

Series 8, No. 3
May-June, 1981

MIC

MISSION NEWS



*Sr. Charline Zafisca, M.I.C.,
her parents and friends,
complete the Offertory Procession
with joyful praises and thanksgiving.*

MADAGASCAR

**Final Profession Day:
The M.I.C. Sister publicly offers
her gift of self to God
To be at the heart of the Church
in the name of all men -**

PERPETUAL THANKSGIVING

by Suzette Jean, M.I.C.

It was a great day in Morondava! Long before 9:00 a.m., the parish church was packed with relatives and friends eager to share in the celebrations. Scouts and Guides formed a guard of honour as Sr. Charline Zafisca, M.I.C., entered accompanied by her father and mother, both proud to sanction their daughter's final commitment as a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception.

As Sr. Charline is a native of Morondava, she was presented by a few representatives of the parish to Monsignor Bernard Ratsimamotoana, the bishop of the diocese and her own uncle. The Bishop offered the Mass and delivered the homily. The readings and hymns for this Eucharistic Celebration were chosen by Sr. Charline, and expressed her deepfelt sentiments of availability, praise, and gratitude.

The profession ceremony was ushered in by a dialogue between the celebrant and Sr. Charline. According to local customs, the closest relative (father or mother) then blesses the elect as a sign of assent to the call of their child to the religious life. Mrs. Charlotte Zafisca, Sr. Charline's mother, came forward and in a loud voice proclaimed the words of blessing. Sr. Charline then publicly made her perpetual profession. After a few words of explanation about the rite, the Bishop placed on Sister's finger the ring signifying her commitment, and had her sign the contract which binds her definitely as a missionary. A lighted candle was then handed to her; as the apostles carried the light of the Gospel to the ends of the world, the Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception is bound, by her vocation, to carry the Good News wherever she may be sent.

The Offertory procession was full of significance and highly colourful. A miniature statue of St. Peter featured the Church; the globe represented the world; a plant suggested the birth and growth of a missionary vocation; the book of the M.I.C. Constitutions defined the life of each Sister; water to be mixed with wine stressed the responsibility of the individual Christian; bread and wine symbolized the sacrificial life of each Christian. Sr. Charline brought up the rear, with empty hands held out, signifying that she herself was her offering.

It was touching to see how the parishioners joined wholeheartedly in the jubilation, manifesting their pride and joy that one of their own was giving herself to God. From mountain and valley they came, a song on their lips, modest gifts in their hands. In the good

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PERU

'I was thirsty... you gave me drink.'

Grateful thanks to the Quebec organization *Développement et Paix* for financing the project mentioned in the following letter. Special thanks to Mr. René Guay, in charge of Latin American projects, for his kind attention and consideration. Also to Sr. Therese Lebeau, M.I.C., who agreed to replace me in the village last June, 1980.

The following letter was sent to me by the president of the Committee for Drinking Water in the village of Apachacco, Taruyuco sector.

Agnes Bouchard, M.I.C.

Sister Agnes,

Many loving greetings! I hope you and your family are keeping well. We, members of the committee, as well as all the villagers, thank you most gratefully.

We cannot find words to tell you how deeply we appreciate your help, your efforts and participation in projects favouring the poor, particularly in trying to obtain drinking water on our behalf. We also wish to thank you 'specially for the seeds of faith and mutual love which you have sown in our village. How we wish to follow the example of love which you gave us. You sowed it deep in our minds and we villagers want to put it into practice by helping one another.

The project of bringing drinking water to our village has been realized because we all worked together, closely united in heart and mind. It took us 25 days to complete it, under the direction of Manuel de Cusco, a very sensible and reliable man. There were many obstacles in the way... a group tried to wreck the work we had done. As we were well organized, we fought for our rights and finally had the project completed.

I want to add a few words about the inauguration ceremony, which took place last October 1. We had many guests among whom were the engineers, Fr. Albanito, and Sr. Therese Lebeau, M.I.C. Moreover, Sr. Marguerite Simard, M.I.C., came all the way from Lima, offering us as gift, a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes. On that day, the whole village was in a holiday mood. Flags flew from every housetop... we finally have drinking water, - a long-desired dream which has now been realized!

