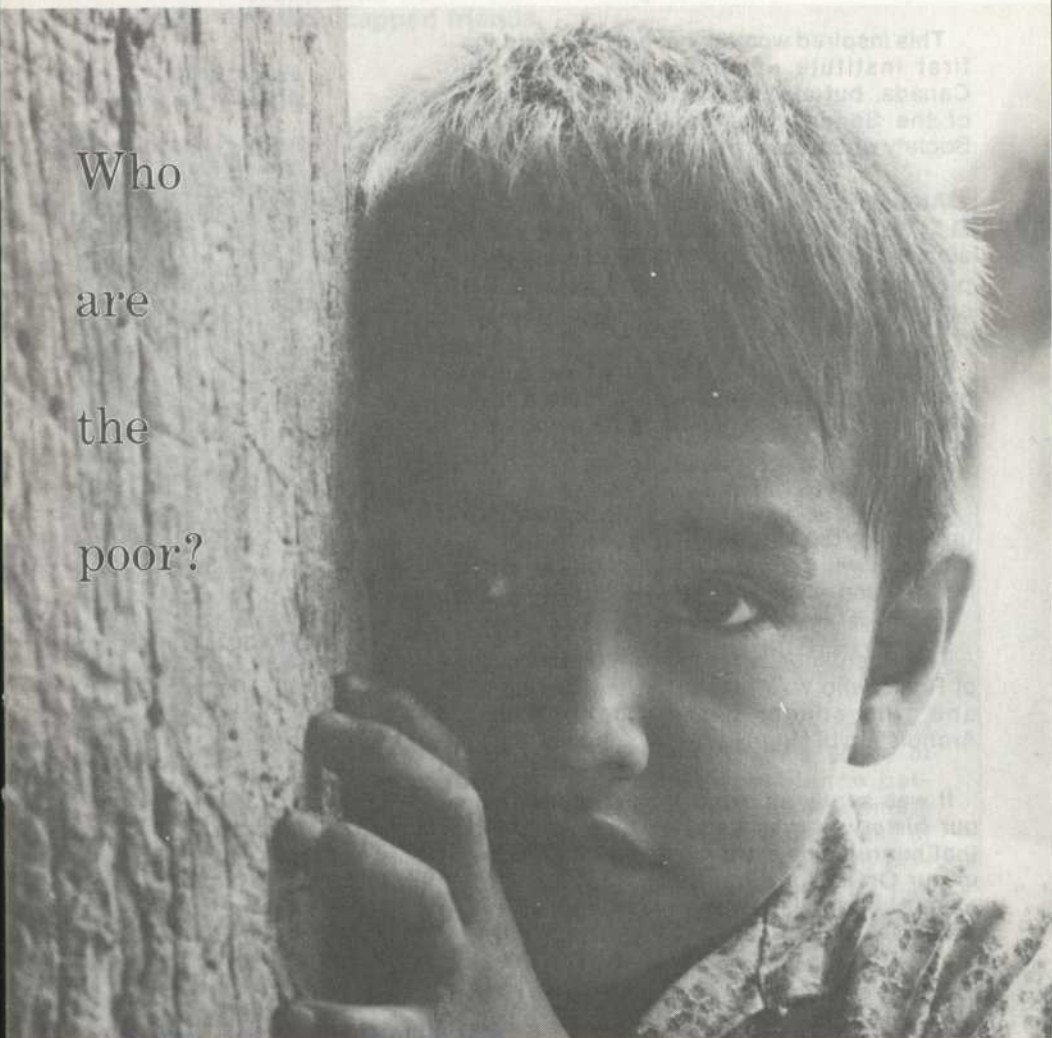


Serie 12, No. 4
July-August 1985

MIC

MISSION NEWS

Who
are
the
poor?



THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Dear Readers,

Last May 19, at Pont Viau, a historic event took place in the chapel of the M.I.C. Sisters.

On this day, the congregation was assembled to celebrate a new phase in the promotion of the Cause of Beatification of our Foundress, Delia Tetreault.

