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# MIC

## MISSION NEWS

The following are excerpts  
from a message addressed by  
**Pope John Paul II**  
to the Youth all over the world

ON

# V O C A T I O N S



Pope John Paul II meets Sr. Marta Romero, M.I.C.,  
at a Puebla Assembly in Mexico.

*Beloved Young People!*

The whole Church is invited to express her irrepressible joy. For what reason? Because Easter is here! Christ, man's Redeemer, is present in His Church, in the world, in history, in our midst!

To you, young people, I wish to entrust today a commitment and a charge. Be, now and always, bearers and transmitters of Christian joy! I cannot fail to recall what my predecessor, Pope Paul VI recommended to all young people: "We cordially urge you to be attentive to inner appeals which come to you. We urge you to raise up your eyes, your heart, your fresh energies, to the heights, to accept the efforts of the soul's yearnings." Bear Christian joy in your hearts: joy that springs from faith serenely accepted; intensely explored by means of personal meditation and study of the Word of God and the teaching of the Church; dynamically lived in union with God in Christ, in prayer and in constant practice of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

On this occasion of the World Day of Prayer For Vocations, I would like to extend to you a very special invitation: reflect. Understand that I am talking to you about very great things. It is about consecrating one's life to the service of God and the Church. It is about consecrating one's life with certain faith, mature conviction and a free decision, with generosity ready for trials and without regrets. The words of Jesus: "I am with you always, to the close of age" ensure the continuing of that "you". The Lord will always call, and there will always be responses on the part of persons who are ready and willing. You too must listen. I know that you are disturbed by many things of this world, and many events of the present time. It is for this reason that I invite you to reflect! Open your hearts to the joyous encounter with the Risen Christ. Let His Spirit work in you and inspire you with the right choices for your lives. Ask advice. The Church of Jesus must continue her mission in the world: she needs you, for there is so much work to be done.

In inviting you to follow this path, I am the humble and earnest servant of that love by which Christ was moved when He called the disciples to follow Him.

## HONG KONG

# Answering the Call

by Colette Soucy, M.I.C.

*Sr. Colette Soucy, M.I.C., a young missionary in Hong Kong, interviews Sr. Laura Thérien, M.I.C., on the Golden Jubilee of her profession. Sr. Laura has served on the missions in China and the Philippines for over 40 years.*

**Sr. Colette:** When did you first think of becoming a missionary?

**Sr. Laura:** I was about fourteen when I first seriously thought of becoming a Missionary Sister. I had often heard about the Missions but without paying much attention. One day, however, as I was leafing through a pile of Grandmother's magazines, I came across the story of a Sister about to leave for Africa. I was deeply impressed to see how she had given up everything – country, family, friends – in order to make the Lord known to people in the mission field afar. Like a flash, the thought crossed my mind, "Someday, I'll follow her example." This was the Lord's first call. When I was seventeen, I suffered a severe attack of typhoid fever. On this occasion, I recalled my earlier resolution and promised Our Lord that if I recovered I would no longer evade to answer His invitation. Thus it happened that in March 1929 I entered the M.I.C. Novitiate of Pont Viau. I was 19 years old.

**Sr. Colette:** In what year did you leave for China?

**Sr. Laura:** I left in 1932, when I was 22 years of age.

**Sr. Colette:** How was the journey made at that time?

**Sr. Laura:** We traveled by ship and train as passenger air service was not yet in general use. The parting from my dear mother and other relatives as well as from Mother Foundress was deeply moving. At that time it was understood that we left for life. In fact, it was the last time I ever looked upon my mother's face. She died while I was in China. But in spite of the pain I felt at the separation, that Departure Day was the happiest day of my life.

**Sr. Colette:** What works of apostolate were yours in China?

**Sr. Laura:** First of all, I had to learn Mandarin, the language spoken throughout Manchuria. In order to put my lessons into practice, I used to visit regularly the Pa Mien Ch'eng dispensary to chat with the patients. A year later, I was assigned to Kung Tschou Ling, a neighbouring town where our Sisters also conducted a dispensary. While I continued learning the language, I

occasionally visited outpatients. For these visits we usually traveled by crude two-wheeled carts pulled by donkeys. It sometimes took us one whole day to come and go.

**Sr. Colette:** Why did you leave China?

**Sr. Laura:** We left because it was impossible for us to continue our apostolate. We were scattered throughout our missions in Japan, Hong Kong, Canton, and the Philippines. I found myself assigned to the latter country where I stayed for over six years. My chief occupation was to care for the sick and the destitute. I also taught catechism to several groups of students. In 1954, I was recalled to Canada, on my first home leave.

