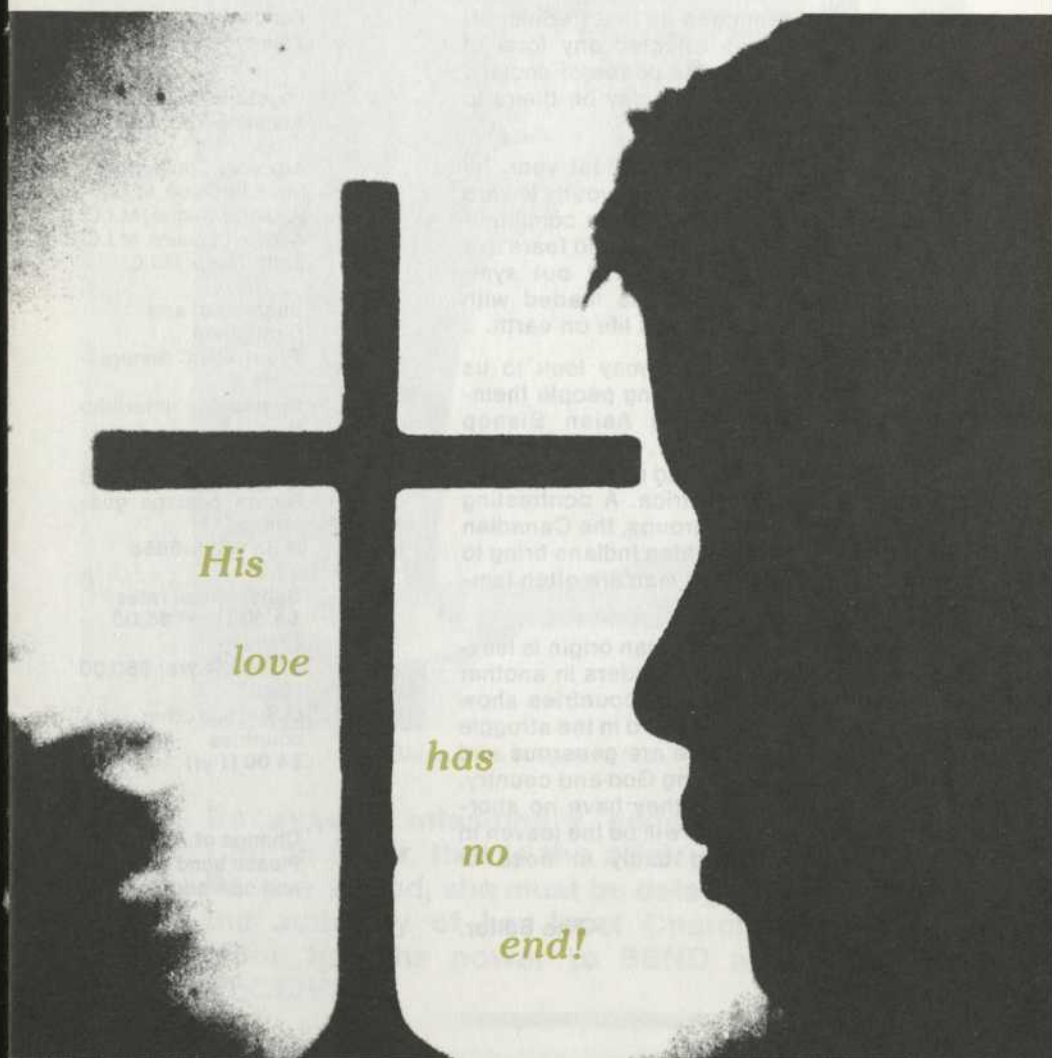


Series 12, No. 2
March-April 1985

MIC

MISSION NEWS



THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Dear Readers,

On January 1, 1985, Pope John Paul II in his message for the World Day of Peace and the opening of the International Youth Year, stressed that peace was one of the missions of youth.

His message reminded us that traditionally, youth has always rejected any form of injustice that disturbs the peace of society, that society which will one day be theirs to lead.

During his visit to Canada, last year, he noted the strong sensitivity of youth toward world peace as they dramatically communicated to that world their hopes and fears in a glorious pageant. They pointed out symbolically, that the world was loaded with arsenals ready to destroy all life on earth.

But grim as the picture may look to us today, that hope lies in young people themselves. This is what an Asian Bishop reminds youth in this issue. In the missions, youth is often exploited and neglected as we read in the article of Africa. A contrasting picture of two minority groups, the Canadian Indians and the Guatemalan Indians bring to the fore that the rights of man are often tampered with.

