

Series 10, No. 3
May-June, 1983

MIC

MISSION NEWS



Peru

*In many faces we can see the Mother of Jesus again
as we go about our mission today.*

***She is all races
And all colors
And all creeds
She is dignity
And beauty
And truth***

***She is strength
And courage
And comfort
She is wisdom
And reason
And compassion***

***She is mother
And wife
And daughter
She is sister
And friend***

***She is hope
And prayer
And promise
She has the power
To move the world.***

Mary said:

"My heart praises the Lord. My soul is glad because of God my savior. For he has remembered his lowly servant. And from now on all people will call me blessed, because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me." Luke 1: 46-49.

MIC MISSION NEWS

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IMPRIMERIE NOTRE-DAME INC.



Sr. Theresia, with her nephew and niece, during a visit to the Buddhist temple at Niko.

Japan

'My being proclaims...'

Theresia Kofuji, M.I.C.

I was born in Tokyo. My father and mother were fervent Buddhists and brought me up in the staunch old Japanese customs and traditions. While I attended primary school, I made friends with a Protestant girl. She often talked to me about her religion. It was the very first time I had ever heard about Jesus Christ. Even then I wished I knew more about Christ and the Christian religion.

But, all unawares, God had other graces in store for me. One day as I was helping out for our high school festival, a girl who worked with me dropped a rosary. Picking it up I wonderingly turned it over in my

hands. This object puzzled me. My schoolmate explained its use, and went on to say that she was following a course in the Catholic religion. She was not yet baptized but she hoped to be after she had completed the course. On the spur of the moment, I asked to join her. Thus began my instruction into the Catholic faith. My own parents did not oppose my desire, and I was baptized on the feast of our Lady's Assumption when I was seventeen.

On the day of my baptism, I thanked God for the priceless gift of faith and begged him to keep me faithful to him. I was the only Catholic in my class. In my heart was then born an ardent desire to

share my newly found faith with many others.

Meantime, as all good Japanese parents then did, my father and mother had arranged my betrothal to a young man of their choice. I had no objection, but on one point I was adamant. My marriage would have to be a Christian marriage. The young man readily accepted to follow religious instruction. Until then, it had never entered my mind that I could become a religious.

However, more and more, I felt drawn to religious life. Finally, after an ordeal of almost a year, I decided to enter the convent. I wanted to enter but which one? The best counsellor I then knew was the Principal of the Nursing School where I had studied. She advised me that her own Community would be happy to receive me. Somehow I did not feel this was where the Lord was calling me.

Several times, I had met M.I.C. Sisters whom I had had as patients at the hospital. Among these was Sister Rita Martel who became my good friend. While I was mulling over my problem, she wrote from her mission in Koriyama, asking me whether, as a Nurse, I would be interested in working for a year at the orphanage the Sisters ran in this city. This seemed like God's will for me. I got better acquainted with the Sisters. The year once over, I was able to decide.

But this time my parents showed keen displeasure. My father remarked, "It's a good thing for you to believe in the Christian God, but I don't see why you should join a foreign community." For her part, my mother told me how I was born on July 14, during the Buddhist festival of the dead. She believed in the old superstition that the dead ancestors then visit their former home. Afraid that her ancestors

might claim me, she had hidden me until after the third day, when the ghostly visitors were solemnly taken back to the temples. Now she believed they knew she had cheated them. "You don't belong to me, really, but you belong to them. Since they are claiming you now, I can't oppose them. But why go so far away?"

This was a very trying time for me because I had never gone against my parents' wishes before. During the first six months away from home, I received not a single letter. Finally my mother came to Koriyama for a visit. When she returned to Tokyo, she explained how things were to my family. How happy I was to welcome them all for another visit!

After my perpetual vows, made in Canada, I returned to my homeland where my family gave me a hearty welcome. My dear father died soon after my return. In 1979, my mother had to be hospitalized for a serious ailment. She remained always serene because, as she told me, she felt a soothing interior presence. "God in whom you believe is assisting me", she gently explained to me one day. I asked her whether she would like to be baptized and she gave her assent. She made her first communion while at the hospital. Against all expectations she lived four more years. Every Sunday, she went to Church with other Christians. Before she died she told me that these four years were the happiest of her life.