This inspired woman, not only founded the first Institute of missionary women in Canada, but also instigated the foundation of the Seminary of the Foreign Mission Society of Quebec.

Attending the Eucharist were some 400 M.I.C.'s, many Fathers of the Foreign Mission Society, a group of dedicated lay people, and members of an auxiliary association studying the spirituality of Delia Tetreault.

Sisters from about 10 countries were present as this celebration coincided with a general assembly of the Institute being held this summer.

Now that the Cause is formally introduced in Rome, the life and virtues of Delia Tetreault will be carefully studied by a tribunal of inquiry.

The Postulator is Fr. Paolo Molinari, S.J., of Rome who was present at the ceremony and who sought permission from the Archbishop of Montreal to pursue the Cause.

It was surely an event worth recording in our history. It was only in October, 1983, that her remains were exhumed and now lie in our Oratory in Pont Viau. Many persons have already visited the place and all are welcome.

The Editor

MIC MISSION NEWS a bimonthly published by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.
P.O. Box 157,
Laval-des-Rapides
Laval, P.Q., Canada
H7N 4Z4
Tel.: (514) 663-6460

Editor
Therese LeBlanc, M.I.C.

Layout Editor:
Angelina Yap, M.I.C.

Advisory Committee:
Murielle Dubé, M.I.C.
Paulette Gagné, M.I.C.
Angèle Lemaire, M.I.C.
Edita Telan, M.I.C.

Secretariat and
Circulation
Team of MIC Sisters

Printed by "Interlitho
Inc."
Second class mail
Registration No. 0358
Return postage guaranteed
ISSN 0315-9655

Subscription rates:
\$3.00 (1 yr) \$5.00
(2 yrs)
\$10.00 (4 yrs) \$50.00
(life)
U.S.A. and other
countries
\$4.00 (1 yr)

Change of Address:
Please send your old
and new addresses.

What Love Can Do

"Yes, love can go that far. The love of God working through me is also going further than I had anticipated," exclaims Sr. Louise working with her handicapped friends.

... when I first began I was afraid



One day each week, Sr. Louise Bussieres takes off from her accounting office at Good Hope Convent to spend the day with the handicapped at Sun Lee Estate, in Kowloon, Hong Kong.

Sun Lee Centre is not an institution, it is more like an enlarged family. About 40 badly handicapped persons of all ages come to the Centre for personal therapy. Some live there under the care of several Sisters of different congregations and some volunteer workers.

This Centre has only one aim: to create a sense of mutual acceptance between the people coming there. "Just as each one of us has his or her own personal life history, so has each of the mentally or physically handicapped person here. Each one wants to be accepted as a

unique person with her own proper and personal history. Everyone needs to be listened to, everyone needs a listening heart somewhere. Our only hope here is that every helper becomes a listening person." These are the words of Sr. Alice Wengrzynek, M.M. in charge of the project.

And that is exactly what Sr. Louise is doing at Shun Lee: listening!

"I welcome them fully as they are, as they come to me. I'm always amazed at the lines of communication that are established between us.

My day at the Centre is always a full one. We bring out the handicapped for walks or organize special excursions for them. My tasks are simple. I help them to eat, I supervise their activities or organize educational games. Then,



...for me the essential is to be there

She informs us that although she has no formal training, she knows how to love these people and how to accept them and their love expressed in their own peculiar and personal way.

after the so-called class hours, we bathe them. Then I sit down and chat with them. My work is that simple, but it demands a lot of love.

I was somewhat fearful as

I began my volunteer services. I was uneasy wondering how I would function with them. Would they accept me? Could I reach out to them?

It wasn't long before I



... communication can be difficult

realized that it was more important **to be** than **to do**. It was the quality of my presence that was important. That one day a week with the handicapped was no longer considered a working day. It was a pleasure for me to be there.

