

Series 10, No. 1
January - February, 1983

MIC

MISSION NEWS



*Every person is called to the one human family.
"Oh, make of me a universal brother!"*

Merging Into Oneness

Our perspective on mission begins by recognizing that God has spoken in the lives of all peoples. There are riches in each culture. We leave ourselves open to the possibility of having our understanding of the Good News enriched by the particular contribution of those among whom we work.

Missionary activity is hence no longer considered a one-way flow. As missionaries, we start by immersing ourselves in the lives of the people we serve and in discovering how God has spoken in their history and traditions.

We grow by the experience of living among people of other lands and religions; we learn about their aspirations for truth, freedom, justice and peace; and as individuals we are enriched by their insights and reflections. We experience the mutual growth which comes in the discovery of each one's unique values.

The same challenge faces the Christian at home in dealing with the diversity of peoples in his environment.

Together, missionaries and lay associates, we have a key role in promoting the world's vision of universal brotherhood... We are the natural bridge builders. We are called to share our insights and experiences with our 'sending Church' so that she will become also a 'receiving' Church!

MIC MISSION NEWS presents in this issue experiences of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and of our lay collaborators as 'learner'. The articles also indicate sensitivity to peoples and cultures of other nations and commitment to one's home country: a conviction that mission is both here (where we are) as well as there overseas.

Sr. Ma. Anthea Raso, M.I.C.

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Forging Friendships In Japan



The missionary is seen not as bringing Jesus to a place where He is totally absent, but as discovering Him already there and enabling others to recognize Him more fully.

Sr. Lolita Villagracia, M.I.C.

Deep in my heart, I have always desired to have a mission experience outside of my own country. This dream became a reality this year when I spent three months in Japan. However, I was apprehensive how I would make out. I knew not a word of Japanese. How could I be expected to communicate with the people? What was I to do?

I arrived in Japan keenly aware of my poverty. But what a loving welcome was extended to me by my MIC Sisters and by their friends! With their help, my short stay was indeed richly blessed with meaningful missionary encounters.

One of my first outings was a visit to a secondary school for boys.

The Brothers in charge had organized a Bible Enthronement Ceremony in their chapel. Sr. Lucille Ménard, M.I.C., offered to accompany me and act as interpreter. About 200 second year students, all non-Catholics except four, attended the ceremony. I admired their deep respect for Jesus in the tabernacle, and the careful, respectful way they handled the Bible. The ceremony closed with a hymn to Our Lady, sung in Japanese.

When we came out, the boys surrounded us and expressed their gratitude for our presence. They remarked that although they did not understand much of what I said in English because they are not used to this language, they could not help being moved by my presence among

them. I realized how sensitive the Japanese are to any kindness manifested to them. If, some day, they become Christians, I feel sure that they will become deeply involved in the prayer of thanksgiving.

Upon attending a course at Sophia University, Sr. Hasegawa, M.I.C., informed her professor of my presence in Japan. As this professor is associated with the Office for Asian Cultural Affairs, he requested me to give a lecture to his third year students regarding the situation in the Philippines. I reflected a lot on what and how to present my talk to the students. Their first question was, "How can your people survive, and apparently make light of the manifold problems they must contend with?" I was amazed to hear myself reply, "Because we believe in Christ and try to hold firm to our Christian faith." My lecture over, a group of students gathered around me to say, "Thank you, Sister, for telling us about God. We need people like you." What a revelation and what a challenge this was for me, especially as these young people were non-Christians. This incident and several others assured me I could always

rely on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

I realize that as a missionary I am called to understand the past and evolving culture of Japan at a deeper level. The land of the Rising Sun is a country with an ancient culture influenced by long periods of isolation from the rest of the world. But Japan now is a modern nation that clings to its honored traditions.

During my short stay, I met many people, individually or in groups. I found an abundance of friendship, respect and love among them. If some came to know God and neighbour a little more because I have been among them, then my presence was not in vain. And one who has come to know God more because of my stay in Japan is me! I learned that God is too great to be contained in the bonds of one culture. He cannot be fully known until we have seen Jesus, the totally loving person, in every culture.