In 1981, I returned to Canada to serve as a nurse in our own Infirmary. It is a joy and a privilege for me to help care for my sick M.I.C. Sisters who have toiled for so many years in the mission fields around the world. It will be a joy for me to return to my homeland and take up again my apostolate among the young.



Sr. Lucie initiates a 'sing-along' among her new friends.

'My spirit finds joy...'

Sr. Lucie Gagné, M.I.C.

Since a year ago, MIC's have lived and worked at Miarayon with the Talaandig people, one of the ethnic minority groups in Bukidnon, Southern Philippines.

During my stay in Miarayon, I was acutely aware that the process of learning a new cultural tradition, means, above all, observing and listening. I started to meet as many barrio folks as I could, to be at ease with them. A great help was their innately friendly and hospitable nature.

Each new encounter made me realize that mission is an exchange. In the circumstances we were in, the people and I had something to offer each other. They were so eager to teach me their native dialect, the *binukid*. I found a guitar and to my joy I discovered that we could communicate with one another through the universal language of music.

My short stay with the Talaandig people was full of privileged moments of immersion in their community. I experienced to a certain extent

the reality of John Taylor's inscription on a poster which welcomed me on my arrival:

"Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes

for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on men's dreams.

More seriously still, we may forget that God was there before our arrival."

I recognized Jesus in these people. They have helped me discover that there are many ways to accompany people from a different culture in their quest for God. I learned, too, that each missionary moves in accord with his own lights and gifts, but with utmost respect for the dignity of the people and the wisdom they possess. I look forward to know my Talaandig friends more in depth in the near future, upon my return. Only when I have become one with them in their daily lives, struggles and aspirations could I truly begin to speak - not a message foreign to their culture but one that flows from their own experience.

Mary in the missions today

Through the ages God has shown Himself to us in various ways. We catch glimpses of Him in the majestic beauty of nature. He has come to us in the events and people of all generations. He has given us an image of Himself in Jesus.

We believe that Mary, too, is revealed to us in the mothers we meet in the poor countries of our mission world – in the frail African mother, her baby tied to her back, toiling in fields of corn; in the young Aymara mother struggling up the steep slopes of the Andes to bring her child to the Sisters' medical centre; in the sorrowing mother of El Salvador weeping over her murdered son; in the smiling eyes of a Chinese mother in a remote mountain village as she watched her tiny tot, so bright and happy, the one sunny ray of love and joy in an otherwise drab atmosphere.

From the beginning Our Lady has guided missionaries along the way of Jesus. The way has often been beset with difficulties; rejection, sickness and hard times, through wars, imprisonments and death. It is the way the Son of Mary chose to travel and He made it clear that His followers must travel the same road.

Saint Luke has recorded Mary's lyrical poem of praise and prophecy, climaxed by the words: "He has confused the proud in their inmost thoughts..." (Luke 1: 51). She sings of the reversal of values and opinions regarding greatness and insignificance, of God's workings of mercy and power. She saw her Son restoring life's true values to bring health to a sick world. Our Lady continues to remind us of these basic values by recalling for us the life of Her Son. To meditate on the 15 'mysteries', or episodes, of her Rosary is to see again the life of Jesus through the eyes of Mary, to review that life over and over again. Who was He? What did He do?

In the life of Mary's Son, power was not sought, wealth and fame and influence were refused, great achievements and spectacular acclaim were resisted. He chose to move among the lowly and the humble. He felt at home with the hungry, the homeless, the afflicted, the troubled, the oppressed. He ate with sinners, talked with strangers, chided and deflated the arrogant. He lived by and constantly affirmed the rule of right judgment, justice, mercy and good faith.

Our Lady today keeps reminding us of the way her Son walked through life. She keeps telling us: "Do you really want to be His disciples? Do you really want to do His work? Then follow Him. Do as He did. Do it His way."

Excerpts from an article by Bishop McGurkin, M.M.

MaryKnoll

The Children of Peru

By Sr. Louise Pagé, M.I.C.



Hello, my young friends!

I've arrived from Peru and I brought gifts for you... Peruvian brothers and sisters to discover and love! Surely, to do so, you would like to know them. I have filled my heart with precious souvenirs... come and look at them with your hearts.