Sister Agnes, we owe you this great boon of pure living water. You never refused to help anybody. Always and in different ways, you tried to help us all, more particularly the poorest among the poor. I really do not know how we could express our gratitude to you for all the sacrifices you made in our favour.

We villagers of Taruyuco miss you very much. Together we continue to spread the Word of God, we work to form Christian communities, we try our best to prepare the way for the liberation of our people. All the villagers are praying that you may soon come back to help us work even more and better! Again, I thank you with brotherly affection.

Signed: Angelino Salas

BOLIVIA

JUNE 24: FESTIVAL OF FIRE AND WATER

by Juliette Ouellet, M.I.C.

June 24, the feast of Saint John the Baptist, is one of Bolivia's most popular festivals. In the southern hemisphere, it usually happens to be the coldest day of the year. True to ancient customs, the people of rural regions begin to light bonfires on the evening of June 23, and keep them merrily blazing until late in the evening of June 24. According to their belief, these fires warm up Mother Earth; prevent rocky surfaces from splitting under the cold; call down blessings upon the fruits of the land. Besides the large communal bonfires, smaller ones are lighted in front of individual farms or even in the middle of garden plots to ensure fertility of the soil.

Another traditional element used during this festival is water, doubtless in memory of that used by the saint in baptizing people. Amid noisy public rejoicings, the good folk gleefully splash one another. Even if this water is icy cold, they believe that no harm can be done. Moreover, men and women wash their heads and clip their hair to have this grow again lustrous and thick.

The use of omens is general on this festival. Lead or pewter is solemnly melted and poured into vases filled with water. People then carefully scan resulting shapes assumed by the metal as it cools. Resemblance to a penny spells good luck; to a sword, a military career; to a book, doctors or lawyers in the family; to an excavation, imminent death... Others, to foretell the future, whip up the whites of eggs. They then gravely interpret their good or bad fortune according to the resulting mounds of frothy eggwhite.

Dancing around bonfires is a folk custom dear to the Bolivians, especially at this time of the year. Most prominently in the countryside, lustrous voices rise in unison while resinous branches blaze and crackle:

*Leap, fire, leap!
Light up friendly shadows.
Merry flames, ruddy and bright,
Leap, fire, leap!*

When the flames gradually die down, young and old amuse themselves by poking the embers. Some even enjoy leaping over the smoldering heap, but this is a dangerous game that often results in accidents. On June 25, many a sadly burned patient lands in the hospital; - he has attempted to leap neatly across the burning pile but has unfortunately fallen right in the middle!

PERPETUAL THANKSGIVING...

old Malagasy fashion, many speeches were made after the Mass. Guests then joined Sr. Charline, her family and the M.I.C. Community, to partake of refreshments spread out on tables set on the school verandah.

Sr. Charline beautifully expressed her sentiments as she welcomed each and all: "On this feast of Our Lady of La Salette, patroness of our diocese, I rejoice to meet so many relatives, friends and acquaintances who came to share in this day's great joy. My happiness overflows in learning that many who had long kept away from the Church have come back today, thanks to Our Lady's intercession. No other gift could have brought me greater joys. I give thanks to the Lord and beg all present to join me in my thanksgiving."

MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

the world over... we discover...

**We owe it to the people
to whom we are sent
to welcome their aspirations,
values, symbols, and customs;
penetrating these with joy and respect
we discover therein
the secret presence of the Spirit
preparing hearts
to receive the Good News of Salvation.**

The M.I.C. Constitutions



*In Taruyuco, Peru:
With Sisters Marguerite Simard, M.I.C., and Theresa
Lebeau, M.I.C., grateful villagers welcome Our Lady into
their midst.*



*In Kuanshi, Taiwan:
In the joy of being sent... Sr. Olivette Côté, M.I.C. (center), with Mandarin-
language MIC classmates, - Sisters Monette Ouellette and Francine St-Onge.*



