

Series 12, No. 5
September-October, 1985

MIC

MISSION NEWS



THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Dear Readers,

It is only a year ago this Fall that we Canadians welcomed Pope John Paul II on our soil. He called his journey among us a pilgrimage.

Yes, the word pilgrim is now one that has become a part of our vocabulary, as we call ourselves members of the pilgrim Church. In history and literature, writers have fascinated us by tales about pilgrims... from the Canterbury Tales onward.

Here, we give you a brief summary of a "pilgrimage of hope" undertaken by our Sisters and others to China. They went with the purpose of listening and being listened to by groups of people who have suffered intensively.

Then, our Foundress, Delia Tetreault, whose Cause for beatification has recently been introduced in Rome, was also a pilgrim in heart. She passed the staff of the pilgrim to her Sisters who are still trudging all over four continents.

Now, as we set off on our own personal pilgrimage of faith, let us remember the many M.I.C.'s who have returned to their mission post this summer to resume their service in the Church.

The Editor

Cover photo: In a fishing village, China

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.

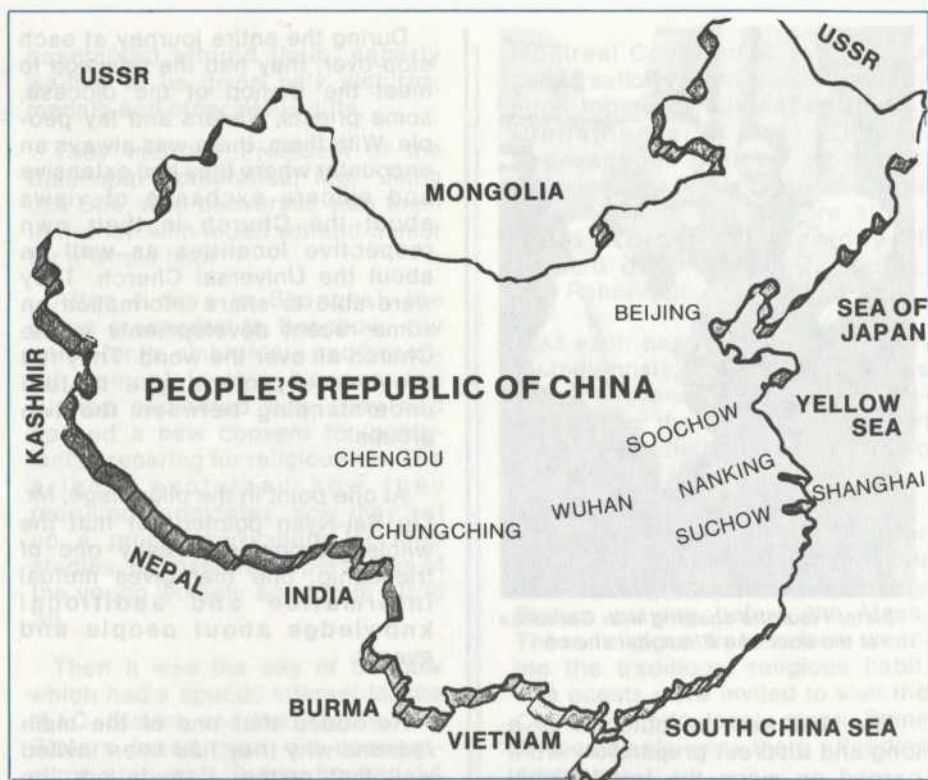
Secretariat and
Circulation
Team of MIC Sisters

Printed by "Interlitho
Inc."

Second class mail
Registration No. 0358
Return postage guaranteed
ISSN 0315-9656

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.



Pilgrimage of Friendship

...One of the main reasons they were invited was that neither Canada nor the Canadian Church had a colonial past.

Among the passengers aboard a jet bound for Shanghai were 6 Canadians who felt they were living out a very special event in the history of the missionary Church. These 6 Catholics were coming into China at the invitation of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association.

In the group was Sr. Monique Préfontaine, M.I.C., superior general, Sr. Fleurette Lagacé, M.I.C., Sr. Teresa Chu, r.s.c.j., directress of the Canada-China program of the Canadian Council of Churches, Fr.