**Sr. Colette:** What was your next missionary assignment?

**Sr. Laura:** Hong Kong, where I have worked ever since. At present, I visit patients at Kwong Wah Hospital. This establishment cares for 1,500 patients, mostly very poor. Many are refugees from the mainland. Here I find friends of all ages who welcome me with open arms. Patients look forward to the missionary Sister's visits. A good number ask to be baptized before they die in the peace of the Lord. Those who are alone in the world like to talk over their problems and ask for advice. I sow the good seed of God's word, sure that it will sprout in His own good time! These visits take up most of my forenoon. In the afternoon, I give English lessons to several nurses.

**Sr. Colette:** You always seem so happy. What is your secret?

**Sr. Laura:** I find happiness in making others happy, in doing God's will manifested day by day.

**Sr. Colette:** You will soon be 70. Don't you feel you have earned a rest?

**Sr. Laura:** Why should I? I want to work all I can while I am still able to do so.

**Sr. Colette:** Do you have a special message for our readers, parents and friends?

**Sr. Laura:** When I left for the missions in 1932, I brought you all in my heart, and I have never stopped, from afar, to share in your joys and sorrows, and to keep you in my daily prayers. I am sure you do the same for me. I want to thank you for your wonderful collaboration which has enabled me to help those in need. God bless you and have you and your dear ones in tender keeping always!

A unique coffee shop called Shalom was recently opened and has been operating for more than two months now at Adachi-ku. Of the 23 wards of Tokyo, Adachi-ku has the second largest population of about 600,000 inhabitants and ranks highest in the rate of government welfare assistance. Among the inhabitants are about 20,000 Koreans, some living anonymously. About 1,000 people are old and needy. Rate of high school boys and girls who attend universities is low, for most of the population belong to the working class and the standard of education in this area is comparatively poor. Catholic Institutions are mostly found in the wealthier zones of Tokyo, and very few priests and religious work among these low-income groups and families. This information is based on the research and experience of Father O. Ando, S.J., one of the Jesuit priests who freely chose to live in this zone, very simply, while continuing to teach at Sophia University.

Anybody is welcome to this coffee shop and may have a glass of juice, soft drink, a cup of tea, a cup of milk or chocolate. Visitors freely contribute any amount they are able to offer. It is obvious that the way the shop operates and, as its name suggests, it is not run for profit but is a means to establish contact with the non-Christian brethren of the area, and share and experience the peace of Christ through the mystery of encounter. I believe that this project was undertaken to be tried as a means to reach out to the brethren in view of the first proclamation of Jesus Christ and His Gospel. The quality of the welcome



*Sr. Laura Thérien, M.I.C., welcomes a former catechist and her family.*

TOKYO, JAPAN

## ENCOUNTERS AT SHALOM

by Virginia Guerrero, M.I.C.

extended to the visitors is of prime importance. It is with the spirit of Christ that one reaches out to each person and shares the joy of the Christian message.

One Sunday, our postulant Sato San and I served three hours at this coffee shop which daily operates from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., except on Wednesday. At the start, three young girls from the area middle school came in and ordered each a glass of orange juice. I sat with them and tried to learn their names and situations. Two guitars lying in the corner of the coffee shop caught their attention. Then, while trying to follow a guide book they started to strum the guitars. They did not quite know how to proceed but continued to play just the same, producing discordant sounds. In a flash, I thought of Sr. Yoko Moriyama, M.I.C., now at the international scholasticate in Hong Kong. If she were here she could have had the golden opportunity to share her talent with the girls who were very eager to learn. I do not play the guitar, but I tried to strum the sound of a hymn. Having struck the right chord, I was able to help one of the girls quite interested in reading English.

Then a young man in his thirties came in. He ordered a cup of coffee and while Sato San was kept busy preparing

it, a high school girl also dropped in. I sat and talked with the young man. During the course of the conversation, he disclosed his desire to know the Christ of the Gospels. He has already read the Gospel but admitted that he did not understand its meaning. With my limited Japanese, I shared with him the central theme of the Spirit of Christ; Love. This appears very simple, but is undoubtedly demanding for both believer and non-Christian who wants to become a Christian. How is a non-Christian to be introduced to the Person of Jesus Christ outside of the concepts of western theology? This is a worthwhile question to put to oneself.