Upon my arrival, Peru seemed to me a children's world; I met them everywhere I went. Working children, especially, were such a common sight that even tourists noticed them. I was eager to know them. I learned the Spanish language so we could get to know one another better.

Children in Lima's streets

My year at Lima, Peru's capital, brought me many new friends. The games the children play and the toys they like are influenced by their way of life in the city. The city slum children learn endless ways of inventing their own toys. Their play is characterized by creativity and spontaneity.

Among the rich who are a small minority, the children go to the most exclusive schools. Children of the middle class attend public school. For the majority among the poorer

families, the children have little chance to attend school for long. A lucky few go to school in the mornings, but in the afternoons and early evenings they roam about Lima to earn a few cents and help out the family.

Lima's streets are full of children making a living by doing simple tasks. More than anything else, these boys and girls, some as young as four or five, enter into their own world of venture so that they might have bread for themselves and may be something to take home.

Anywhere in Lima, when you park your car, they are there to negotiate a number of services. Or they are ready to clean your windshield while you wait for the red light to change. They travel in groups of three or four, shining shoes; they sing on the buses or carry heavy loads. They are on every corner, on the beaches, and in public places, selling flowers, fruits, cigarettes, newspaper, lottery tickets, or other like items, always bargaining for enough profit to survive.

Young friends in Pucallpa

After my stay at Lima, I worked in Pucallpa, a small town in the valleys.



Frank / UNICEF



Wheater / Mary



Speiser / UNICEF



Wolff / UNICEF

Souvenirs



from **Peru**



ater / Maryknoll



ACDI

There I met other friends who charmed me with their smiles and gentleness. Music comes easily to them, and so do poetry and drawing.

This countryside region is rich in rivers and trees, and provides a natural playground for children. During the dry season, they have acres of forests and fields to explore, trees to climb. What fun they have at fruit-picking: oranges, bananas, papayas, and a variety of other delicious kinds. During the rainy season, streets and backyards get flooded; in some areas the water rises to five feet. How the children enjoy opportunities for swimming and boating!

Although they are cherished by their parents, life is not always made easy for my young friends. For the Peruvian farmer, children are working members of the family and they are expected to do their share. They work alongside their parents at home and in the fields. After school hours, countless chores have to be done. Some boys and girls may be found running errands or carrying burdens too heavy for their frail shoulders. Others fetch water from far distances. Some gather firewood, baby-sit or attend to a variety of household chores. But even work can be fun; these children are ready to chatter and to laugh... nothing seem to dampen their lively spirits.

Glimpses of the highland children

The highland is bleak, austere and devoid of luxuriant vegetation. Yet, despite the hard way of life in this region of snow-covered peaks, the people love their children and do their best to make them happy.

Until recent times, the children of this region seldom went to school; parents saw no need for schooling. Even now, only a few go beyond the primary course. More girls than boys drop out of school early, or never get sent in the first place.

The children of the highland are quiet and reserved and share family responsibilities at an early age. Boys as young as five, in their colourful costumes, playing their *queñas* (bamboo flutes), spend the days herding the llamas and the *vicuñas*, on which their families rely on as a source of wool for the warm clothing they need in the harsh winters. A seven year-old can be counted on to plant and hoe potatoes. A girl of the same age already knows how to cook, knit, or weave. The older children protect and take care of their younger brothers and sisters. The girls learn early to care for the infants in the family.

Invitations to brotherhood

I must admit that quite often, upon meeting the children of Peru, I thought of you, my young friends in other parts of the world. Like you, they have their dreams, their needs, their aspirations. Many of them are poor, but in spite of this, they manifest an admirable zest for life. They are boys and girls who not only want to be recognized and appreciated for the role they play within their own families and community, but also to be known and loved by their brothers and sisters around the world. Together with you, they dream of participating in the building of a better tomorrow.

For them and for you, I wish a deeper understanding of the universal call to brotherhood...

Brotherhood is wanting to know and love one's brothers and sisters around the world.

Brotherhood is accepting and appreciating others who are different in culture, creed or colour.

Brotherhood is helping and sharing, with an open heart, in a spirit of joy and peace.

Pont-Viau, Canada

'His love is from age to age...'

Sr. Alice Larouche, M.I.C.