This is what my months in Japan have meant to me. The people I met have become more than friends. They have given a richer meaning to my life.

Prayer of the Afflicted

*We do not ask that you return our sight but we do ask
that you open the eyes of our society to discover
the true values of justice and peace.*

*We do not ask that you give us back our legs but we do ask
that our brothers walk united toward you.*

*We do not ask that you restore our hands but we do ask
that you teach us all that there is more joy in giving
than in receiving, that brotherhood is sharing
everything as you have done with us... Amen.*

P. Lowery, M.M.

A Bridge Between Cultures

By Sr. Lise Doucet, M.I.C.

To give testimony to my mission experience in Haiti is to render justice to my church of origin, the diocese of Trois Rivières, Quebec. I was sent to the missions in 1974. After five years in Haiti, I was in mission for three years in my own homeland. I now look forward to my return to Haiti early in 1983.

Why did I go to Haiti? "He called me by my name. I followed Him and I have discovered that His name is Love." It is in thanksgiving for this discovery that I desired to share the Good News with my Haitian brothers.

Mission 'ad extra'

I was sent by the Canadian church to my adopted church of

Haiti. I realized that this 'sending' has a double significance: my going and my coming back.

During my stay in Haiti, I shared the people's joys, sorrows and hopes; I have been greatly enriched with their values. I must admit too that my faith was strengthened in a different way than if I had been in Canada. A creative bond was set up between my Haitian brothers and myself, - a bond of mutual confidence, of sharing and of love which is capable of surmounting all barriers.

Insertion in the Haitian milieu

Each day I discovered that to be able to communicate with the people, to meet them in their native tongue



The heart of the missionary vocation is to love the people and their culture.

was a rich and rewarding experience. I further realized that to learn Creole without learning the proverbs was to ignore an important facet of the Haitian culture. In Haiti, proverbs are both a unique style of communication and the practical wisdom of ages. Haitian proverbs effectively combine concreteness, humor and deep insights into human nature.

The local proverbs were for me a special way of inculturation. As I tried to enter more fully into the lives and values of the people, I listened to the proverbs that they used most frequently. I recall Mrs. Kardelien telling me of her hunger: "An empty bag does not stand." Isn't this an indirect and quaint way of expressing a reality?

Mission 'ad intra'

After five years on Haitian soil, the church of Haiti reversed my 'sending'... my adopted country sent me to my homeland. I came home, carrying in my heart the words my Haitian brothers told me: "We are sending you so that you will share with your people everything you have lived while among us."

I thus returned to my country imbued with a great desire to awaken it to the universal and missionary dimension of the Church. I tried to concretize the values I learned by telling myself, "If my Haitian brother were here, he would share with my people. I was sent to make known the values he loves and lives at home."

I deeply believe in discovering the riches of my adopted people before looking at their needs. And then I ask myself, "What am I doing with all these riches?" And I question people I meet here in Canada: "What are you doing with the riches of the Haitian people? Why is Haiti poor, despite the abundance of its natural resources? Do you listen to

the needs of the Haitian people or do you exploit their riches? Do you welcome them as brothers?"

The 'Sending' is a continuity...

On my return to Haiti this year, I feel that I am being sent a second time. Yet, between my first mission experience and the second, there is a continuity; it is my second departure but it is the same 'sending'!

I return to a people that has already sent me. They are waiting for me, eager to know what I have lived among my countrymen, desirous of learning what I have shared with them. When I left Haiti, my Haitian friends told me, "Now you belong also to us. When you return, you will tell us what you have experienced in your native land." I can thus imagine myself as a bridge between two cultures, a link between the Haitian church and the Canadian church. In my heart this bond is an interior link of the Universal Church.

Religious missionaries are numerous in Haiti. They are active members of the Church, constantly exercising preferential options for the poor and the 'small ones'. By the quality of our presence as religious in Haiti, we truly witness to the universality of Salvation. Though we go to give the best of what we are, we return as advocates of those we went to serve, giving testimony to our actual lived experience among the people. Ours is a significant, prophetic role.