An M.I.C. missionary of Asian origin is leaving her land to help form leaders in another continent. The Third World countries show that youth are in the vanguard in the struggle for justice. These people are generous and not afraid to invest serving God and country. That also explains why they have no shortage of vocations. These will be the leaven in the dough in a world badly in need of Redemption.

The Editor.

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Taiwan

Go, tell everyone...



Maria Goretti Syun, M.I.C.

Because a missionary send-off is a Church affair, that is the affair of all the People of God, she must be delegated by the authority of her local Church who alone has the power to SEND and to RECEIVE.



*Sr. Maria Goretti Syun, M.I.C.
receives a parting gift from the Church of Taiwan*

For many years already, the Canadian Church has been sending Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception all over the world to help proclaim the Good News of Salvation to those who never heard of it. These Sisters are now scattered in 14 countries.

One of the many who heard these Good News through the Sisters was a girl named Maria Goretti Syun of Kuanhsi, Taiwan. Today, it is her turn to bring these same Good News to the people of Zambia, Central Africa. It is a big step for Sr. Maria and a giant step for the Church of Taiwan to send her forth to others.

The first send-off took place in Montreal, in 1909, when the Foundress herself, Delia Tetreault, saw her Sisters leave for far-off China.

As the Institute grew and as women of other nationalities joined the M.I.C.'s, other Churches and countries began sharing the responsibility of the missions.

The Philippine Church has already sent many of her M.I.C.'s abroad; several of them are now serving in Africa, Japan, South America, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Canada. The Cuban and Haitian M.I.C.'s have also taken off for their missions. The Japanese Sisters have offered their

services in Haiti, Philippines and Canada. The Hong Kong Chinese Sisters have had their share in the mission as well.

This exchange between the various local Churches goes on and on, each one bringing something new, something enriching to the receiving Church. There is a gradual growth in faith as the exchange goes on.

Last summer, it was the Chinese Church of Taiwan that formally entered into the plan of God. Sr. Maria Goretti Syun accepted from her local Church to go and proclaim the Good News of Christ through a joyful service in the Church of Zambia, in Central Africa.

Someone of Taiwan pointed to Sister that this outward thrust towards others was not the usual way of thinking and acting for a Chinese person.

But for a Chinese Christian person, a member of the M.I.C. congregation, it was the normal road to take. On her profession day, Sr. Maria had already offered herself to God and had accepted to be sent off to other nations if the superiors asked it.

This time it was Africa who called. She had a ready answer: "Here I am Lord, to serve you there as long as they need me!" And that, for an M.I.C. means for life!

Because a missionary send-off is a Church affair, that is the affair of all the People of God, she must be delegated by the authority of her local Church who alone has the power to **send** and to **receive**.

This carefully prepared event took place in Taipei with the Very Reverend Archbishop Lokuang presiding the ceremony, in front of community, relatives and friends.



Sr. Maria Goretti with her mother and other family members.



Offertory procession with Sr. Aline Dumas, Provincial Superior.

After Communion time, in a personal prayer, Sr. Maria expressed her thanksgiving to God to be chosen for such an apostolic task. Then the Provincial Superior, Sr. Aline Dumas lit a candle and offered it to Sr. Maria in the name of the missionary congregation. After a brief dialogue with the presiding Bishop, she received the official mandate "to go forth to Zambia in the name of the Church of China".

Sr. Maria Goretti first met the Sisters in her native village Kuanhsi. There, Sr. Blanche Menard, seeing the eagerness of the young girl to become a Christian, prepared her carefully for her Baptism. In 1967, she joined the congregation of the M.I.C.'s and after her initial forma-

tion as a religious, was sent to Hong Kong to pursue studies in English.

After her return to Taiwan, she made her final commitment to God in 1976. Then she took up advanced studies at the Fu Jen Theological where she graduated with honors. For several years, she taught full time at the Taiwan Pastoral Centre in Taipei.

Her new appointment now will bring her to the Leadership Training Centre at Chipata, Zambia. This diocese is under the leadership of a Zambian, Bishop J.M. Mazombwe. The diocese can count 662,500 as population with about 20% of them being Catholic. The M.I.C.'s have been serving there since 1954.



Pastoral Centre colleagues pledging support...

Maria Goretti left behind her, three brothers and one sister, as well as a fervent Catholic mother, a daily Mass attendant at 80. All of them support her in her mission endeavor.

Sr. Maria sees her send-off as an outcome of her most ardent wishes. When her friends questioned her on her mission yearning, they exposed to her the needs of the Taiwan Church. Should it not be one of her priorities to serve the young Church of Taiwan first and foremost?