The high school girl then spoke with me, using some English words she had learned in school. After a cup of coffee and a sharing of presence and of time together, she extended her hand for a handshake to bid us goodbye. For me, this was no ordinary gesture. I felt a firm hand reaching out for understanding and love... this girl's parents are divorced.

An old man then came in and picked up a Spanish book from the shelf. He ordered a cup of milk and sat at the farthest corner of the shop. He finally came up to the counter, honestly explaining that he had no money with

him and would thus bring his contribution some time later. He shared with me something of his past life as a soldier in World War II. A devout Protestant, he had kept and read the Bible secretly during those hard days. He is now living all alone for he never married. Touched by the man's simplicity and honesty, Sato San offered him a cup of hot milk.

Among our other visitors were an old lady and two young girls. I gave the three a warm welcome. It was just time for us to leave when Sr. Antoinetta, a Mercedarian, arrived for the next shift. Sato San and I felt our three hours had been spent meaningfully for the other.

In faith I had the opportunity to encounter each caller at the coffee shop as a brother or sister. Each face is still vivid and the mystery of each person I still bear in my heart. The moment of personal encounter and acceptance of the Person of Christ by each one, when will it take place? This question remains a challenge to me - not only at Shalom but also during my regular home and hospital visits of old people living in this 'slum' area; whenever I visit a blind man staying all alone in his two-room apartment, to prepare a hot meal of rice and Japanese soup and to share very simple prayer together with him; a reading of a biblical text and the Our Father. The non-Christian world remains a challenge to one's Faith in the Person of Jesus Christ. He makes all the difference!

(Sr. Virginia Guerrero, M.I.C., is a young missionary from the Philippines who has recently been working in Japan.)

MONTREAL, CANADA

## Once Upon a Dream

by Louise Roy, M.I.C.

*I had a dream last night,  
Yes, I had a dream.  
I dreamt that from the dying seeds  
Had grown a multitude.*

*I dreamt that they were of all complexions,  
Of all nations.  
I dreamt that in years far back,  
Their fathers had come from other lands  
In quest of liberty.*

*Yes, I dreamt of their fathers too.  
I dreamt of how for days, months and years  
They could not possibly foresee  
How so different  
They could find a way to live in harmony.*

*And I dreamt about their battles,  
Their quarrels, their wars -  
Tearing each other apart  
Until one day,  
Their sons and daughters found  
The secret of His Love.*

*Discovering their similarities,  
Unfolding their riches to each one,  
Respecting one another's way -  
They spoke their truth in love and liberty.*

*One in diversity they became.*

*"We have to thank our God,"  
They said,  
"For this freeing Gift from above."*

*And so they went, I dreamt,  
To brothers near and far,  
Spreading the News that He is alive!  
Spreading the News  
That He is the secret of lasting unity!*

# MISSION WITHOUT FRONTIERS

by Teresa Fung, M.I.C.

I have been particularly privileged in becoming the Lord's instrument to make Him known and loved to many whom He allowed me to meet, especially to members of my own family. Now in Vancouver once again, I look back to our family reunions with grateful joy.

Three of my sisters and a brother who have been staying in Australia for several years past had often urged me to visit them. Last year, as an opportune occasion offered, I spent three months with these family-members living out-side mainland China.

My brother, who was seriously ill, received Baptism and Holy Eucharist before his death. He had a solemn funeral which three priests concelebrated.

After this sad event mingled with Christian joy and hope, I turned my attention to my niece and her fiancé who wished to receive instruction regarding Christian marriage. A Eucharistic celebration and a ceremony held in both Chinese and in English took place on their wedding day. As the priest spoke no Chinese and the participants lately arrived from Vietnam knew no English, I was happy to serve as interpreter.



*Sr. Teresa Fung, M.I.C., shares family joys with her relatives.*

When I first arrived, I organized for my relatives a penitential service in Chinese. Again, just before leaving, I organized another service for all the Chinese Christians in the parish. The parish priest gladly collaborated.

Moreover, a young Vietnamese gentleman came to me for religious instruction. I had time to teach him sufficiently to enable him to receive Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion before I left. After the ceremony, many among the parishioners came forward to congratulate him and welcome him into their midst. This was such a consolation for me that it made me almost forget the loss of my beloved brother.