I believe that even if all Haitians were evangelized, there would still be a place for me in Haiti. I deeply felt sent so that there would be a bridge to show that no church is alone, that there is a sharing... that interactions of giving and receiving between our churches and among our peoples are loving encounters, the goal of which is communion.



Delia's Dream

Dear Parents and Teachers,

This section of the MIC Mission News was prepared especially for young people. We invite you to encourage those under your care to be interested in it and to follow the suggested activities.

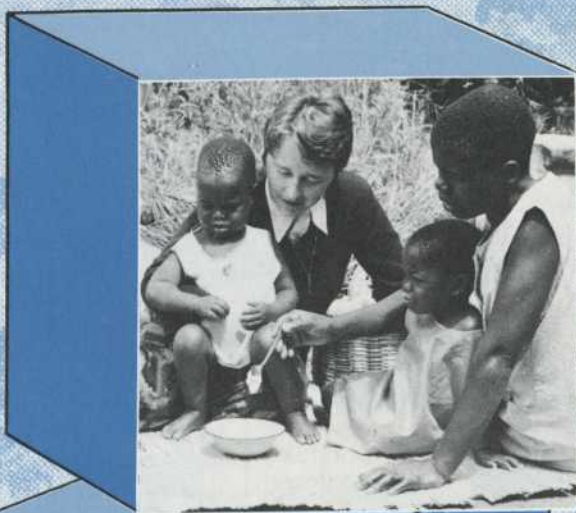
We sincerely hope that together, we may help them develop a sense of mission awareness and concern, awaken in them respect for and kinship with people of other cultures, as well as develop a sensitivity to the needs and struggles of these people.

Delia Tetreault was a young girl who lived in the small village of Marieville, Quebec. As a child, she used to take every chance she could get, after school and during her free time at home, to hide in the attic and read old issues of *The Holy Childhood* and *The Propagation of the Faith* annals which she found in a box. These magazines narrated stories about children from other lands and how missionaries were helping them. She never thought then of someday becoming a missionary herself. It was enough that

she greatly admired the priests and sisters who were missionaries.

Delia's diary, where she wrote her childhood secrets, tells us about a dream she had one day when she was 12 years old:

"In this dream, I was kneeling beside my bed when suddenly, I saw a field of ripe wheat before me. Soon, all the ears of wheat were changed into children's heads; at that time I understood that these were children from different parts of the world who did not know Jesus. I was very much impressed by this dream."



MIC MISSION NEWS
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A Dream Comes True

Delia did not tell anyone about her dream but she has never forgotten it. She desired so much to do something for the children whom she had seen in her dream. She realized how lucky and privileged she was as compared to many children around the world who were poor, hungry, sick and did not know Jesus. As she grew up, she worked very hard, with a joyful and thankful heart, a heart as big as the world, to make her dream come true. For her, this was her vocation in life.

Many other women from different countries and cultures carried

the same dream in their hearts: to bring Jesus and His love to peoples around the world, especially to the poor and the 'little ones' whom Jesus loved. Today, Delia's companions are known as the **Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception**. They work in 15 countries, helping people in different ways, such as teaching, providing medical services to the sick and in making Jesus better known and loved. They share the people's joys and sorrows, hopes and aspirations, helping them to draw from their own customs and traditions all that is good, beautiful and true.

Lord Jesus, You have blessed us with many riches
our health, food, education, peace,
security and the joy of knowing you.

We often forget about our brothers and sisters
who are not blessed with these gifts.

Like Delia and the missionaries, help us
to open our hearts to our brothers and sisters
around the world.

***Do you ever dream of a better world for God's children
around the world?***

***If your dream were to come true, what would you do
for your less fortunate brothers and sisters?***

I would like to know your dream.