Let me share with you the joy we all had when we accompanied them to the "Olympics for the Handicapped" at the Hong Kong Stadium. It was something to see them participating in the various sports. They came back proud winners of 7 Gold Medals, 6 Silver and 9

Bronze! It was a triumph for all! Although I was totally exhausted at night (I am no longer 20 years old...) I was spiritually refreshed.

Naturally, with such a group, work is never routine. With such patients you never know what to expect next. Let me give you an example.

One young autistic lady of 19 decided to adopt me. It was difficult to communicate with her, but eventually the barriers broke down and she is now much more communicative. She can now say a few coherent words and this makes her very happy.

Another young man kept covering his face with his sweater and thus retired into his own ivory tower cutting off all contact with other human beings. My first attempts to befriend him met with rough and aggressive responses. I had to protect myself physically at times. I passed from the verbal to the non-verbal language and reached out to him. One day, I had the bright idea to pass my hand over his shoulder and his back. Would you believe it? In half an hour, he was pacified. He removed his sweater from his face and even showed a slight smile! It was a victory! He had done all this by himself... we couldn't believe it! What love can do!



Louise Bussieres (front) and Colette Soucy (2nd row) with the handicapped

Yes, love can go that far. The love of God working through me is also going further than I had anticipated. I feel I am fulfilling a mission near these suffering members of our human family. I feel close to those brothers of mine, even if it is a challenge for me to interpret their words in Cantonese, to understand their feelings and moods.

I feel it is worthwhile to be a missionary in Shun Lee Estate... even for one day a week. True enough, there would be work there seven days a week. And I'm hoping that more volunteers will come to serve there and stand there **listening**. For it is really in **being** there, not only **doing** things that counts before God and man."

In Hong Kong, the attitude towards the handicapped has progressively changed. It has become more positive. In such a non-Christian society, it was often the custom to hide, to isolate and sequester the handicapped. Families refused to accept the fact that they had such a member in their families. But ever since 1981, the Year of the Handicapped, attitudes have changed and much more is being done to integrate the victims into the family and society. Sometimes the family alone cannot cope. They need outside help and that is why this Centre and other such Centres have spread in various areas of crowded Hong Kong.

(From an interview with Sr. Colette Soucy, M.I.C.)

The newly appointed Executive Secretary of the M.I.C. Animation Centre for Canada, Sr. Rita Ostiguy, visited our offices recently and explained to us a bit how she had envisioned her work as an educator in South America these last 10 years.

This is my Mission

"For more than 10 years, I have been active in the schools of Bolivia. I sincerely believe in my work as an educator of youth. I am by nature what people call "a born educator".

After I joined the community of the Missionary Sisters, the superiors soon recognized that I had the gift for teaching which could serve in evangelization. And it was in South America that I developed this gift.

Yes, even "born educators" have to grow and I feel I did. I tried to be attentive to the Holy Spirit dwelling in me and in others. I had to analyze the life realities and study the living situation of the people in prayer and deep reflection.

Just before I left Bolivia to return to Canada, a group of some 48 religious men and women of various congregations and countries met together to evaluate our work as

educators in this country. We reflected on the prophetic role that most religious persons play in Bolivia today, in both the educational field and in the development and promotion of the human person.

With the help of a sociologist, we came out with the following pertinent data.

We first focused on the weaknesses of our mission. We discovered that our present educational system was alienating our youth from their own life realities. We saw that the numerous working strikes of teachers claiming higher wages indicated that the teaching personnel was more interested in financial matters than education.

We noticed that 60% of the children could not find facilities to be admitted in schools. We were struck by the enormous differences between the private and public sectors of education.