*In Koriyama, Japan:
A baptism-day souvenir for Sr. Theresia Fujimatsu, M.I.C.,
with her godchild, Mayumi Komada and the Komada family.*

In the following excerpts, Sr. Olivette Côté, M.I.C., speaks about her first two years in Taiwan and allows us to catch glimpses of a young missionary's adaptation period in her initial mission country:

I come today to share my experience which will, no doubt, interest you who are engaged in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. Whoever you are, whatever your age and profession, I wish to reach you; this is why I offer you a few comparisons that may help you understand my message.

Little child, my friend, you trust your parents and life completely that the Lord Jesus said to the grownups one day: "Unless you become as little children, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." – To be able to step into the Father's projects and to become a missionary, I must have a childlike heart, together with the dynamism, boldness and the vivacity of youth.

If you are a child who likes goldfish, you know what happens to your goldfish if you put it in salt water. I am a 'fresh-water fish', a native of an attractive city of Lac St. Jean in Quebec, Canada. The Lord led me to a tiny island surrounded by a vast sea: Taiwan. For me, to become a missionary is to be 'somewhat' like a goldfish that has to get accustomed to live in salt water.

If you are a mother or father, you know the joy and detachment, the love and displacement it costs to give birth and then to allow your children to leave home one by one. A missionary must be able to leave and be separated from her parents, friends, work, and country, to offer the life of Jesus Christ to others.

If you are a surgeon doing heart or kidney transplants, you certainly can guess the physical, psychological and sociological reactions of the missionary who has to have a new heart grafted by the Lord in an entirely new world.

If you are a farmer, you know that the 'grain of wheat' you throw into the ground has to die to bear much fruit... Jesus is asking His friends to bear the seed of His word and to produce fruit abundantly... I am sure you can easily understand what has to be lived by

TAIWAN

IN THE JOY OF BEING SENT

by Olivette Côté, M.I.C.

someone whom Christ sends to share the Good News with His Chinese, Magagasy, Canadian or African brothers.

Do you want to know how I lived all this in the reality of daily life? At the beginning, I was fascinated by the beauty of the country which I likened to an earthly paradise filled with verdure, flowers, fruits, variety of vegetables, and magnificent mountains. I felt strongly attracted to this young and dynamic nation.

Yet, in spite of the marvels of this enchanting isle, there were days when I felt like a perfect stranger. Yes, I was often homesick during my first year. A stranger, because I could not communicate with the people with whom I lived and worked. A stranger, because for several months I could not go out without being accompanied. I could not as yet read the thousands of Chinese characters that would help my orientation, neither could I ask for information from the people I met. I had to accept to become a little child and practically let myself be led everywhere by the hand. Happily, I soon learned where to find the mail box nearest our residence, and into which I could put my letters to keep in touch with everybody, – relatives, companions and friends from other parts of the world.

During those first two years, I also had to become a little child as I began learning Mandarin at the Taipei Language Institute. Learning Mandarin is very interesting; for me, it was rather demanding... After some months of sustained efforts, came moments of wanting to give up, gloomy hours wherein I asked myself whether I would be re-born in this mission country some day... whether I would ever know this language a little, at least to be able to express myself and to be understood.

Through this experience of adaptation with the cross, I met great joys! –

joy of being born again at all levels of my being; joy of discovering and learning; joy of feeling more and more at home in Taiwan. The joy of beginning to understand what the people around me are saying; joy of being able little by little to use the Mandarin I learned; joy of recognizing here and there the characters I studied; finally, the joy of making a few outings alone.

There is, too, the joy of creating new ties of friendship and fraternity; joy of seeing the great marvels the Lord is doing around me and in me. Joy of knowing that I am in communion with you all, one with the universal Church and with all men, my brothers. Joy of being where the Lord led me. Joy of receiving His light and strength each day to enter into His project of love for the whole of mankind. In short, joy of receiving my daily mission: envoy in the name of Jesus Christ!