Please send your answers to the above questions to:

Sr. Anthea, MIC
Box 157, Laval Branch, P.O.
Laval, P.Q. H7N 4Z4

***Kindly enclose a self-addressed envelope together with your
answers. You will receive by return mail a little surprise!
Thank you. I hope to hear from you soon.***

At our center pages, we find some of Delia's companions, the **Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception**, who continue today to help children around the world.

(Clockwise) **Sr. Milagros Duque, M.I.C., in Hong Kong**
Sr. Micheline Marcoux, M.I.C., in Madagascar
Sr. Adeline Mead, M.I.C., in Vancouver
Sr. Louisa Nicole, M.I.C., in Japan
Sr. Louise Lefebvre, M.I.C., in Malawi, C. Africa

Victoria, British Columbia

The Woman Who Always Said "Yes" To God



By Florence Wedge

What picture emerges for me as I study the life of Delia Tetreault, foundress of the **Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception**? I see a woman of faith who said yes to God in sunshine and in shadow, in success and in failure, in life and in death.

Deeply in love with Christ, she patterned her life upon that of God's Son who, as St. Paul wrote, "was not alternately 'yes' and 'no'; he was never anything but 'yes.'" (2 Cor 1: 19) To be never anything but yes: such was Delia Tetreault's magnificent obsession when she vowed to do always what she discerned as God's will for her. That intrepid woman dared to pray: "Make me die if I don't do your will."

Assured that God is in loving control of life's little and large details, she practiced what she preached – or rather, what she wrote to one of her spiritual daughters: "If you are attentive, you will discover this adorable will everywhere. Constitute yourself the missionary of this devotion of devotions. To accept all that the good Lord wills or permits, what a grace!"

It was the secret of her holiness, as we gather from her advice to another Sister: "Convince yourself that it is detachment from our personal views and identification of our will with the will of God that constitute true holiness."

Like the Immaculate Virgin she loved, Delia wanted to be the Lord's servant and totally surrendered. She bowed submissively when the modest Tetreault family fortune failed just when she needed that financial backing. Trusting in a paternal Providence, she launched her apostolic works in utter poverty.

A woman of new beginnings, she gave birth to Canada's first Missionary Institute for women, and worked tirelessly to set afoot the men's **Foreign Mission Society** based in Pont-Viau, Quebec – also first of its kind to strike roots in Canadian soil.

Her intuitive sense of timing and a strong nudge from the Holy Spirit (she had chosen *Mary of the Holy Spirit* as her religious name) told her that Canada should be sending out apostles to other lands in gratitude

to God and the Church for the missionaries who had evangelized it from sea to sea. Many were quick to throw cold water on her plans, again and again thwarting her generous efforts. Yet with spirited persistence she continued to blaze new trails as God indicated.

She appealed to her spiritual daughters to sustain her in filial solidarity: "It is the prayers and sacrifices of my dear children," she wrote, "that will obtain for me the grace of graces: that of knowing the holy will of God and the means of accomplishing it in all things."

Her yes to God was a word of joy. She served Him with gladness of heart and desired her Sisters to be messengers of joy. "Spiritual joy," she told them, "glorifies God and sanctifies us. Aboard our Lady's skiff there should be only joyful rowers!"

Her yes to God was aglow with gratitude. After her example, the

Sisters still make their apostolic labors a perpetual tribute of thanksgiving to the Giver of all blessings.

The fruits of her communion to God's will are visible today. Two apostolic families are serving the missionary Church on five continents. They strive to incarnate in their lives the examples of virtue she left them as her legacy of love.

When physical disabilities curtailed her activities and she could only pray, suffer, and love, she still gave God a free hand in her life.

Will the Vatican rank her with the immortals of sainthood one day? Thanks to my kinship with Delia's daughters through membership in their **Immaculate Conception Missionary Association**, I feel entitled to suggest that their foundress will accept whatever honours the Church wishes to award her. She will repeat her beautiful act of acceptance: "My God, I thank you, all that you do is good!"