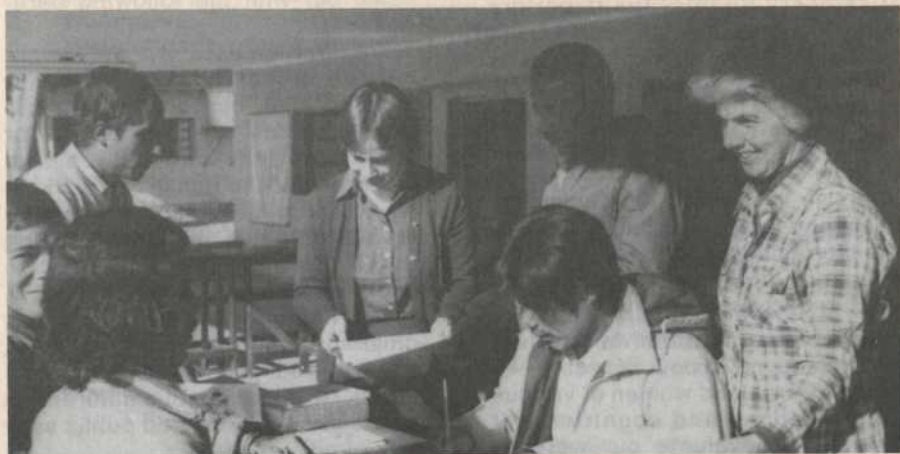


Rita Ostiguy with her teachers

It also became clear to us that the aid of the Church was being channelled toward the more privileged classes of society, that more than 50% of the population ignored its native language, that women were over-dominated by men.

But we did discover some positive signs, giving hope for the future.

We felt that people had a strong cultural sense of identity, a deep sense of the religious, a capacity to struggle and a hardy endurance, a desire for liberation, a sense of community, and a very high percentage of youth population!



It was good to notice that we religious are much more aware that evangelization in Bolivia means the integral liberation of the person. This liberation was to be achieved by proclaiming the truth, denouncing injustices and transforming society.

For me as an M.I.C., it meant that I had to proclaim Jesus Christ, that I had to search how I could help to promote the dignity of the human persons around me, that I had to denounce injustices, that I had to contribute to build up a better society through education.



This was my mission. I wanted to carry it out in a spirit of thanksgiving for the marvels that God the Father had done in His children!

You Stole Their Hearts



*"I am leaving now,
but believe me,
I am not going
away!"*

Claire Garceau with her friends, the poor

Last February, in the middle of the night, Sr. Claire Garceau quietly left the house to go to Villa Salvador the largest shanty town of Lima. When she arrived there she saw hundreds of thousands of people of all the similar villages awaiting the arrival of the Pope. These people wanted to meet him on their own grounds.

When Pope John Paul II arrived, around 9 a.m., all these people who had been there all night, welcomed him in loud cheers. (An estimated 2 million people were present.)

The rustic podium, erected by the people was constructed of the same material as their homes, that is, of straw and nipa. The word "hambre" (hunger) was posted in large letters on all sides of the podium.

A Polish priest, pastor of one of the parishes of the shanty towns greeted the Pope in the name of the communities assembled there.

Then a Peruvian couple serenely explained the anguish of the population living in these towns. "Holy Father, we are hungry, we are suffering all kinds of miseries and privations, we are unemployed, many of us are ill, our children and wives are victims of tuberculosis, our babies are dying. But in spite of all these sufferings, we believe in the God of Life, in the God that gives Life, in the Church now treading with us."

Pope John Paul was visibly moved. After reading from his texts for a few minutes, he laid them aside and spoke from the heart. He ended

his homily by inviting the assembly to recite the our Father with him to ask God **that the Peruvian people always hunger for God, and never hunger for bread.**

He reluctantly left them as he kept repeating: "I am leaving now, but believe me, I am not going away!"

Claire admits that she was too far from the podium to see John Paul very well. The crowd was too dense, yet she was happy to be there in solidarity with these hungry and poor brothers. Anonymous brothers in Christ, deprived of power, land and job, yet happy to welcome the Pope on their own grounds.

Just before leaving, the Cardinal turned to the Pope exclaiming: "Holy Father, you have just committed a theft! You have just stolen the hearts of all these Peruvians!"

It was a fact. He had stolen their hearts.

Chile

Who are the Poor?

I was very upset when I returned home later that day. The one question that kept popping in my head was: WHO ARE THE POOR?