On my final return to Canada after 42 mission years in mainland China, the Philippines, and Taiwan, I found that I was not ready to set aside all active apostolate. What could I do? My knowledge of the Chinese language encouraged me to hope that I could perhaps continue to serve the Chinese people, by working with the immigrants.

It took a dramatic event to challenge me directly and thrust me into action: the exodus of refugees from South East Asia. There has been a marked increase in the number of refugees entering Canadian ports particularly during the present decade. The numbers continue to grow. Loss of property, lack of jobs, or plain poverty have driven people from their homes in the search to alleviate their distress and gain access to the amenities of the

modern world. It is the same story all over again: women, children, old and young, flee their country and leave their land because they fear persecution and even more because they are in fear of losing their lives. Streaming from their countries of origin into foreign ports, the homeless hoped for resettlement wherever compassion was found. And compassion was found... For those who have safely reached a welcoming land, the chance of a better life holds genuine promise.

The year 1980 witnessed the massive arrival of refugees in Canada and any assistance from the private sector was welcomed by the official agencies in charge of resettlement programs. I felt very happy and privileged to join my M.I.C. companions in Pont Viau in taking care

Sr. Alice (center, front row), Sr. Marie-Berthe Fleurent (center, back row) and their Vietnamese students take a break from classes.



of several refugee families. We helped by giving French lessons to the families placed in our care.

At least thirty 'students' have since then spent time with me in my little classroom.

However, in spite of all the satisfaction my classes brought to me, I was hoping that someday I would be asked to give religious instruction, with baptism in view. I waited and a request finally came! The Sisters of Holy Cross asked me to initiate a Laotian couple in the Catholic doctrine. Boun My and his wife Nipha speak Mandarin and their knowledge of French is as yet rudimentary. It has been five months now that we traveled together the

road of discovery of God's plan for mankind. I am often touched by their questions; I am filled with wonder to hear their prayers, and to watch the disclosure of their budding faith during our exchanges. Within a few months, I believe they will both be ready to be presented to the diocesan catchment. This task, so much in keeping with my missionary vocation, fills my deepest aspirations. I discover that the couple to whom I teach are not just refugees... they are persons who count on my help, so that they can once again believe that 'to be human' means to be able to care and share with a gesture of goodness and solidarity, in a spirit of true brotherhood.

Delia Tetreault
M.I.C. Foundress

'He has done great things for me...'

By Sr. Madeline Maillet, M.I.C.

Beginnings

At a time when Canadian women enjoyed little prestige and possessed still less resources (1902), it took a great deal of courage for Delia Tetreault to launch her missionary project. She had long hesitated before taking the decisive step, wishing to make sure that this - the foundation of a missionary community - was really what the Lord required of her.

So deep were her faith and trust in divine Providence that they ren-

dered her capable of undertaking great things.

Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

In the fall of 1904 Archbishop Paul Bruchesi of Montreal brought from Rome the seal of papal approbation. How Delia rejoiced to hear that Pope Pius X himself had deigned, not only to approve the foundation, but to decide by what name it should be known, "Society of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception".



*The MIC's today: of different nationalities, all missionaries in a spirit of **Thanksgiving**.*

Missions Abroad

In 1909, in response to an urgent appeal from Bishop Merel of Canton, China, the first group of six M.I.C. Sisters left the Motherhouse, bound for their distant field of apostolate. Their departure created quite a stir, for theirs was the first group of Sisters sent out by a purely French Canadian Missionary Society. It was to be followed by countless others, not only to China but to several other countries around the world.

Delia's work at home and in the distant mission field continued to be blessed with a remarkable expansion. Archbishop Bruchesi could write in 1938, "To my knowledge no other community has, within the space of a few short years, flourished as much as your Institute has flourished." The equally rapid development of the Foreign Mission Seminary caused her to exult and to magnify the Lord. Scores of young men were drawn to this apostolic centre, eager to cooperate

in the great work of evangelization thus obeying the Lord's last command, "Go and teach all nations..."

Toward the last days

But the years were rapidly depleting her physical endurance. Only her indomitable will kept her on her feet. In the Fall of 1933, however, the limit was reached. She fell seriously ill and was forced to take to her bed. Now came the ultimate test of her courage. Although it was not easy for her to accept the limitations of disease, sickness did not change Delia. It only served to reveal in all their mellowed perfection the qualities she had always practised. The hushed evening of silent contemplation had fallen on the laborious day of an active apostolate for her whose courage was fully consistent with a rare dynamism. One of Delia Tetreault's closest friends paid her the following delicate tribute which aptly described her whole life: "I thank God for all He has done in you and through you."

