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MIC

MISSION NEWS



THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Dear Readers,

In our present edition of MIC MISSION NEWS, we bring in the theme "journeys". It is appropriate to the articles and to the events that occurred in Canada these last months.

The journeys of the Tall Ships over the seas held us all spellbound as many of us watched them unfurl their long masts in our Canadian cities.

The unforgettable pastoral journey of Pope John Paul II is also over. The spiritual messages that he left us all in his numerous talks will be food for reflection and prayer in the years to come.

Missionaries too have long journeys. There are always some of us leaving for other countries, and summertime is the busiest season, for many an MIC is boarding a plane bound for the missions.

One MIC relates here how her missionary journey took her to several parts of Asia, as events pushed her here and there. Another missionary friend at home, tells us how events kept her in her homeland all these years in spite of her dreams. A group of young MIC's from Taiwan and the Philippines explain how exciting yet how peaceful are their days of preparation for their future missionary journey into the Unknown.

So, as we all begin another part of our own journey, let us remember that there is always another mountain to climb until we reach the end of the road.

The Editor.

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*Cover photo by Mr. Jacques Turcotte.
One of the Tall Ships on her journey.*



"The Novitiate is to the Congregation what the cradle is to the family. All the hopes and joys of the Congregation rest upon the ones in formation."

These were some of the favorite words of our Foundress, Delia Tetreault. They were expressed to some novices in Canada many years ago. They are meaningful to us novices, here in Baguio, the cool city in the mountains of the Philippines where our Novitiate building is situated. Here, on top of a hill overlooking the city, we can marvel at God's creation in a milieu conducive to prayer, solitude and silence. He knows that we have many miles to

travel while attempting to reach Him as we pass through this period of discernment and intense preparation for our personal commitment to Christ in this missionary institute of the M.I.C. Sisters.

We have just begun our journey, our first YES to Him. We felt His call and we have responded in Faith. Acknowledging Him as our Formator and trusting in His infinite Love, we remain open to His program. We know that we are undergoing the process of transformation which will make us more effective instruments to fulfill the mission he will entrust to us later.

whatever we do...we do all for the

glory of God and to prepare ourselves



Left to right: Elvira Madolora, Fenecia Dapitanon, Nonette Ortiz, Flora Capul, Lorna Fajardo, Irene Ferrer.

To provide an integrated formation, we organized a community program with respect to our apostolic and personal life style. All this is geared to help us discover our personal gifts as well as our needs and limitations. We wish to become our best true selves while relating to God, others and self. Through individual meetings with our Directress as well as in group sharing, we evaluate each month our lived experience.

We attend inter-novitiate classes with varied courses such as Scripture, Ecclesiology, Mariology, Social Doctrine of the Church. We also participate in personal and inter-personal sessions where much discussion and sharing occur. During these encounters we novices feel that we are given the chance to experience the value of a religious vocation. Moreover, our Directress, Sr Guadalupe Sempio, gives us regular talks which con-

tribute to our spiritual, human and MIC growth.

Through the "Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life", we are developing a deeper knowledge of Christ as we grow in His intimacy. His words become incarnate in our lives as we integrate our spiritual experiences with our relationships, activities, ordinary and significant happenings within our Novitiate community and the larger communities, the M.I.C., the Church, our country and the world.

We six novices here are also involved in different types of work. Some of us do pastoral work each week in a nearby barrio, Tocmo. We prepare the liturgy and services while sharing the Good News with our country's minority groups. We help get marriages validated, prepare some for Baptism and other Sacraments.

to become missionaries!



Irene Ferrer, leaving for her pastoral work.

Another group does to Tiptop, a neighboring community working with people in building up a basic Christian community. Some of us spend hours with poor children, giving them basic education in reading, writing as well as religious education. A nurse in our group has started a "de-worming" program for undernourished children of the same area.

Our formation would be incomplete without training in household tasks. We share together in community services by taking weekly turns in the kitchen, laundry and cleaning. We take lessons in dressmaking, learning to make our own clothes as well as some for the poor children. We also become farmers at certain times since we cultivate a patch of garden, where vegetables, ornamental plants and fruit trees grow.

These many experiences in the

Novitiate have enriched us very much. They challenge us to integrate them properly and they help us too, in our growth and recognition of the Lord and His call. The evangelical counsels are no longer mere concepts and religious idealism.