I also wish to tell you that to live happily despite everything, I had to pray much to Jesus and Mary: to abandon myself to this love, acknowledge the Lord and believe in Him to the end. It was good to know that I am supported by those whom I love. I have been accompanied by my M.I.C. Sisters and by the precious help the Lord gratuitously placed on my path... I experienced that the mission and Christian life are lived in solidarity, – that 'no man is an island.'

It is because I believe in Life, in the Love which Jesus came to give us and which He puts in me for the others, that I have accepted to share with you my experience of adaptation. I am pleased to remind you that I wish to remain a bridge between you and the Church of Taiwan. I still need you to pursue my journey!

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

MISSION BRIEFS: Koriyama, Japan...

Mr. Augustin Komada is a teacher of Mathematics at a public High School in this city, while Mrs. Angela Komada is a Sociology teacher at our Xaverio Junior High School. Mayumi, the little girl, is a first grader. Her brother, Hidekazu, is in kindergarten.

Mr. Komada came to Xaverio over ten years ago to brush up on his English.

After their marriage, Mrs Komada who had attended a mission school in Sendai, requested Sr. Theresia Takahashi, M.I.C., to teach them religion in their home. Mrs Komada has long nurtured the desire to become a Christian, and she prayed that the Lord will grant the same desire to her husband. Sr. Theresia then asked our pastor, Fr. Gariépy,

O.P., to complete the couple's religious instruction. After a year of preparation, both Mr. and Mrs Komada asked to be baptized. We rejoice with this new Christian family and with grateful hearts we bless the Lord for answering their prayers with the gift of faith.

Janet Delisle, M.I.C.



PHILIPPINES

'MABUHAY,' JOHN PAUL II!

Pope John Paul II in the Philippines:
"My affection for you is great!"

"When persons meet for the first time and want to make friends, they usually introduce themselves... You already know my name and possess some facts about my person. But since I intend to make friends with you, I will introduce myself.

I come to you as a missionary, sent by the Father and by Jesus to continue to proclaim the Kingdom of God which begins in this world but is realized only in eternity, in order to consolidate the faith of my brothers, to create a deep communion among all sons of the same Church.

I come as minister and unworthy vicar of Christ to watch over His Church; as the humble successor of the Apostle Peter, the Bishop of Rome and Pastor of the Universal Church. I come as Peter's

successor: the heir to the mysterious and indescribable spiritual authority which had been conferred on him, but also to the tremendous responsibility entrusted to him.

Like Peter, I accepted to be the Universal Pastor of the Church, eager to know, love and serve all the members of the flock entrusted to me.

I am here to know you. I must say that my affection for one and all is great. I am sure that I can help you, at least in some way."

This was the Pope's spontaneous response to a warm, festive welcome extended by 47 million Filipinos during his six-days visit in the Philippines, Asia's only Catholic nation.

The Pope's parting words to the Filipinos:

"May you always enjoy peace in your hearts and in your homes, may justice and freedom reign throughout your land, and may your families be faithful forever, united in joy and love.

I take with me many beautiful and joyful memories. I have marveled at the great diversity of cultural values and worthy customs which enrich your land. I shall long remember the people of such varied backgrounds and traditions whom I have had the pleasure to meet. May God bless the Philippines!"

To Christians, John Paul II left a specific message:

"Assume an even greater role in the work of evangelization, sharing with others the faith you have received as God's gift. I assure you all of my prayers."

Beatification Rites in Manila

"I shall therefore go first of all to Manila where I shall crown the year of jubilee with the beatification ceremony." Thus spoke Pope John Paul II on December 21, 1980, officially confirming his pastoral visits to the Far East.

On February 19, 1981, during Mass celebrated at Rizal Park, Manila, Philippines, a flight of doves was released and a painting depicting Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino martyr, and 15 other martyrs of the faith was unveiled as Pope John Paul II declared them blessed.

