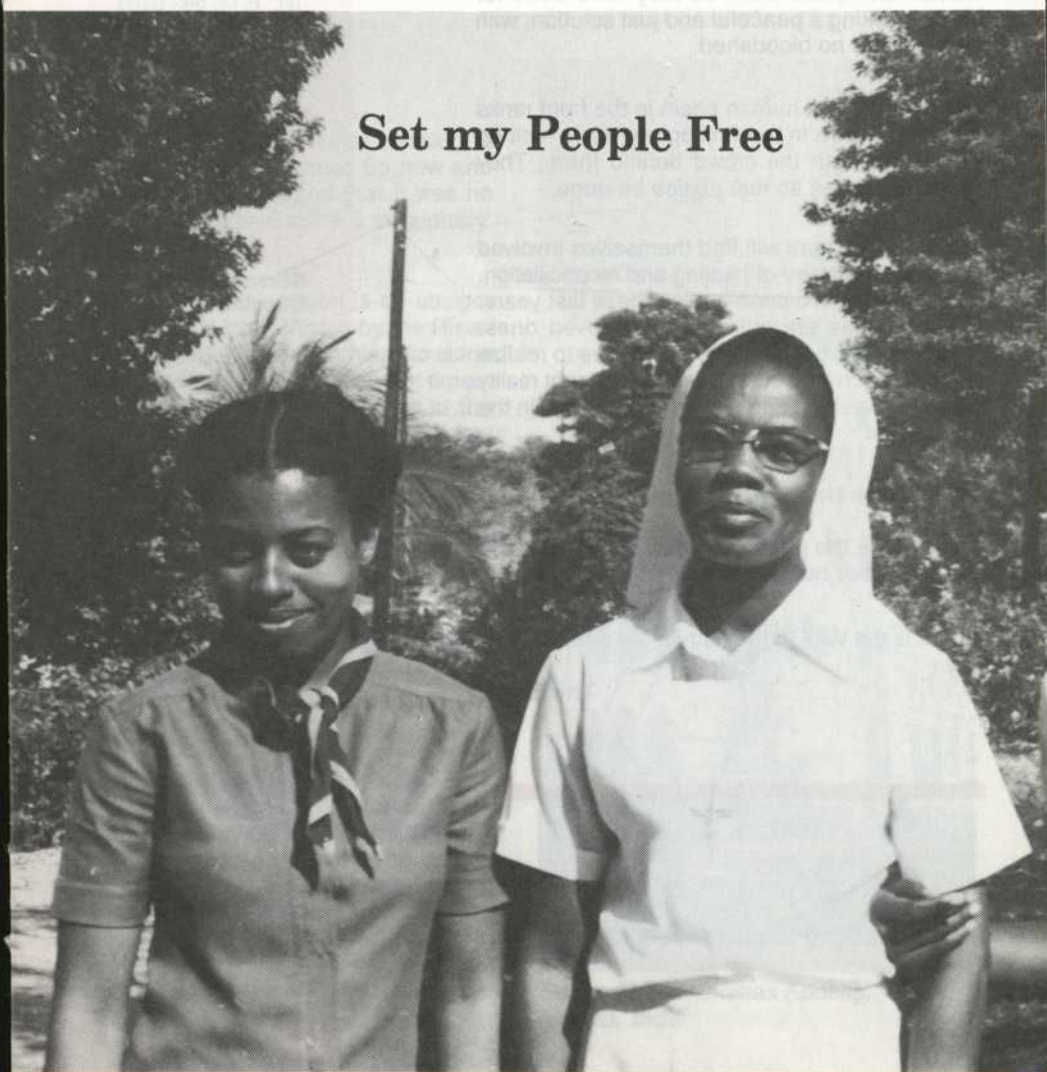


Serie 13, No. 3
May-June, 1986

MIC

MISSION NEWS

Set my People Free



THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Dear Readers,

During these past months, missionaries have experienced the paschal mystery with their people. The 80 M.I.C.'s living in Haiti and the 70 of them in the Philippines shared the agony of their brothers as they struggled for justice. They walked alongside them as they have done for years, seeking a peaceful and just solution, with no violence, no bloodshed.

They formed a human chain in the front ranks facing the tanks in the Philippines while reciting the Rosary with the crowd behind them. They risked their lives so that justice be done.