Each day, as we experience God's gratuitous love and mercy, we become more open and docile, like Mary, ready to be transformed in Christ by His Spirit.

We are moving forward to where God has called us. Each day is precious for it contributes to the fulfillment of His beautiful plan for us. We are not in anxiety for we remember the words of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit: "The good Lord knows which ways we must pass to accomplish His designs and He leads us step by step." With her, we ask Our Lady to teach us to live that life of a real Marian missionary, a life of ECCE-FIAT-MAGNIFICAT.

Stepping

stones

in the

A Missionary has a long journey to cover. There are many stepping stones in life before the journey ends.

When Sister Jeanne Bouchard was 26 years old, she accepted to leave for far away China. At that time, the Sisters left Canada for good, not expecting ever to return. So, it was a farewell to parents and friends. Humanly speaking, it was heartbreaking, but paradoxically, her missionary heart was simply overflowing with joy. "I felt I was answering the call of the Lord," she says. Her first mission was in Northern China, in Manchuria. This was 1939. As she was a trained nurse, she gave herself body and soul to her patients coming to her for relief.

In 1947, she was forced to flee from Manchuria because of war. She was then assigned to the leprosarium in Sheklung. Here she found her joy in relieving lepers and serving them day and night. But once more, she was obliged to give up her work and leave. She had no choice! In 1952, after the Communist takeover in China, she was expelled from China! "My heart nearly broke that day!" she admits.

Without returning to Canada, Sr. Jeanne undertook work in Hong Kong this time. Naturally, this new

insertion meant learning another Chinese dialect to work with the poor people. In China, she had mastered Mandarin which was somewhat simpler than the complicated Cantonese dialect spoken by the people of Hong Kong. Only her strong faith could sustain her at this point. "It was in utter poverty of being and in all simplicity, that once more I assumed my nursing services among the poor and the underprivileged refugees... I felt that God was very good to me to allow me once more the freedom to express my missionary zeal by serving this portion of suffering humanity."

In 1957, upon the invitation of Fr. Paul Duchesne, M.M., she took charge of a Clinic in Diamond Hill in Kowloon. This was one of the poorest areas of the time where thousands of refugees from China were huddled together in makeshift houses. The Clinic building itself was modest but the services rendered were first class. In no time at all, Sr. Jeanne managed to discover where some of her former leper patients were living. Her joy was boundless for she could continue helping them with funds received from Canadian benefactors. "In

Sr Jeanne Bouchard explains how her journey led her from Canada to Manchuria then to Shek Lung and finally to Hong Kong.

missions

each one of them, I saw the face of Jesus". For more than 35 years now, Sr Jeanne has managed the clinic at Diamond Hill. All this time she was financially supported by the MIC Sisters and by donations from benefactors in Canada and the United States.

The Clinic received some 30 patients per day until it closed this year. For years, it had also served as a distribution centre during the influx of refugees in the 60's. Here, flour, rice, milk powder, oil, noodles and clothes were distribute daily to Chinese people who had just left the Mainland. It also served as a Catechumenate Centre, with Sr Laura Therien, MIC, preparing hundreds of catechumens for Baptism.

The HK Government has recently opened a modern clinic with updated medical facilities to serve the people of the area. The MIC clinic is now closed with "mission accomplished".

All through these years Sr Jeanne was helped by a faithful Chinese lady, Mrs. Che who stood by her through thick and thin for 27 years! An admirable Catholic, totally dedi-



Sr Jeanne Bouchard and Mrs. Che at the Diamond Hill Clinic.

cated to her work, Mrs. Che was in the clinic every day. She accompanied patients to hospitals, visited them afterwards, followed them up until they recuperated. Sr Jeanne feels that without the cooperation and help of her dedicated helper she would have been unable to carry on the work by herself.

Now, when she returns to Hong Kong late this year, Mrs. Che and Sister will visit poor patients in the Government hospitals, comforting them with their hope, their joy and love.

Thus the service still goes on...

(From an interview by Colette Soucy, MIC at Diamond Hill Clinic, Kowloon, H.K.)

In her lifetime, Delia Tetreault once said: "What better way for us to thank God than by giving him children who will sing his goodness throughout the ages."

Up to this day, M.I.C.'s throughout the world continue to inspire children of all races and cultures to sing the praises of God.