Philippines

A Seed Is Growing

Catanduanes is an island located close to the southeastern tip of Luzon. It is a rugged and mountainous province often visited by typhoons and earthquakes. Although its soil is arid, most of the people are engaged in rice plantations. A number are fishermen, as most of the towns lie along the coast. Transportation from one town to another is difficult. Within towns, tricycles are the only available means of transportation.

The province has a population of about 160,000. Although the majority

of the people are Catholics, they still have to deepen their understanding of the Good News. Practices of piety, novenas, processions, prayers, hymns in Latin and Spanish, and traditional customs such as "mano" or kissing the hand of the priest, etc. are still prevalent. Catanduanes has never been visited by foreign missionaries. The people are proud of the fifty-six priests, three bishops, and two archbishops who come from their own ranks. Many families take pride in having a son in the seminary.

Upon the invitation of the Bishop, Msgr. Jose Sorra, Sr. Ditma Luz and I gave talks in the schools of the diocese. In public elementary schools, we held sessions with the teachers. Wherever there was a barrio high school, we met with the third and fourth year students, together with the teachers and the school staff. We sensed their thirst for the Word of God.

Being few in number, the priests are concerned to a great extent only with the sacramental ministry. Many questions asked reveal how unenlightened the people were about their Christian commitments. Sr. Ditma shared with them some statistics which opened their eyes to the fact that we, as a Christian nation for 461 years, have a great responsibility of sharing the Good News with our non-Christian brothers, particularly in Asia.

The bruises I got when I fell from a motorcycle later served me as a "visual aid" to demonstrate our real desire of awakening them to their

missionary responsibility as baptized Christians. Sr. Ditma's forthcoming departure for Taiwan gave an affirmation of our response to the need of sharing our faith with our non-Christian brothers.

We were given opportunities to speak to some students in local colleges. In the evenings, we entertained young men and women, mostly choir members and Legionaries of Mary, who were desirous of knowing more about missionary life. We also joined the Legionaries in their Sunday Bible sharing at the Provincial Jail.

As a whole, the Church of Catanduanes is growing. It is beginning to respond to the needs of the people to know more about the Word of God and of the universality of Salvation. Prayer and Bible sharings are beginning to flourish. Already, a group of public school teachers has volunteered to work as catechists in the evenings and on weekends. The future looks bright and the faithful are progressing in mission awareness.

*We are blessed to have received the Good News
and thrice blessed when we are generous
in sharing it with all.*

*Sr. Melba Castillo, M.I.C. (left)
with Sr. Ditma-Luz Trocio, M.I.C.*



Mission Briefs



Mzimba - Mzambazi - Katete (Malaŵi): Religious Education Centres

The mandate of teachers of religion is undoubtedly more challenging today than ever before. We are thankful that there are many dedicated people who are determined to teach the faith in an attractive and creative way, showing children how Christ's Message brings a new meaning to their daily lives.

To open the hearts of our primary school teachers to an on-going formation by a sharing of experiences and problems, visits to different schools have been organized these last five months. The whole staff of Mzimba, Mzambazi and Katete schools were invited to the Religious Education Centres to have them acquainted with the program.

Guidance offered by the Centres seems to have created a deeper awareness in the reading and understanding of the Word of God. Participants are encouraged to attend regularly the Gospel groups at the parish and outstations. With them, we have made ours the parish schedule for the Sunday services held in the outstations. This involvement has helped all of us to make concrete our experience of God in prayer, in the living of brotherly communion and close participation with the local Church. Moreover, the teachers believe that they are building the basis for different ministries to which they are called. Solidarity with the parish priests and the Christian community is deepening.

Our hope is great, for we believe in our teachers!

Sr. Gabrielle Saucier, M.I.C.

Napo, Lima (Peru): The Missionary Rosary

The Pontifical Missionary Works (O.P.M.) with which Sr. Evangeline Plamondon, M.I.C., works, wish to promote the Missionary Rosary in a very special way, on the occasion of which is "Con Maria, Misioneros de Cristo" (With Mary, Missionaries of Christ).