Lorne MacDonald, O.M.I., Director for the English sector of the Mission Office of Catholic Bishops, Fr. Jean-Louis Martin, P.M.E., superior general, and Fr. Michel Marcil, S.J. of the «Amitié-Chine» Office in Canada.



Sister Fleurette chatting with Catholics at the door of a Shanghai church

The visit was the outcome of a long and discreet preparatory work carried on since the International Ecumenical Conference held in Montreal, in 1981, entitled, "China and the Churches: A New Beginning".

The objective was clearly stated that the attempted journey would be first and foremost a religious one, and that the priorities were to be on the Catholic religion in China.

They had proposed visiting several cities with important points of interest, such as Catholic and Protestant seminaries. They had even suggested their interest in Buddhist, Taoist and Muslim Centres, as well as visiting villages, factories, schools, etc.

Mr. Liu Bai-Nyan, the Secretary General of the National Patriotic Association was to accompany them all along their interesting journey.

During the entire journey at each stop-over, they had the privilege to meet the Bishop of the diocese, some priests, Sisters and lay people. With them, there was always an encounter where they had extensive and sincere exchange of views about the Church in their own respective localities as well as about the Universal Church. They were able to share information on some recent developments in the Church all over the world. They felt they were promoting a mutual understanding between the two groups.

At one point in the pilgrimage, Mr. Liu Bai-Nyan pointed out that the whole journey was really one of friendship, one that gives mutual information and additional knowledge about people and events.

He added that one of the main reasons why they had been invited was that neither Canada nor the Canadian Church had a colonial past. Furthermore, their Catholic delegates had been warmly welcomed at the Montreal Conference and given cordial hospitality. They had never forgotten that.

In Shanghai, they visited various churches and made a pilgrimage to the famous Sanctuary of Our Lady Help of Christians at She Shan.

In all the churches, they noticed that the liturgy was conducted in pre-Vatican II manner, in Latin, the priest facing the wall, back to the people. These were praying fervently, singing traditional hymns and oftentimes chanting prayers during the Mass. After the celebration, the Canadians met the people at the church door. At times these

assembled around them, eagerly waiting to be given holy pictures, medals and other pious gifts.

They met the President of the Episcopal Conference, Mgr. Jiang Jya Shu, who conversed with them in French with much wit and humor for a whole hour.

After 4 days in Shanghai, the group proceeded to Soochow, city noted for its embroidery and beautiful women! In this diocese, the Bishop explained how they had opened a new convent for postulants preparing for religious life. The priests explained how they recruited candidates, how they set up a proper curriculum for their studies, the pastoral experiences of the young women, aged from 18 to 30.

Then it was the city of Suchow which had a special interest for the M.I.C. Sisters and the Jesuits. The Sisters found their old convent-clinic as it was. It now housed 14 young women postulants. (The M.I.C.'s had fled Suchow in 1948 during the Chinese Revolution.)

As usual on the trip, they met several Catholics with whom they were invited to share their religious experiences. These Chinese Catholics explained in detail how they lived out their faith today in the actual Chinese society. These testimonies were impressive and the group felt relaxed and at ease.

After Suchow, it was Nanking. When they attended Mass at the Immaculate Conception Church, they noticed that in the praying congregation were two Africans and two tourists.

They visited many points of interest, among them was the National Protestant Seminary where they met some of their friends of the

Montreal Conference. Interesting conversations were carried out on such topics as contextualization, fundamental and liberal approaches, notions on cultic differences, tendencies towards prayer groups and a more structured liturgy, the theology of Teilhard de Chardin, Hans Kung, Karl Rahner etc.

At each banquet tended to them by their hosts, there were speeches to be delivered. The task of responding for the Canadian group fell to Sr. Fleurette Lagacé, M.I.C. who could speak Mandarin fluently.

Then they took the plane for Wuhan. When they entered the church, they saw some 30 elderly Sisters praying before the Mass. These religious women were wearing the traditional religious habit. The guests were invited to visit the Convent, meticulously clean. Some 14 postulants were there attending classes.



Sr. Fleurette, in front of the former M.I.C. house in Suchow

The next day, they went visiting the former residence of the American Franciscans, now a major seminary open since 1983. They were greeted by the staff members and the seminarians. They discussed with them the norms for selecting candidates, their courses of study, the religious formation given to the aspirants to the priesthood.