Experience moreover shows that mutuality is the name of the game. Three young M.I.C. sisters in Taiwan tell us how each of them has been inspired by the children they met in the classroom or in the camp.

Theresa Chang, a novice from Kuanhsi, relates how camp life captures the young at heart...

"The theme of the children's camp this year is "I Love My Family". Children from all parts of Taiwan came together to learn the truth of these words.

Strangers to one another, they were at first shy and afraid to approach others. But once they opened up to one another, their faces lighted up. They began to smile and laugh. It was fun to play with them but it was more heart warming to watch them as enraptured listeners to various speakers: lay, priests, bishops.

They were motivated to embark on a task — the noble task of building up the Body of Christ of becoming an active member of a big family and say, 'I am the Church'. Each day taught them how to live, grow and be rooted in God's family, to experience the joy of togetherness in love.

"Children to sing



Around the table of the Word and Bread each day the children sang and prayed. They listened to experiences of adults who were once upon a time children like themselves.

One newly ordained priest invited them to go further: "Do not be afraid to give up something you like, to share what you have, be not afraid of failure or humiliation. If you stand firm others will follow Jesus — the Way, the Truth and the Life."

A change of attitude became the prominent sign of the children's response to life in the camp.

ng his goodness..."



A group of happy Chinese children at the Camp.

The summer camp is over but its taste remains in my heart. The children captured my heart and I love each one of them. I am happy, too, to belong to this one big family. As a big sister I tried to help them as best I could. They have needs I could not satisfy, is is true, but like St. Paul I say, "I plant, Apollo waters but, it is God who makes the plant grow."

Patricia Luk, a novice from Hong Kong, summarizes how the summer catechism camp deepened her own relationship with God...

"Watching the children grow in their values and relationships made me conscious of my own need to grow in caring, listening, trusting, loving and accepting each one in his uniqueness. Daily life at the camp is a good soil for us all to practice what we preach.

The God who comes to me through this camp experience is a God of a child. May He grant me a heart filled with innocence, freedom, peace, joy, tenderness, love! May the child in me grow to the full stature of Christ!"



Theresa Chang and Patricia Luk, MIC novices, happy with their summer camp experience.



Theresa Hsiao, M.I.C., with a group of First Communicants.

Theresa Hsiao, M.I.C. shares with us the entries in her Journal...

'At the end of June '83, I moved from Taipei to Kuanhsi for an apostolic experience. While there I taught the summer class of first communicants. I had seven pupils: five boys and two girls.

July 11: Our group can easily constitute one family... five are related and two are cousins.

July 15: The naughtiest boy in class asked if he may choose himself as one of the two "good students" I had asked them to select. "If you think you are good enough..." came my reply. After class he offered me a pencil... A gift of love...?

July 25: We learned how to pray, how to talk with Jesus. Before each class we offered ourselves to God... at the end of the class we sang songs of praise and thanks. I found joy with each song we sing and I remember what Delia Tetreault Taught us: "... repay God by giving him children who will sing his praises forever."

Aug. 11: Since the children are ready for their first communion, we started our home visits to prepare the parents for the coming feast. At each home we sang songs to thank the family for their hospitality. This attracted the attention of the non-Catholic neighbours. Joy becomes a powerful witness.

Aug. 17: Quietly the children arrived for their mini-retreat. Paper apple cuttings were hanging from nearby tree and each child picked two apples. On each apple is written the fruit which God's Word bore in them during these six weeks. It was a real harvest time for them and for me!

Like St. Paul, my heart cried out in thanksgiving: "What do you think is our pride and your joy? You are. And you will be the crown of which we shall be proudest in the presence of the Lord Jesus when He comes." (1 Thess. 2:20)

(Edited by Angie Yap, M.I.C.)

As the journey



Miss Mary E. Whelan

Dear Sister Therese,

Thank you for your beautiful gift: "WHO IS DELIA TETREAU?" It is delightful and inspiring reading; and I am grateful to you for having introduced me to this saintly and courageous woman; I am already seeking her intercession for graces which I need!