Her answer, based on what Vatican II, expressed in "Ad Gentes", explains fully why she is leaving:

"In order that this mission zeal may flourish among native mem-

bers, it is very fitting that young Churches should participate as soon as possible in the universal mission work of the Church. Let them send their own missionaries to proclaim the gospel all over the world, even though they themselves are suffering from a shortage of clergy. For their communion with the universal Church reaches a certain measure of perfection when they themselves take an active role in missionary zeal towards the nations." (Art. 20, Ad Gentes.)

Sr. Maria feels that her responsibility springs from her Baptism. She wants to share the faith she received. She adds that as an M.I.C. she must go and proclaim the Good News that the Kingdom of God is near.

It was a wonderful trip by plane. The purpose was to make the Guatemalan Indians known to the Canadian Indians and thus foster a spirit of solidarity among them. After acquiring information about the life and privileges of the Canadian Indians, we verified once more the situation of the underprivileged Guatemalan Indians.

Fr. Maurice was on hand to meet us at Fort Rupert. To our surprise, the Chief of the Cree nation, a 28 year-old man was on the same plane, and we did not know it.

We were introduced to him on landing, and this acquaintance facilitated our travels throughout the Cree region. The Indians here govern themselves and are the ones to extend invitations. The white people living there are their employees. The Indians are organized in eight villages. Each group is governed by its own council and for the eight villages there is a great chief who lives in Val d'Or. He directs the Cree nation with the heads of each village group.

On arrival, we visited the village, the newly constructed school, the cultural centre, the dispensary, the Post Office and the Pentecostal Church. It happens that 60% of the population belong to this religious group and the pastor himself is a Cree.

He invited us to a community meeting in his church building where we presented a diaporama on the Guatemalan Indians, explaining their life style, their poverty, their sufferings and persecutions. Our first encounter raised questions and interested everyone in the village.

Visit to the

Celine Descamps, Sr. Gliceria and two Cree friends



Glicería Acosta, M.I.C.

the Crees

Sister Glicería Acosta, a Cuban M.I.C., accompanied by a Guatemalan friend, had the privilege to be invited by Father Maurice Provencher, O.M.I., at Fort Rupert, Northern Quebec, where the Crees live.

friends.



The following day we were invited for a radio interview. Questions were raised on the government, education, health, life style, slavery among the Guatemalan Indians. The groups were deeply touched when they heard of the hard life led by the Guatemalans.

The Guatemalan Indians are slaves, poor and lowly while the Crees are free, rich, and able to govern their groups. The Crees are spoiled and protected by the Federal and Provincial governments.

Fort Rupert has a population of some 300 Crees living in 60 houses constructed by the government. These homes have all the modern conveniences of our society. However, since the changes were too rapid, they neglect the maintenance of their homes. They also own motor boats, motor cycles and a portion of the land is allotted to each family for hunting.

More than 40% of the Crees do not believe in God and have no religion whatsoever. There again lies the big difference between the Guatemalan Indians who have nothing, but believe in God, in the Catholic Church and who allow themselves to be guided by the Church leaders.

I managed during the visit to put across a short message on evangelization. The Crees, like the Indians of Guatemala, like all men, like us, want only one thing: to be loved, respected and accepted as they are.

We came back enriched by the experience of meeting our Cree brothers who welcomed us and opened the door of their hearts and homes to us.

"Rosie" Helps Marita



Marita learning to use her crutches.

Africa

Have you ever heard of a Cabbage Patch Doll that came to the help of the Missionary Sisters? Yes, there is one. Her name is "Rosie" and she was won in a raffle by a little girl named Todd Bracken, of St. Leonard, Ont.

How did "Rosie" become involved with mission enterprises? Well, it was after the visit of Sr Yvonne Ayotte, of New Liskeard, Ontario, in their Primary School last year.

Sister Yvonne told the pupils about a group of handicapped girls that really needed their help. The children responded by holding a Lenten raffle and the proceeds were sent to Mzimba, Malawi, where Sr. Yvonne works.

In a country like Canada, handicapped persons get the benefit of many social privileges, from the government as well as from society itself. A disabled person can lead a normal life as he has the rights to receive free medical care as well as government subvention.

In a country such as Malawi, Central Africa, there are no such privileges for the people living in the so-called "dead North".

That is why the M.I.C.'s took a first step to open a Centre for handicapped girls of the area. As the White Fathers visited each mission post, they discovered more and more of these disabled persons, helpless and illiterate, often a burden on their village clan.