One of the most remarkable moments of their journey was the visit to the Franciscan library where 10% of the volumes had been saved after the Cultural Revolution. There were whole shelves of Scholastic philosophy and theology, books on spirituality, entire tablets of the former Canon Law and some *Acta Apostoli Sedis*. In another section of the library were more modern Chinese volumes sent by the Holy Spirit Seminary of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In the afternoon, they shared ideas with their Chinese friends who explained how they lived out their Faith today.

Before leaving Wuhan, the group visited a Taoist Temple where their hosts, the Taoist priests welcomed them in their long flowing blue robes. In this monastery, young Taoist candidates were being prepared to carry out their religious duties. The Canadians were served a delicious vegetarian meal by these monks.

The group left for Chungching and Chengdu. In Chengdu, they visited a Muslim mosque where they were informed that of the 56 ethnic groups of China, 10 of these are Islamic. They explained about their various religious practices, their five daily prayers, their weekly Friday noon celebrations, the Ramadan, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the Sunnite tradition to which they belonged.



Wuhan, Taoist Temple

The last important stop on their Chinese journey was the capital, Peking now called Beijing.

They were warmly welcomed by their hosts and had several banquets to attend once more. They first visited the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, where they were informed that the diocese now counts 30,000 Catholics. About 300 people attend Mass daily, and on feast days the attendance can rise to 13,000.

Besides meeting Catholic groups, they spent some time visiting the Academy of Social Sciences which has an Institute for World Religions. The members of this institute carry on constant interchange with other countries, such as Canada, the U.S.A., Scotland, West Germany. Mr. Liu Bai Nyan pointed out here that youth were now showing more interest in religious questions.

During the trip they had visited several Buddhist Temples and monasteries. One of the most

interesting ones was the Mongolian Monastery where lamas are being trained. This residence, formerly the home of the heir presumptive to the Emperor, houses 50 young Buddhist monks from Mongolia. These must remain celibate, they must learn Chinese, Mongolian and Tibetan languages besides their heavy schedule of studies of their sacred texts, meditation and traditional Chinese medicine. The exchanges of ideas were on life and the spiritual and religious attitudes towards life. They seemed extremely happy to see the visitors and expressed it openly in their sharing.

In all the places where they stopped, the visit had been well organized and they were greeted in all cordiality. As Sr. Fleurette and Sr. Theresa and Fr. Marcil could speak fluent Mandarin, seldom were interpreters needed, except to help

the other members of the team that could not understand. In many places, elderly Bishops and priests could speak French and some English.

The sharing was informative and friendly. Formalities dropped and the Chinese people were speaking openly and freely. A bond of friendship was created and grew day by day with their genial host, Mr. Liu Bai Nyan. It was with regrets that they bid him farewell, that they waved goodbye to him as they were boarding the plane for Hong Kong. He had been their guide during their 25 days in China. He had led them from Shanghai to Soochow, Suchow, Nanking, Wuhan, Chungching, Chengdu and finally Peking.

(by Michel Marcil, S.J. & Fleurette Lagacé, M.I.C.)



Sr. Monique Prefontaine, listening to two religious women in Shanghai

People's Republic of China

National Statistics

People

Population	1,022,054,000 (1983) est.*
Annual Growth Rate	1.5% (1982)†
Population Density	278 inhabitants per square mile*
Land Area	3,691,521 square miles*
Life Expectancy	68 years*
Literacy	75%
Ethnic Composition	Han Chinese 94%, Mongol, Korean, Manchu, others**

Religious Adherents

Officially atheist. Traditionally Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.*

The 1985 Catholic Almanac reports that no Catholic statistics are available.**

Trade

Exports	U.S. \$22.1 billion (1983)*
Principal Partners	Hong Kong 24%, Japan 23%, U.S.A. 10%
Imports	U.S. \$21.3 billion (1983)*
Principal Partners	Japan 22%, U.S.A. 18%, Hong Kong 12%