Now, missionaries will find themselves involved further in a ministry of healing and reconciliation. Many hearts have been broken these last years. Many families are still mourning loved ones. Together with the people they will have to realize that the Paschal Mystery is an ever present reality in our lives as we search to follow the Lord in the Beatitudes.

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice,
Blessed are the peacemakers... not those who
shun conflict but those who face it squarely.**

This is the WAY to the Father, the one and only way.

The Editor

Cover photo

Haitian M.I.C., Sr Lina Lagredelle.

MIC MISSION NEWS a bimonthly published by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

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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)
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Is mission relevant today?

In the Church today there are signs of an emerging model of mission. Justin Ukpong of the Catholic Institute in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, develops this theme for us.

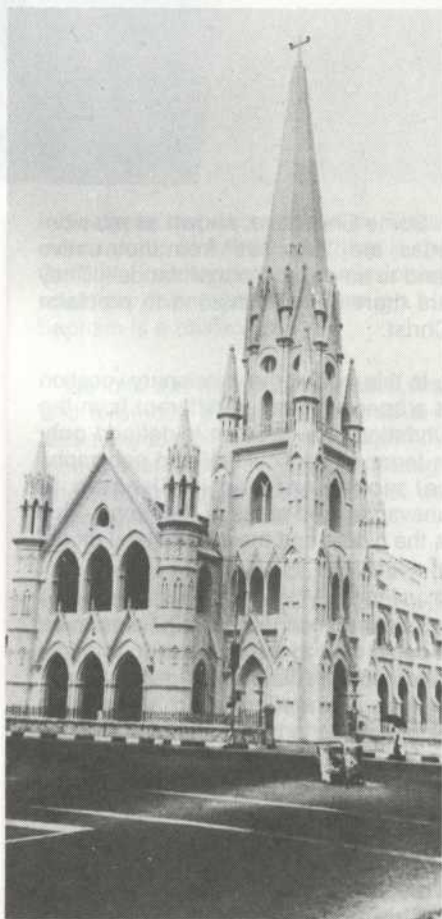
The question whether mission is still relevant today comes up now and then. One writer stated that it was no longer fashionable to be a missionary. Is this true?

We know that mission is an assignment given to the Church by the Risen Lord Himself. He also promised to abide with this Church until the end of times. We know that mission belongs to the very nature of the Church in such a way that without mission the Church ceases to be meaningful. Mission therefore cannot be taken on or abandoned at will... it is not a matter of option for the Church.

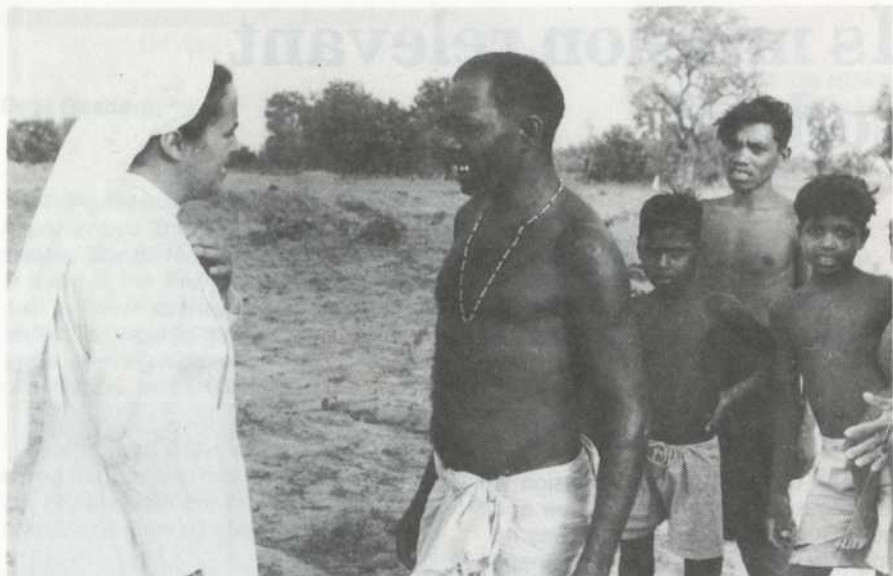
Modern mission invites us to a deep reflection and understanding of mission. For this let us examine a few models to discover contours of an emerging one in the Church today.