The work which she inspired is very dear to my heart; and I feel that her spirit of evangelical dedication is being perpetuated in these valiant souls who have chosen to follow her, since it has already spread into four continents of our poor confused world. I should like to have the privilege of helping in some way to

is ending...

a new dawn

After an active and interesting life of ninety-five years, a friend of the missions repeats how good God has been to her during all these years!

alleviate the suffering of those who are in need in so many places; and I believe that the community of Mère Marie-du-Saint-Esprit will know how our Divine Master wishes to dispose of the proceeds of the enclosed cheque which I am happy to contribute. God has been good to me; this belongs to Him.

It may interest you to know that your predecessor, Sister Anthea Raso, visited me in my apartment before I came to reside here; she registered me as a life member at that time.

At the time of her visit, I told her that I felt a close attachement to the M.I.C.s and I related to her an inci-

dent which occurred while I was attending school about 1904. At recess one day, one of my classmates asked me: "What will you do, Mary, when you are grown up?" My reply was: "I wish to found a community of Sisters". "And what will you call that community?" I was not prepared for that question, but after a moment's reflection, I replied: "I shall call it The Sisters of the Immaculate Conception." (I knew of no such community at the time). Well, just a few years later I entered the business world, as a stenographer, and found it most interesting and much to my liking, whereas my lovely little classmate entered religious life.

Years passed... then another incident, around 1922 brought me in touch with the M.I.C.s. One day I was sent to deliver a book by a certain religious priest. Just as I was leaving, the good Father asked me if I had ever considered becoming a religious. I told him that I had, but I did not feel it was the life for me. He said: "You are the very type of girl who should be in the convent." Then he invited me to visit a certain Sister — (I cannot recall her name) — at the Convent of the Missionary



Sisters of the Immaculate Conception on Côte St. Catherine Road.

I told him I thought she was in China. He replied that she had come home now. "I would like YOU to go to China," was the unexpected answer. Then I told Father about having met a lady who had showed me pictures of her sister in China. She had even given me one. It showed Sister holding an oval basket containing infant Chinese girls, not wanted by their parents. It was the very same person he was inviting me to see!

As I was mounting the walk to the M.I.C. convent door, I remembered my youthful ambition and I told the Sister at the door that at one time in my life I had said that I was going to **found** her community. She told me that in 1904 the community was just being founded and that if I had entered I would have been considered a co-foundress because the Mother Foundress was still alive.

How mysterious is our life! I am now in my ninety-fifth year of an active and interesting life, interspersed with its joys and some deep sorrows; but, in viewing it in retrospect, I know that God has been at the helm of my barque along the way. Since reading about Mother Marie-du-Saint-Esprit, however, I have been wondering what paths I might have trodden had I come under her influence around 1911.

Congratulations on your appointment as Editor of MIC MISSION NEWS, a great little publication which I enjoy reading.

Sincerely, a late comer,

(Miss) Mary E. Whalen

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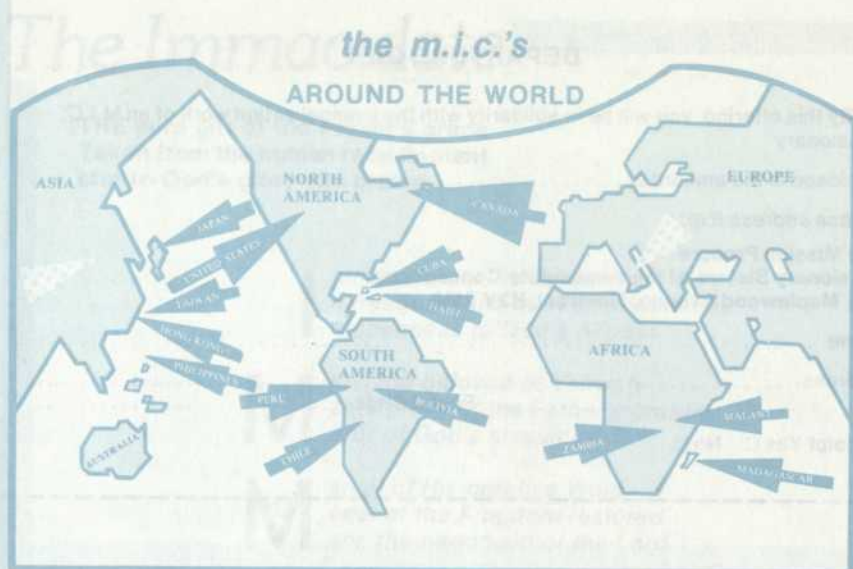
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