fully participate by disseminating the **MIC-Mission News** and the **Précurseur** in their milieu. These collaborators, through personal contact with the families in their respective parishes, inform them of the work done in their name by the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception, and invite them to be likewise involved in the missionary apostolate as ICMA members.

The missionary call is shared, understood, and generously responded

to by several groups. Yet, how many among our own family members, friends, fellow-workers, and co-parishioners are just waiting for an invitation to personally get involved! Not all of us can go to work in far-away non-Christian countries... right in our own milieu, we can do our share!

As we welcome the '80's, it is in our Foundress' name, as well as in that of all the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception the world over that we gratefully thank you, our ICMA associates and MIC collaborators. Your generous involvement and fraternal sharing strengthen and encourage us in our missionary vocation.

THANK YOU! ♦

By Carmen Langlois, M.I.C.

*Translated from the French
by Edita Telan, M.I.C.*

**INVITE YOUR FRIENDS NOW!
BE OUR ICMA ASSOCIATES
and MIC COLLABORATORS!**

New ICMA Associates/MIC Collaborators may also send back their membership coupons to:
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