So in 1979, the Year of the Handicapped, the M.I.C.'s opened St. Paul Handicapped Centre for Girls

at Mzimba, Malawi. They had no funds at all on hand and counted on God's Providence to inspire Canadian benefactors to help. And they did!

The Centre with its two buildings can lodge about 16 young girls, disabled in some form or other, yet intelligent enough to follow courses in reading, writing, mathematics and religion.

The parents were jubilant for no one could take care of them, much less educate them so as to prepare them to earn their own living.

This enterprise meant that the handicapped girls would need medical aid and often surgery, followed by physio-therapy. Someone would be needed to accompany them to the hospitals for treatment. These are at a distance of some 150 miles away. Additional fees would be required for transportation, for equipment such as wheel chairs, callipers, crutches, braces etc.

Last year, when Marita, a young unknown girl telephoned from a bus station at Mzimba, she asked to be admitted at once. But someone had to pick her up. A patient with two legs in plaster casts after surgery is in no condition to walk two miles.

In no time at all, Sr. Marie Paule Gaudreau, Directress of the Centre, quickly sewed a new dress to replace the torn and shabby one she was wearing. Her luggage was a mere basket containing few items of clothing.

Marita's troubles were far from over. One of her recently operated legs was causing much pain. The

next day, a bad odor issued from the cast: her wound had become infected!

On communicating with the Rumph Hospital, the Sisters were told to bring her back immediately. The poor girl had hardly recovered from her first painful journey that she had to undertake a seven-hour bus ride to Rumph!

True enough that a journey by car would have been much easier, but petrol was so expensive and so rare in the Mission. Where could the money come from? Just as the Sisters were wondering what to do, one of them suddenly remembered that an amount of money had been received from the school children who had raffled off their Cabbage Patch Doll.

So, the Sisters set off by car. Marita's leg was saved and the badly infected leg would heal after relief was given to her. One week later, she was ready to come back to the Centre.

The others welcomed her with joy. She could now join the education courses and learn to fend for herself. Later, after learning how to sew, she could even obtain a sewing machine with hand pedals to bring to her hometown. This way, she would earn her own living and not be dependent on the family or the village to support her financially.

Thanks to the generosity of benefactors from Canada and elsewhere, Marita and other girls like her, have been able to lead a more normal life, to develop their potentialities, to discover that she was important, unique, in her own way, as a child of God.

*Sister Yvonne Ayotte, M.I.C.
Provincial House*

*P.O. Box 47
Mzimba, Malawi,
Central Africa*



Sr. Claudette Bouchard with some of her students.

Mission comes to us

by Gabrielle Ouimet, M.I.C.

A few months ago, the students of St. Mary's Chinese Day School in San Francisco were passing the word: "There's a new teacher circulating in our midst... Who can she be?"

They watched this new teacher come and go and soon discovered that behind the two black doors along the main hallway was the place where she could be found during the day.

Some of the braver students came forward and asked: "Who are you? Will you be teaching us?" There was a spark of interest in the eyes of many.

It had been announced that Sr. Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C. would be in charge of co-ordinating and directing the religious education programs of the school, as well as that of the Chinese Language School.

With her experience of teaching and administration as principal of Katete Girls' Boarding School, in Malawi, Africa, Sister is well aware of the needs of teen-agers. As former Executive Director of the Toronto Archdiocesan Mission Council, she had many opportunities in organizing workshops for teachers and giving lectures on various topics.

About one week after her arrival, the Catholic students of St. Mary's began meeting with Sr. Claudette on a regular basis. Some were directed to the Confirmation Program, other to the First Communion classes, and others yet in the groups preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Sister also developed a religious education syllabus while in the process of teaching pupils attending evening school. This syllabus is now being used in the grades 4 to 12.

The catechists of the C.C.D. Program also worked with Sr. Claudette to plan the year's work for Sunday School children attending public schools. Youngsters interested in being received in the Family of God are also provided special care and attention that will allow them to experience God's goodness and love.

At the beginning of the school term the Catechists and teachers of St. Mary's attended a Mass where each one received a special anointing as they were sent to their respective parish communities to fulfill their responsibilities in the Spirit of Christ.

Students no longer ask questions about Sr. Claudette; they know who she is, whom she represents and what her mission is all about. Dedicated to the Word of God, Sister has but one dream, that of being God's echo, making him heard and loved.

St. Mary's School is a school for the Chinese children of San Francisco. According to the 1980 census there are some 82,244 persons of Chinese origin in the big city of 677,000. Its Chinatown is considered the world's largest Chinese colony outside of Asia.