The frontier model of mission

The "frontier model" identifies mission with "frontier evangelization." It sees mission as bringing the Gospel message to those who have never heard of it. It sees the world as one divided into two parts: the Christian world corresponding to what we call today, the North, and the unchristianized sphere, roughly, the South.



*Basilica of St. Thomas Apostle,
Madras, India*



Some Christians, known as missionaries, are "sent out" from their native land to so-called "pagan lands". They are there in the missions to proclaim Christ.

In this model, the missionary vocation is a special vocation different from the Christian one. Mission is defined **only** in terms of transcultural and geographical movement and is directed to unevangelized areas of the globe. This is the oldest and more traditional model of mission.

There are certain weaknesses here. It could lead to the conclusion that at a given point in history "all pagan lands" will be evangelized and so mission would cease to be meaningful. But this is not the view of the promise of Jesus when he said He would be with the mission endeavor until the end of time.

The partnership model

This model involves a mutual agreement between two local churches (an older and a younger one) for creating

mutual pastoral awareness, with the idea of giving support in terms of personnel and material aid. This partnership could be between two dioceses or two parishes. In this model, mission is seen in terms of direct assistance from one local church to another.

The receiving-sending church model

Here, the younger churches send missionaries to other places even though they still receive missionaries on their own. This makes us witness the establishment of new missionary institutes in some younger churches as Korea, Philippines, India, etc. This model originated in the 1960's and is gaining momentum rapidly.

It is good as it has a healthy conception of mission. It has opened the young church's potential to send out missionaries and has raised the missionary consciousness of these people. But it still gives the impression that one section of the globe is mission land and that personnel may be drawn from one part to work in another.



The future model of mission

The New Testament sees the whole world as mission land. The Gospel is to be preached in all places, at all times. Mission must be seen as a process whereby those who have been evangelized stand in continued need of evangelization and those who have never heard the Gospel message are evangelized for the first time.

Then we can talk about two types of mission. There is the **PASTORAL MISSION** for those already evangelized whereby they internalize and interiorize their faith. There is also the **FRONTIER MISSION** for the non-evangelized in which the process of enlightenment and initiation into the Christian way predominates. This can be true in sociological as well as in geographical terms. Within one society may be found both categories. All people whether Christian or not, need evangelization in one form or other.

Every Christian is called to be a missionary. The missionary mandate was given to the apostles not as to

individuals but as to a group. Thus, membership in the Church, that is the Christian vocation, involves a missionary vocation. Every Christian through his baptism is a missionary.

We fulfill that missionary vocation, first and foremost, through a life that is a testimony to the Gospel message. This means interiorizing the Gospel message and letting it take possession of us. Every Christian is called to this.

In the social aspect, missionary witness involves the quality of our social relations. This means handing on the Gospel through love, compassion, openness to and acceptance of others as Jesus did. Every Christian is called to manifest his missionary vocation in this way.

The personal level is the core of the mission activity. It shows up mission not only by words but also by action. The Gospel message first becomes part and parcel of the Christian life and then radiates it through actions and attitudes with all those we come in contact with.

Mission at the geographical level involves people of other cultures. It means going to other lands. It is realized in transcultural situations. Not every Christian is called to this type of mission witness. But the Lord's command was clearly to evangelize the whole world, so mission is fully realized when carried out in a transcultural geographical level. This is where the Church's universal missionary character can be realized.

shift from the sending Church to a new situation, whereby every local Church will become both a sending and receiving Church. In this way all local churches will realize its missionary vocation. Also the international and universal nature of the Church's mission will be realized.

In other words, no particular section of the Church is to bear alone the brunt

Angie Yap, M.I.C. a Filipina, animating a group of children on an Indian Reserve.



So, based on the above considerations three categories of missionaries may be distinguished. First is the general missionary vocation with every Christian a missionary. Second is the special ministry, the catechists, the deacons, the priests, the religious who exercise special functions for the welfare of the community. Third is the transcultural geographical mission, the lay Christians, priests and religious who exercise their missionary vocation in another culture.

In the light of all this, what should be the model for the missions of the future?

The following factors seem important. First local churches have been established in most parts of the world. Second, these local churches have become more and more aware of their missionary responsibilities. Third is the international and universal character of the Church's mission.