Refusing to import rosaries from foreign countries, the O.P.M. decides to encourage the Peruvian industry. This calls for much patience and ingenuity. The factory providing the rosaries is undertaking its first experience in this task, and persons who will 'mount' the beads have to be found. Sr. Jeannine Sabourin, M.I.C., heartily joins in this campaign. She learns the technique and teaches it to several disabled persons in the neighborhood. Besides providing her friends a small means of livelihood this allows Sr. Jeannine to spread the devotion to Mary. For many, the project is a real revelation. They love the Blessed Virgin but they do not know the value of the missionary rosary: To pray to Mary with the whole world in one's heart.

The people who come to Napo are surprised to see so many rosary beads. To the question, "What are you making?" each one explains again what is meant by the missionary rosary, offers the leaflet prepared by Sr. Evangeline, and speaks of the humble rosary of the people. Thus little by little, a missionary animation goes on in the companionship of Mary.

MIC Information

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION (ICMA)

In 1902, Delia Tetreault founded the first Canadian Missionary Congregation: **The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception**. Since 1923, at the launching of a missionary publication "The Precursor," she invited her compatriots to participate more directly in the Mission by becoming ASSOCIATES and BENEFACTORS of the Congregation.

Today, we offer you in her name a means of personally collaborating in the missionary service of the Church: **Immaculate Conception**

Missionary Association (ICMA). The bimonthly magazine, MIC MISSION NEWS, the link between the MIC's and their Associates, is sent to all the members.

Your affiliation gives you share in the prayers and apostolic works of all the MIC's. Every week, two masses - applicable to the deceased - are offered in one of the MIC houses throughout the world. Moreover, a stream of Marian prayers flows in the Congregation for the intentions of the Associates and Benefactors.

Schedule of Masses for our Associates

January, 1983

Generalate (Canada)
Mzimba (Malawi)
Port-au-Prince (Haiti)
Tananarive (Madagascar)
Kuanhsi (Taiwan)
Vancouver (Canada)
Jeanne d'Arc, Montreal (Canada)
Yauri (Peru)

February, 1983

Cochabamba (Bolivia)
La Boule (Haiti)
Ottawa (Canada)
Good Hope (Hong Kong)
Morondava (Madagascar)
Miarayon (Philippines)
Dutrisac, Montreal (Canada)
Limbe (Haiti)

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION (ICMA)

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and subscribe to the MIC MISSION NEWS.*

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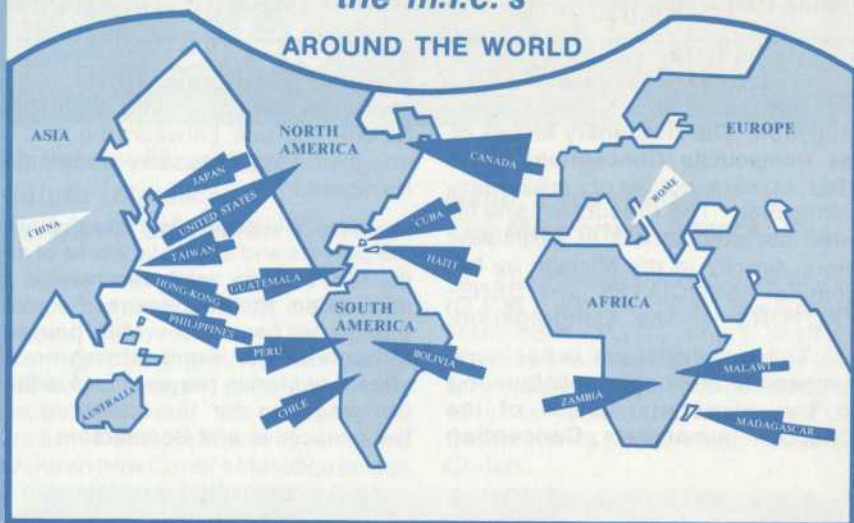
Please remember a dear departed one at Masses offered for deceased Associates:

Cut along line and return to ICMA:

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Mission

the m.i.c.'s
AROUND THE WORLD



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