Mission Briefs



'The hungry He has given every good thing...'

Les Cayes - Haiti:

The year 1982 was decreed a Eucharistic, Marian Year in Haiti, and was the occasion for numerous religious celebrations in the whole country. Here at 'Les Cayes', the Diocesan Committee of which I am a member organized a Regional Congress for Haitian youth.

The Congress mobilized the entire population of 'Les Cayes' as the transportation, lodging and feeding of two thousand young persons from 7 dioceses presented a few strategic problems. However, the difficulties were overcome with much good will and cooperation.

The Congress was so organized as to help young people discover their place in the Haitian Church. During three days, speakers and resource persons animated sessions on the following themes: "Justice and Peace", "Youth and the Eucharist", and "Mary, Mama of Haitian Youth".

I feel very privileged to have lived the Eucharistic, Marian Year with the people, in communion with all the young Haitians who are full of ideals and ready to live Christian options for justice and peace in today's world.

Sr. Clemence Trudel, M.I.C.

Chipata - Zambia:

At St. Ann's Homecraft Centre, a new program has been integrated with the regular Domestic Science course. Sr. Bien Torres, M.I.C., has introduced a 3-month pilot program for training Zambian girls to be leaders of small Christian communities. The program's emphasis is on basic Christian living, particularly on prayer, community sharing and services. Sessions are given for 2½ hours weekly and deal with topics on the Church, Prayer, Social Justice, Group Dynamics and Human Relationship. The program will end with three days of intensive prayer and reflections.

The second term of this pilot-program will be devoted to the on-going formation of the students at the Centre.

The Echo, Feb. '83

The United Nations has set 1983 as **World Communication Year**, encouraging the mass media to increase efforts to combat the problems of hunger and underdevelopment, violence and war, ignorance and apathy.

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

May, 1983

Davao, (Philippines)
St-Hubert, Montreal, (Canada)
Chantal (Haiti)
Wakamatsu (Japan)
Quebec, du Parc (Canada)
Banga (Malawi)
Malita (Philippines)
San Juan de Miraflores (Peru)

June, 1983

Lima, Prov. House (Peru)
Mati (Philippines)
Ancud (Chile)
Los Palacios (Cuba)
Shih Kuang Tse (Taiwan)
St. Jean (Canada)
Somerville, Montreal, (Canada)
Koriyama (Japan)

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION (ICMA)

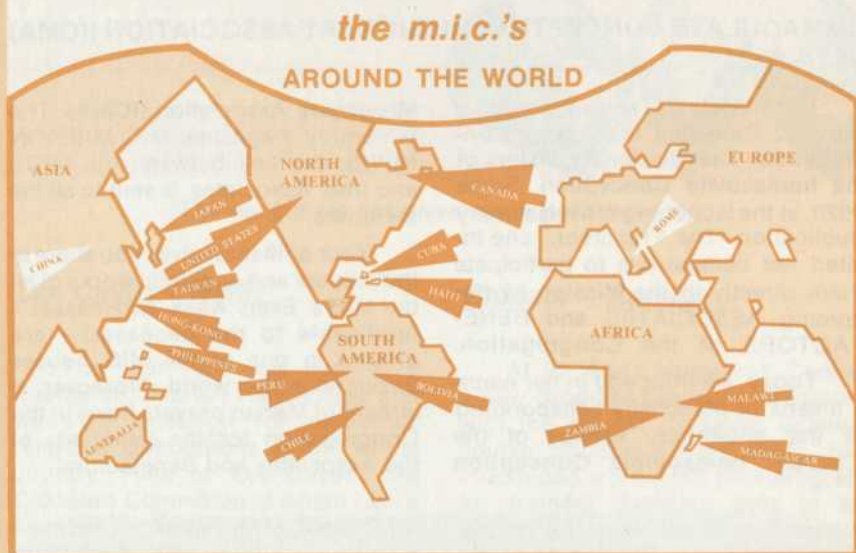
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