Based on these factors we see the mission of the Church as involving, a

of sending out missionaries. This burden must be shared even by younger churches. By the same token, no particular section of the Church is to enjoy the privilege of receiving missionaries. Even the older churches should share this privilege.

This model sees mission not as one-way activity but as a two-way process. It seeks to integrate the missionary activity of the Church into a collegiate system. There are many signs of this model of mission beginning to take place.

Mission will always be relevant in the Church. The models may evolve and change but the assignment of the Risen Lord to go forth to all peoples everywhere and make them disciples will always remain true.

(Condensed from an article by Justin S. Ukpong, a professor at the Catholic Institute of West Africa in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Courtesy of Maryknoll's World Apostolate Bulletin.)

Her husband is a soldier

A missionary priest recently related this heartbreaking story. In one of the Central American countries where war is an every day occurrence, he meets people who come to attend Mass, where intentions for prayer are most often related to death in the family, members ambushed by the enemy.

On the outskirts of the village, lived a family of parents and eight small children who came there to seek safety. They are of indigenous descent, small in stature, dark-skinned with very black hair. After they had discovered the church, the rectory, where they met friendly concern, the children would come to evening mass, led by the eldest sister, Rosita, a mere child of twelve. They always arrived quietly, bare-footed, with dishevelled hair. The skirts were often held by a string to replace the missing buttons on their clothes. Their handsome features, snow-white teeth and beautiful smiles were unforgettable.

One evening two new faces appeared. They belonged to two tiny girls, aged five and seven. They were pure Indians. The little one, Teclita, refused to raise her head to look at the priest. The older one, Maria Josefina, clung desperately on to Rosita.

Hoping to gain their confidence, the missionary gave each one of them a small piece of bread which they ate heartily. But the two younger ones remained reserved. "Are they neighbors?" the priest asked Rosita.

"No, they live with us now," Rosita responded. "They were abandoned in their house on the farm." Then the priest inquired how that had happened.

"The guerillas hit her mother and took her away", answered Rosita seriously.

Then the angered priest said: "Why did they pick on her?"



"Because her husband is a soldier", replied Rosita with wisdom and simplicity. The priest closed his eyes for a few seconds. A thousand thoughts entered his mind. The only question he could raise was: "WHY?"

(With permission, Scarboro Missions, Feb. 1986. Reproduced from an article of Fr. Joe Curcio, S.F.M. currently working among the poor in Nicaragua.)



Missionary Magnificat

My soul proclaims your greatness, my God
My spirit exults in the tenderness of your love.
Before time begun, you have called me,
loved me, set me apart...
Days have seen me through
drawing strength from your might.

You have willed to touch my life with a mission -
You have uprooted me from all the familiar
and transplanted me to an unknown.
You have allowed me to be a child once again
mumbling every word as I learned another language,
You have allowed me to experience poverty to its deepest roots
making me face helplessness and nothingness
in order to make me more whole.

My soul magnifies the greatness of your power
Out of a limited space,
You have created for me a world
full of challenges and richness in Hong Kong.



Each time I look at a Chinese girl, a mother,
a boy or a father,
I see your love in the sweetness of their smiles.
I see you in the sparkles of their eyes,
in the colour of their skin,
in their strife to work hard,
to live a life that is full
with their values, customs and beliefs.
I praise you in the culture of this people
yes, this people whom I now call my own.

Among my people, Lord, I shall always remember you -
for every friendship I make,
for every step I take,
for every sound of my typewriter,
for every flash of my calculator,
for every touch of my pen,
for every number I shall write,
for every book I shall hold...

These moments, I shall treasure -
these moments — YOU — shall I always remember...
magnificat!
magnificat!

*emilia m. marcelo, mic
hong kong*

In the Cancer Ward



Mireille Bourdeau, M.I.C. with cancer patient

When Sr. Mireille Bourdeau first arrived in Hong Kong 7 years ago, she immediately enrolled at the Language School of the Chinese University to study Cantonese full time. Each day, for hours, after her classes, she literally locked herself in her room to repeat phrases and syllables with their proper tone. It was no small feat, to be able to master meaningful sentences in a language which has 6 tones for each syllable. But Mireille persevered for nearly three years in that difficult pursuit of acquiring working knowledge of Chinese.