This question came out after a visit to one of the poorest of the poor near Ancud where Sr. Gilberte Peras is sharing her life.

"One day I decided that it was time to visit my old friend Don Alberto and his family. The rainy season had just come to an end and the roads were open again.

So I set off walking on the main highway until I reached a dirt road where I had to trample for about 500 meters. Then I had to cross a wobbly, swinging bridge that seemed just ready to collapse under my weight. I hung on to the ramp for dear life before reaching the other side of the swollen river, foaming under the crumbling construction.



Sr. Gilberte Perras wonders who are the poor?

Then I saw the house!

It was no more than a shack of four walls with holes gaping on all sides. The roof, partly covered by tar paper, had a thin iron sheeting on one part of it, while the other part was covered with an old piece of thick nylon.

My first question was: "Doesn't it rain in here?"

'No,' answered the sick woman lying on her mat on the ground. She was weak one could easily see. She explained that she was recovering from a bout of liver trouble. Her little son was huddled closely to her, as they both lay under their warm yet old blanket.

I glanced around. The only piece of furniture was a table-shelf nailed to the wall. In the middle of the room was a suspended cooking pot hanging over smoldered ashes. There was no food in sight. Only a slice of garlic!

I sat down on the bare earth and began chatting with the woman. She was not complaining. She only hoped that her husband, Don Alberto, who had gone out searching for work, would find something to do. They had no more money.

What could I possibly say to comfort her? Words seemed useless in such a situation.

I was very upset when I returned home later that day. The one question that kept popping in my head was: WHO ARE THE POOR? Is it that woman willing to admit that she had nothing? Or me — that woman who could never live and persevere in hope in such a situation? Me, the woman from a rich country or that woman of the Third World facing a bleak and hungry future?"

I wonder what Christ would say about all these people in Chile?... And I still wonder... WHO ARE THE POOR?

(From a French article, by Sr. Gilberte Perras, m.i.c.)

A Young Cuban Writes...

Young Cubans working in the fields



A young university student of Cuba explains to our readers what the situation of young Christians is, in his country.

All our young people were born since the Revolution of 1959. All of them were trained in an atheistic society in a Socialist system. All of them have experimented hard labor in agricultural projects at the rhythm of 4 hours per day in the fields, and 4 hours in the classroom. This is a fact for all students of secondary schools and colleges in our rural area.

True enough, that all may pursue higher studies if they so wish it, for all education in Cuba is free. So is food, lodging, medical and dental assistance, as well as sports.

Furthermore, a monetary allowance is granted to University students.

More than 100 university and technical careers are open to us. Work is thereby assured after studies are completed. There is no such thing as unemployment. Work can be found in Cuba, Angola, Ethiopia, Yemen or Nicaragua.

Equality of women is legally assured and currently carried out. Women have access to the same jobs and professions as men.

Furthermore, young people are



Cuban students attending classes in Colon, Cuba

hale and healthy, intelligent and creative. They are not racists nor are they class conscious as were their elders previously. They are fully aware of the problems of society. They take interest in them. Like youth all over the world, they aspire after success, they yearn for a better life. They search for happiness.

Yet... this life situation can hardly be called "Paradise on Earth".

Because, if this were so... then... Why is there still so much defiance and dissatisfaction left in Cuban society? Why are so many turning to alcohol? to easy sexual relationships? Why all the eagerness for consumer goods? why the rush for the latest styles and fashions from other countries? why the craze for rock music? Why the fear to become involved?

Could it be that our youth is becoming frustrated?

And what about our Christians? These are often the target of ridicule among their peers. They are

excluded from certain professional jobs. They are a small minority, they are like "the remnant of the Old Testament" among their atheistic or indifferent companions. Nevertheless, they share the same aspirations as others.

In a Socialist country, it is one of continual confrontation. The community, the fraternity is a force. Unlike other free countries where evangelization is possible, in Cuba, this is impossible. The only means of proselytizing is by personal witness to the Faith, to Christ."