God surely had his purpose in calling me to Australia. Although I remained in this place for three months, the time actually seemed short with all these missionary activities. My three sisters appreciated my stay among them. They were deeply impressed by the kindness of my M.I.C. Community which made this family reunion possible, and they were grateful and happy to witness the joy I experienced in my religious missionary life.

Another family gathering which I treasure with much joy and gratitude took place earlier in mainland China. I had not visited my homeland for thirty-three years. My sister, my brother, and their families met me in Canton whence we went to visit our small native town. It was a happy reunion and we enjoyed it to the full.

During this visit, I came upon a Catholic family I used to know in my childhood. How glad I was to find that they were fervent and sincere believers. We spent long hours recalling past events and praying together. A woman to whom I gave a small crucifix was overjoyed. She kept repeating, "Now, at long last, I have something to remind me that Jesus is close to me."

I am grateful to my religious Community for allowing me to meet my family once again. All along the way during these visits, I felt accompanied by my dear Sisters' prayers. I am sure they all played an important role in the success of my 'missions' in countries where no M.I.C. Sisters work at the present time.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Foundation: June 3, 1902, Montréal, Canada

Foundress: Delia Tetreault (Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit)

Apostolate: Catechetical work, pastoral activities, schools, social work, hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages.

Members: Nearly 1,000 Sisters, all over the world.

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THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



*Silver jubilarians Sisters Victoria Kamanga and Rufina Moyo, R.S., with Mother Margaret Nyirenda, Superior General.*

September 21, 1980, marked the silver jubilee celebration recalling the foundation of the Society of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, familiarly known as the Rosarian Sisters. At present, the Society numbers 43 professed Sisters of whom 31 have made their perpetual commitment. The M.I.C. Sisters have reason to rejoice with this society since it was privileged to share in its initial efforts at establishing a firm foundation.

When Msgr. Marcel St-Denis became the head of the newly organized diocese of the northern region of Nyasaland (now Malawi), Central Africa, back in 1948, one of his first projects was to found a community of African Sisters who would assume works of evangelization and of education. Meantime, in the neighbouring diocese of Lilongwe, three girls from Katete, Beata Ngoma, Rufina Moyo, and Victoria Kamanga had felt the call to devote their lives to the apostolate.

In that same year (1948), upon the request of Msgr. Marcel St-Denis, a group of M.I.C. Sisters from Canada arrived in Katete. Their apostolic activities and religious witnessing kindled in two girls, Rozalina Gumbo and Anastazia Nthala, the desire to follow in their footsteps and embrace religious life. The secret aspirations of these five girls met with the personal wishes of Msgr. Marcel St-Denis. He directed them to Sr. Madeleine Lorange, M.I.C., who was to be their guide and counsellor and who would deepen their spiritual knowledge.

November 21, 1951, saw the opening of the Postulancy period. On that day the community of the Rosarian Sisters was born. The people of Katete witnessed this event with emotion and wonderment for religious life was a

foreign idea to them. To their astonishment, they realized that it was not to be regarded merely as the affair for alien white people since God had called their own daughters as well. He had come knocking at their door also asking them to give Him their children; they did so in all generosity.

The new community grew slowly and in great poverty. The first postulants lived in one room which served as classroom, diningroom, and bedroom. They met for prayer in the chapel of the M.I.C. Sisters. As they had no religious books in their own language, their first concern was to produce a prayer book, translating prayers from English to Chitumbuka. In this field Beata, then a school teacher, played a leading role. She possessed deep spiritual insight and a good understanding of religious matters. Through her reflections and examples she helped her companions to deepen their understanding of God's call and to respond with greater generosity. Thus, the Rosarians see in her a very important element in the building up of their nascent community. She is rightly considered as co-foundress of their Society.

The postulants became novices on April 4, 1953. They applied themselves more deeply to the study of religious life and to prayer under the guidance of Sr. Bernadette Dumas, M.I.C., appointed as novice mistress. With devoted motherly love she remained at her post during 14 years, up to 1967, the year of the first final profession in the Society. As the African background, culture, and customs differ greatly from those of Western peoples, a great effort was needed on the part of the Rosarians and their guides to adapt to one another's mentality. The formative years of the

## AFRICA

# The Rosarian Sisters

candidates were therefore a challenge faced with a deep spirit of faith.

On September 24, 1955 four of the first five novices made their religious vows as Sisters of the Holy Rosary. They dedicated their lives to God in the presence of a great number of Christians assembled to witness the religious commitment of their own daughters. Of these first four pioneers, Sr. Maria Beata died in Karonga on April 7, 1958, after a long and painful illness. She was only 26 years of age.