This was the first time in Church history that beatification rites were held outside the Vatican. The sixteen martyrs of Nagasaki, Japan, include one Filipino, four Spaniards, one Frenchman, one Italian, and nine Japanese. Of these, ten were Dominican priests, two were lay brothers, two women Tertiaries of St. Dominic, and two laymen. Only Lorenzo Ruiz was married and a family man.

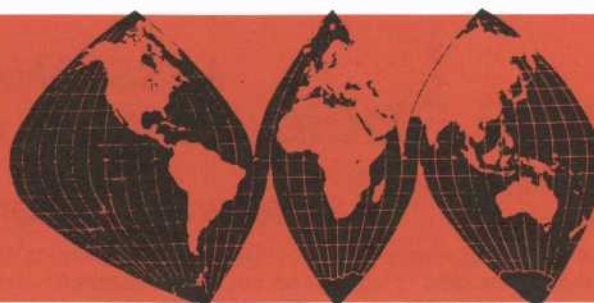
The rites began with a petition by Philippines Cardinal Jaime Sin, mentioning the capsule biography of the sixteen martyrs, and praying that the Pope recognize them as blessed. With

the title, the martyrs may be venerated in public, within a diocese or a religious congregation.

In his homily, Pope John Paul II asked the faithful "to look today to these zealous martyrs who give us deep assurance and fresh hope when they tell us: in all this, we are more than conquerors because of Him who has loved us. And this is the mystery we celebrate today; the love of Jesus Christ who is the Light of the world."

Culled from: Times Journal and The Philippines Daily Express February 17-22, 1981.

Mission Briefs



San Francisco, U.S.A.

Here in San Francisco, this year, the Lord answered our plea and our Community now enjoys a "home" thus giving more permanency to our apostolate. This compact little house is located close to the metro line that brings us downtown in about 30 minutes. The view of the ocean is splendid ... a real meditation in itself.

Sister Carmen Castonguay has joined our group since September last year. She has taken over all the secretarial work. Now, I am fully given up to evangelization proper. I have the Sacramental preparation of the school children, adult Christian initiation classes either at our home in the evenings, at the Mount Mary Mission School at night, or in individual homes as the case may be. Besides, I have folk Mass liturgy at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays, followed by one hour of CCD classes. All in all, it is a full schedule, but in which I do not feel pressured and which I enjoy tremendously.

Patricia Blanchet, M.I.C.

Katete, Malawi

After my transfer to Katete, I realized I would have to go through a

period of readjustment, if I may call it so. Many among the older people recognized me and gave me a glad welcome. But, alas I have forgotten the local dialect and must start learning it all over again. Although this has been my very first mission, things have changed mostly for the better. The medical centre has been rebuilt. However, as the soil of the area is poor, produce is still insufficient to supply the needs of a very dense population which keeps on growing. This explains the numerous cases of malnutrition we daily treat at the dispensary.

To remedy this situation, we opened a rehabilitation Centre for the children afflicted with this ailment. Whenever we can persuade mothers to remain temporarily at the Centre, we give them elementary notions on food. Most of the children lack protein. Certain old customs, still observed, forbid little ones to eat eggs. Thanks to donations from *Fame Pareo*, our patients are supplied

with meat, fish, eggs, maize, beans and milk.

Donations from benefactors have allowed us to buy a few beds for the more sickly children. Thank You, dear Canadian friends and benefactors. We deeply appreciate your assistance. As you can see, work is not wanting. I care for over 30 young patients at the Centre and with the mobile clinic, I visit over 200 children twice a month. God bless you for enabling us to care for God's favourites - the children and the poor.

Yvette Carle, M.I.C.

Koriyama, Japan

On Pentecost Sunday, last year, an impressive ceremony took place in our parish church of Koriyama. Ten children and babies received Holy Baptism. Mr. and Mrs. Komada, baptized at Easter, 1979, were the happy parents whose two children were among the group.

(Turn to inside page, bottom)

Our newsletter *MIC Mission News* keeps you tuned to missionary doings around the world. Nothing could awaken missionary interest more effectively than your winning new members to the cause. How about asking your friends to join our missionary association ICMA? Use coupon below.

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