Economy

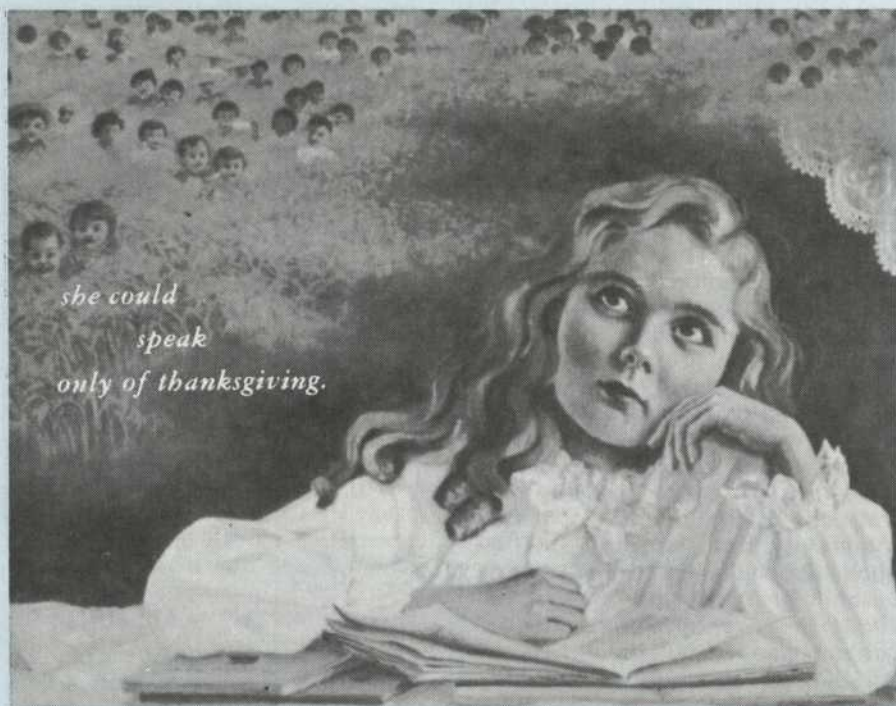
GNP	U.S. \$301 billion (1984)*
Per Capita Income	U.S. \$566 (1980)*
Work Force (Total)	447.1 million†: Agriculture 74%, Industry and Commerce 15%.*
Industries	Iron, steel, plastics, agricultural implements, trucks.*
Chief Crops	Grain, rice, cotton.*
Minerals	Tungsten, antimony, coal, iron, lead manganese, mercury, molybdenum.*
Crude Oil Reserves	20 bin. bbls. (1980).*
Other Resources	Silk.*
Arable Land	11%*
Meat Production	Beef, pork, lamb.*

* The World Almanac and Book of Facts. Published by Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc., New York.

** 1985 Catholic Almanac. Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington, IN.

† Background Notes, U.S. Department of State, December 1983.

‡ Mission Handbook, U.S. Catholic Mission Association, Washington, D.C.



Delia Tetreault,
Pilgrim
Woman

Delia Tetreault was a pilgrim woman who never set foot outside of Canada. She was a pilgrim woman who travelled far and wide through her inspired works, through the missions her Sisters served, through their perilous journeys and lives in the four corners of the world.

Born in Marieville, a few miles from Montreal, she was a child of the nineteenth century, a true daughter of her times in many ways. Yet she had a prophetic role to play in the history of the missions.

She lived in Victorian days, 8 years before Ste Thérèse of Lisieux, and 18 years after Brother André. She was brought up in a French Canadian family living the traditional Catholic life of the times. Families then recited daily morning and evening prayers together, they prayed the rosary, the angelus when the church bell rang, made many novenas, followed the severe penances of Lent. Marieville was a community like the others. The whole population must have been Catholic. History informs that in 1881, the French population of Canada was 1,300,000 (whereas the English speaking population was then 4,300,000). In 1881, 66% of French Canada was rural; 99% were practising Catholics.

People lived in closed communities. Travel was not easy. People were afraid of long distances. They were afraid of other cultures, they even shunned them. Marieville must have been the same. Delia was brought up in this atmosphere.

True enough that some 600,000 French Canadians had emigrated to the U.S.A. to work in factories. Some of her own family had done so. She knew a little about that new country. Furthermore, she had heard some Oblate Fathers, missionaries of the Canadian Northwest Missions, relate their adventures, their privations, while living with the Eskimos, the Indians. Delia's imagination had been stirred by these tales.