A new era was opening for the Society. In 1957, illness forced Msgr. Marcel St-Denis to return to Canada. He was not to return to his beloved Malawi. The Society owes him a great debt of gratitude for having given it life and stability. Bishop Jean Louis Jobidon, his successor, guided the young community towards self-government. The first General Chapter opened on April 24, 1972. Sister Margaret Mary Nyirenda was elected Mother General for three years. Beginnings are always hard, but with God's help and the support and understanding of Bishop Jean Louis Jobidon and of his colleagues, the Society pulled through.

On August 23, 1975, a second General Chapter was held and Mother Margaret Mary Nyirenda was re-elected for a period of six years. During these first nine years of self-governing, stress in the Society was placed on updating all the Sisters in matters of spirituality, biblical and pastoral, by means of sessions, seminars, and personal studies. Opportunities were offered the Sisters to further their education so as to give better service to the Church. Most of them attended secondary schools. Eight were sent overseas for degrees in education or diplomas in nursing. Two went to the Pastoral Institute in East Africa. At the Formation House, two Rosarian Sisters became respectively Novice and Postulant Mistresses.

With our dear African Sisters we sing a vibrant Magnificat for the graces bestowed upon them and their Society!

*Condensed from "The Rosarian Sisters" published by Mother Margaret Mary Nyirenda, R.S.*

# Mission Briefs



## Nan-Ao, Taiwan

Sr. Yolande Moquin, M.I.C., who witnessed the departure of Sr. Antoinette Foisy, M.I.C., from Nan-Ao shares her experience with all of us:

"The day previous to her departure, Fr. Beauregard celebrated the Eucharist in thanksgiving for all that Sr. Antoinette had achieved at Nan-Ao. After Mass, the hospital secretary, Mr. Wu, told everybody to be seated as he had something to say. Mr. Wu declared that no one would be able to forget Sr. Antoinette, as all the flowers in the garden, all the trees on the premises, all the clean floors in the building and around, would be there to call her to mind. It was very touching to see this big man speaking with all sincerity and simplicity while he praised Sister. When she left on the following day, a large group of her faithful friends showed up at the station. Although they had given her their gifts beforehand, and had taken all the photos they wanted, they felt they had also to be there for the actual departure. Fr. Beauregard saw to it that they would be allowed to go beyond the train gate and thus stay on until the last minute. These people wished to express their love for this missionary who worked by their side for years, - in the laundry, the kitchen, the garden and elsewhere. These were truly the anawin, the 'poor of Yahweh', expressing their gratitude to one who shared the hardships of life with them in their own country.

## Katete, Malawi

Here as in many other places, one must accept events as they come, day by day. I should say, hour by hour, - such is the impossibility of planning ahead, as the best plans are apt to be changed by circumstances and events. One such occasion happened to me when I was called to Lilongwe to take part in a

meeting of the local Medical Personnel. The town is 432 miles away from our place. As there is a shortage of gasoline in the country, I went to ask for a permit to take a reserve for the long trip. I was met with a blunt refusal. I therefore left for Lilongwe with only 50 litres in the tank.

Upon my arrival in Mzuzu, I noticed several cars waiting at the gasoline station. I was assured that the tank truck would come that night. Next day at 5:15 A.M., I was the first one to arrive at the station but finally received my gas order only at 2:45 p.m. Fortunately, my companions living in town brought me breakfast and lunch! At Mzuzu-Kasungu, my next stop-over, I was lucky to have the tank filled after only an hour of waiting. At Lilongwe, so as to save gasoline for my return trip, I did my errands on foot. On my trip back, I was allowed to buy 20 litres from the Diocesan garage... a special privilege

for that day only. At Kasungu, the distributing pump was broken. I was twenty miles from Kaseye when my gasmeter pointed to zero. Indeed, I reached my destination, but not without some anxiety!

Yvette Carle, M.I.C.

## Vancouver, B.C.

Congratulations to our dear Sr. Germaine Roy, Executive Director of Mount St. Joseph Hospital, who received news from the American College of Hospital Administrators that she was recommended for a Fellowship status. Such a status recognizes the affiliate's leadership, initiative, professional growth and development above and beyond ordinary vocational expectations. The convocation took place at Place des Arts in Montreal, Quebec. A good number of M.I.C. Sisters joined Sr. Germaine and the guests present at this event.

Ida Carriere, M.I.C.

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