Our young Christian friend of the architectural department explains that these Christian youth are attempting to build bridges in their own society so as to be credible witnesses. They aim to improve human situations in their communities by witnessing to Christian love. They feel that this is the only way to keep the Faith alive. They want to be able to look optimistically at the future of their own Church.

(From a Spanish article written by a young Cuban)

DEPARTURE GIFT

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

Enclosed is the amount of

Please address it to:

The Mission Procure

Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

121 Maplewood Avenue, Montreal, H2V 2M2

Name

Address

Postal Code

Receipt Yes ☐ No ☐

Schedule of Masses for our Subscribers

July 1985

Mzuzu (Malawi)
Les Cayes (Haiti)
Gagalangin (Manila)
Koriyama (Japan) 2
Toronto (Canada)
Trois-Rivières (Canada)
Tak Oi (Hong Kong)
San Juan de Miraflores (Peru)

August 1985

Novitiate (Haiti)
Chipata (Zambia)
Pucalpa (Peru)
Baures (Bolivia)
Roche-a-Bateau (Haiti)
Mother House (Montreal)
Taipei (Taiwan)
Delmas House (Haiti)

MIC MISSION NEWS

*I wish to subscribe to MIC MISSION NEWS
published by the Missionary Sisters of
the Immaculate Conception*

*P.O. Box 157, Laval-des-Rapides
Laval, P.Q., Canada H7N 4Z4*

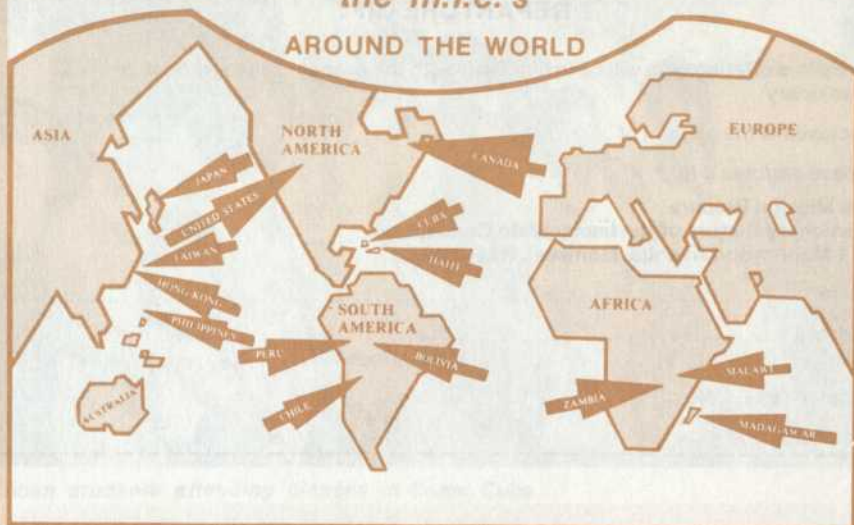
NAME

ADDRESS

POSTAL CODE

\$3.00 (1 year) \$5.00 (2 years) \$10.00 (4 years) \$50.00 (life)

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



For further information, please contact The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception at any of the following addresses.

The Generalate
121 Maplewood Avenue
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
H2V 2M2

Chinese Center
30 Goulburn
Ottawa, Ont., Canada
K1N 8C8

MIC Sisters
56 Indian Road Crescent
Toronto, Ont., Canada
M6P 2G1

2950 Prince Edward St.
Vancouver, B.C., Canada
V5T 3N3

1417-38th Avenue
San Francisco, CA
U.S.A. 94122

Provincial House
P.O. Box 47
Mzimba, Malaŵi
Central Africa

Provincial House
13-16 Fukazawa 8 Chome
Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 158
Japan

Provincial House
Mount Good Hope School
Clear Water Bay Road
Kowloon, Hong Kong

MIC Sisters
30, Lane 148, Section 2
Fu Hsing South Road
Taipei 106, Taiwan

Provincial House
P.O. Box 468
Greenhills, Metro Manila
Philippines, 3113