*Delia Tetreault,
Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit*

In her teens, she had become an avid reader of romantic stories. She admits spending hours in these novels. They opened up to her new lands, new people, new cultures. The Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, discovered in her uncle's attic, held her spellbound and fascinated her. Delia's knowledge of the world had expanded beyond Marieville. She knew that there were people living other experiences in life, in other cultures different from hers.

But she had to break through her own frontier. And that is never easy. The big cities were far away, family ties were strong, the Church with its structures, controlled the lives of the people, as well as the social welfare, the education, etc. How does one manage to climb out of such a binding situation unless one has been led by the Spirit of God? And Delia had been invaded by that Spirit early in life. So she broke out of the shell.

It was an era when many foreign communities were being invited by the Bishops to come over from Europe and carry on urgent types of charitable works for the needy and the poor. Contemplative life was not in style, it was rather the service to the poor. Yet, Delia, at one point aspired after the Carmel but in vain. It was not God's will for her.

Just as Peter and Paul, one day in history, decided to go beyond Jerusalem, leaving behind them their Judean culture for the Graeco-Roman world, Delia had to leave Marieville and go beyond to Montreal. Here, she soon found herself immersed in charitable works among the poor for some 10 years. Working alongside a French lady, guided by a French Jesuit, Fr. A. Pichon, she continued searching for God's will in her life. The missions relentlessly held their appeal for the young woman. She felt assured that her present work was a preparation for the future.

Like Pope John Paul II, she never hesitated before taking risks. Somehow or other, she managed to meet missionaries and approached them, unfolding her missionary dreams. Thus it was that she met Fr. Daignault of Africa. Then there was Fr. Bourassa, who became her spiritual guide, and even Mgr. Bruchesi, Bishop of Montreal. She was a daring person, nothing could hold her back as she believed in her mission.

Her patience had been long tried by the many years she had spent caring for the poor in the House of Bethany. Later on, it was her sick mother that held her while her feet were itching to go beyond the known frontiers to carry the Good News of Jesus.

She waited. Her waiting was not in vain. In those days, her spirituality

was very simple, a deep devotion to Mary and to the Blessed Trinity. Her gift of self became gratuity and thanksgiving. Her spirituality was a very Christian one, never bordering on the miraculous. It was day by day living and loving God. At the same time it was apostolic, founded on the missions. She was still dreaming of crossing continents, oceans, to reach out to the poor. This was the result no longer of dreams but of contemplation. It was the effect of her Marian love.

After her foundation, her spirituality evolved and became modern, very much in line with the post-conciliar one. It was thanksgiving, it was prophetic. Heart filled with gratitude, joy and praise to God, she could speak only of thanksgiving. She had one of those admirable devotions to Our Lady, to the Blessed Trinity. "The deeper Our Lady makes me penetrate into the spirit of our vocation, the more it appears to me that the main reason for our existence as a society is that of thanksgiving. I am trying to recall all the marvels God has accomplished and done for us ever since the foundation of our little house." And she praises the Trinity for it!

She lived through the reign of 6 Popes: Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI and Pius XII. She walked forward in extraordinary apostolic action with the greatest of elegance more in action than in word. She had a pilgrim heart!

"I am marvelling in a spirit of thanksgiving before Delia Tetreault and her community, before all she accomplished ever since she was born. **Magnificat anima mea Dominum.**"

(Extracts from a lecture given by Fr. Benoit Lacroix, O.P. in March 1985.)

Hong Kong

A long road to freedom



Kwai Sing with his Mother, & Suk Mei, his sister

*No one can be forced to accept the freedom
that Christ came to bring to all men.*

For years I have known the Chung family. They are very dear friends of all the Hong Kong M.I.C.'s.

Last Easter when I received the photo of Mrs. Chung, taken on the night of her baptism in St. Teresa's Church at Kowloon, my heart burst out in a thanksgiving prayer. She herself wrote to me saying: "Now, I am a Christian. I have all I want."

Mrs. Chung, is a young Chinese mother whom I first met when she and her husband brought us their little daughter Suk Mei to our Good Hope Kindergarten, some 12 years ago.

Her husband is a well-off industrialist managing several factories in Hong Kong. The Chung family have a close family life, common to most Chinese in Hong Kong. Their eldest son attends a well known Anglican School where he is about to graduate this year. (No doubt, he will apply to study abroad, as many young graduates of secondary schools of Hong Kong do.)