St. Mary's School and the Chinese Language School have a total enrolment of 628 students of which 98% are non-Christian. Evangelization is welcomed and appreciated by these youngsters engulfed in a materialistic society which does not satisfy their deep quest for peace and authenticity.

The influx of Asians in the U.S.A. has brought about a phenomena of reverse mission. Immigrants are in need of moral and spiritual support; missionaries are there to guide them in the pastoral field. That is precisely the goals of St. Mary's Chinese Centre and its schools.

For Sr. Claudette, an American M.I.C., being a missionary at home means looking beyond geographical settings. The Kingdom of God knows no boundaries.

Hope for the Future



Yes, Bishop J.B. Wu of Hong Kong believes so, as he addressed the students of Good Hope School, in Kowloon, Hong Kong, last year.

"I would like to say a special word to you, dear students of Good Hope. You are lucky to see this expansion to your school being completed. You have now a splendid new Hall and extension where you can pursue many activities - cultural, religious, social, civic, physical etc.

At the Blessing ceremony we heard the words: "Unless the Lord build a house, the labour is vain." The foundation of all we build on, must be Christ.

He gives purpose to our plans and the assurance that He is with us through all the ups and downs of life. He gives us hope and confidence.

In these times of Kong Kong's history-making events, you may have questions to ask about the **why** and the **wherefore** of life. Be on the look-out for real values which last and can be important to you.

Look for ideals which will enrich

your life, and for which you are ready to forego pleasures, if this comes in the road of your values.

Never be discouraged, do not give up your will to do your best, nor your search for a meaningful lifestyle. Resignation is a form of adaptation to the despair of today's world.

You, the young people are the guardians of hope for the future. You are the leaders of tomorrow.

Here in Good Hope School, the Sisters and lay teachers give you a fine example of dedication and service. Their example will be an inspiration to you in the years to come.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the diocese of Hong Kong, to thank the M.I.C.'s for their excellent contribution to education all over the years.

God Bless you all!"

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By this offering, you will be in solidarity with the evangelization work of an M.I.C. missionary

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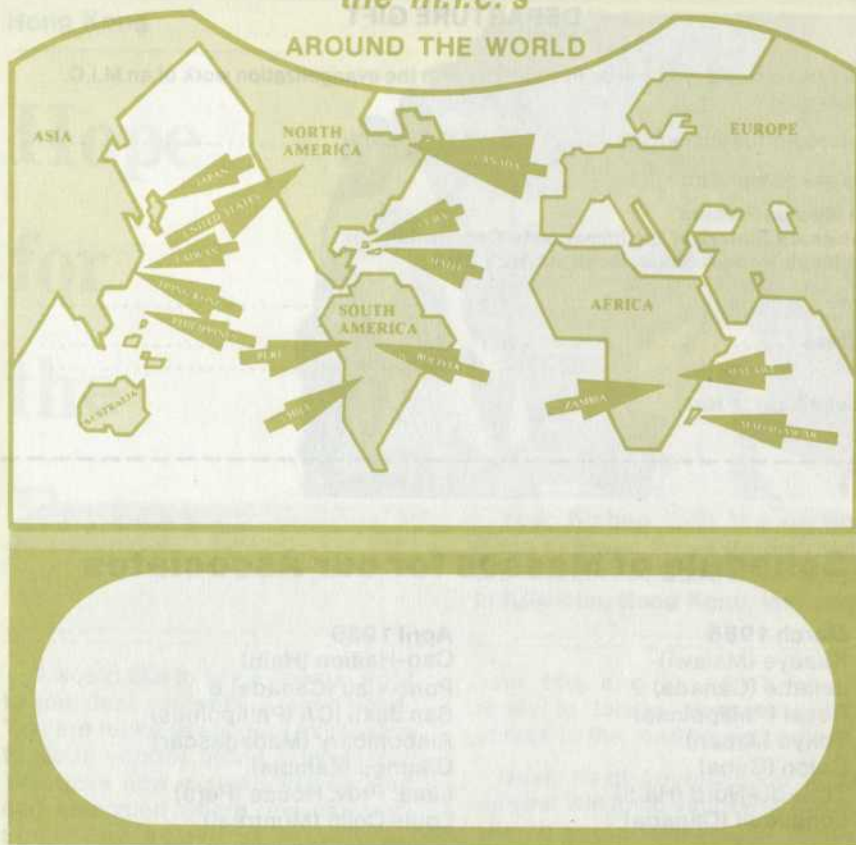
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