The second child, Suk Mei, now called Loretta, is a beautiful teen ager, in the Third Form of Good Hope Secondary School. Early in life, in her Kindergarten days, the

Sisters had noticed a weakness in one of her eyes. The child had to be helped in writing her Chinese characters. She was then only 5 years of age. Her parents brought little Suk Mei to the best eye specialists of Hong Kong. Nothing could be done in her case. The family even moved to Taiwan for several years, so that there she could receive special eye care. Again nothing could be done.

Then, Mr. Chung decided that the family should return to Hong Kong so as to facilitate the education of the children.

Suk Mei returned to Good Hope Primary. This time, she was in Grade 2, but was behind the others in English classes, as the Taiwan schools did not offer language studies at that level. In no time at all, she caught up with her classmates, and soon headed the class.

No matter how high her grades were, her parents, in typical Chinese style, always wanted her to get higher ones. Suk Mei, the studious girl, never managed to get into sports because of her asthmatic condition, and her excessive impulse to study. Now as a Secondary School student, she is very active in the school and shares in the numerous school activities that the management provides.

The third member of the Chung family is a delightful little boy named Kwai Sing. His teasing eyes, his cherubic dimple never make you suspect that he is about to play a trick on you. Kwai Sing is now in Primary Four of a Catholic school run by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. (Neither Kwai Sing nor Suk

Mei are Catholic yet, nor is the elder brother.)

Kwai Sing is also head of his class, and he is a very good in the Speech Festivals where he has gathered already several certificates and honors. His Chinese is perfect, and his English is coming along very well.

Mrs Chung, the mother, stays home and helps the children and her husband form a respectable and happy Chinese family. She and I could never communicate verbally very well, since she has a limited knowledge of English. But we excelled in non-verbal communication, and this is one of the times that I discovered that love is a universal language. She knew I loved her children, that I cared for her and her family. So our friendship grew from year to year.

Both Mr. and Mrs Chung raised many questions on religion, but at the time they were not yet ready to accept, though they knew quite a bit the teachings of the Gospel. They were living it as "anonymous Christians". Their spirit of charity, of family love, of concern for their employees spoke strongly of their faith in life. Finally, God's invitation became more solicitous... and Mrs Chung accepted to become a catechumen.

In Hong Kong, the Church has one of the most active and well adapted catechumenates in the whole universal Church. The catechists themselves have followed a well organized course, preparing them to lead their Chinese brothers into the Christian community. These young men and women of all ages, are

followed closely by core groups. They attend renewal sessions regularly, they follow retreats for their own spiritual growth, they are a part of a large network of committed Christians living out the life that the early Christians led, sharing their faith with their brothers and sisters. Each week, they meet the catechumens of their parish, by group, and discuss with them God's activity in their lives. With their inductive approach, they cover the Bible, the doctrine of Catholic tradition, they gradually initiate catechumens into the sacramental life.

Thus it was that at the Easter Vigil, Mrs. Chung received the waters of baptism, confirmation and holy communion, after a long and challenging preparation.

In the Hong Kong diocese, on that same night, in all the parishes, some 1400 adults were admitted into the Christian community.

Mrs Chung, is now a newly baptized Christian. These people are always eager to share their faith with others; she will approach her own family, her friends and relatives and soon many more will follow her footsteps.

It's a long road to freedom, says the song. Yes, no one can be rushed to accept the freedom that Christ came to bring to all men. He has different ways to invite each one, whom He calls by name as he called Mrs Chung.

(Therese LeBlanc, m.i.c.)



Mr. and Mrs. Chung and Sr. Jeanne Gauvin, M.I.C. and Mary Olga Lam, M.I.C.

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

September 1985

Chicoutimi (Canada)
Ste-Dorothée (Laval)
La Paz (Bolivia)
Baguio (Philippines)
Cochabamba (Bolivia)
Les Coteaux (Haiti)
Plantagenet St. (Montreal)
Moron (Cuba)

October 1985

Kanyanga (Zambia)
Chaitien (Chile)
Rimouski (Canada)
Port-Salut (Haiti)
Tak Sun (Hong Kong)
St. Laurent (Montreal)
Lima, Novitiate (Peru)

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 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, Malawi
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**