Then she went to work as a nurse in the Maryknoll Hospital serving the poor in the Kowloon region of Wong Tai Sin. Her R.N. degree and her previous training had prepared her for nursing work, but what she met at the Maryknoll Hospital was beyond anything she had been prepared for. These poor people, mostly immigrants or refugees from China spoke different dialects and not the Cantonese which she had so painfully learned. The nursing prescriptions as well as the medical reports were written in Chinese characters! For

Mireille, the heavy burden was not so much caring for the patients, for she loved them and she is a top nurse. It was trying to understand their pain and suffering, wanting to relieve them. Her fatigue at night was not her tired body but her tired mind which had to listen and speak a language so foreign to any other language. But Mireille never gave up!

She stuck it out until one day, God, who speaks in such mysterious ways in our lives, gave her a message that was clear. She became unable to cope any longer with practical nursing because of a bad foot accident during her annual retreat. Mireille understood the message.

From thereon, she was determined to offer her services to patients in another way. She took a course in Pastoral Care for the Sick in Manila, and returned to Hong Kong searching for Pastoral work in hospitals. This is what she wrote about recently:

"I am now working at the Queen Elizabeth Government Hospital of Kowloon in the Oncology Department, meeting terminally ill cancer patients each day. I meet new challenges, new sufferings, new anguish and new hopes every day. I feel my own limitations and I wander through the immense wards of the "third class patients". These are the poor, the ones who cannot afford private rooms and care, those who cannot pay for treatments which could relieve them.

My job consists in being there present with them during their long illness. I do carry on some basic nursing care as well, for these patients are often neglected due to shortness of staff and other reasons. It is heartbreaking to see their condition each day.

I was invited to do this pastoral work upon the recommendation of Dr. Tze, President of the Catholic Doctors' Guild of Hong Kong, a senior medical officer in oncology at this government hospital, one of the largest of all Asia.

"We have no money on our budget to

pay you' he told me as he offered me the job. Luckily, the Diocese managed to give me a small monthly allowance.

At first, the idea of having a nun in that type of ministry was not easily accepted by the medical staff. Dr. Tze managed to convince his colleagues to give it a try. And it worked out. Now, I am accepted. Let me tell you this story that happened to me just recently.

When I arrived at the hospital the other day, one of the nurses told me that a lady wanted to commit suicide. She was suffering of cancer of the larynx and could no longer swallow even water. A treatment was being offered to save her life and she was refusing it. The staff, so overburdened, did not know what arguments to use to convince her to accept a gastrotomy, (an opening into the stomach). So, in their despair they turned to me and asked if I could talk to her.

A Buddhist nun at prayer



I started an informal conversation with her as I noticed a Rosary at her bedside. This made me wonder whether she could be a Catholic. Sure enough. She had been baptized at birth; most of her family were believers in God.

When she admitted that she wanted to commit suicide, I was inspired to resort to her faith level. I asked: "Do you really believe in God?" On her positive answer, I continued: "Do you know that it is only God who can decide when we should die and that we cannot take our own lives?" At these words she burst into tears admitting that she knew this.

As the conversation rolled on, I explained to her the process of gastrotomy. I told her that she would still be able to go on caring for her grandchildren and even live happily with them despite her condition.

After getting her consent for the operation to be carried out, I left her to inform the nurses... imagine my surprise when I noticed two doctors near me who had witnessed my encounter with the lady. One of them thanked me. "Thank you Sister. Today, we learned a good lesson from you." I could feel their relief as they knew that the lady had accepted to keep on living. For me, there was deep spiritual joy in my heart to know that I had been able to reach out to her on the level of faith.

Very soon, I'll be visiting a terminally-ill patient at the Monastery for Buddhist Nuns on Lantau Island. This is a particular friend of mine, a Buddhist nun only 35 years old. I will spend a few days with her at her monastery and together we will be able to chat about the meaning of life and where life leads to as she prepares to die.

Now, you see my ministry as I carry it out day after day. I am due to go back on home leave this year. It will be hard for me to leave these suffering people but God will find ways to help them. Meanwhile, I do need the prayers of our friends in Canada. Do not forget me."

Mireille, M.I.C.

(Mireille Bourdeau, M.I.C. Alexandria, Ontario.)

Cuba

No Age Limit

How old is old enough for the missions? St. Lucille Brouillette is convinced that 68 is not yet retirement age.



*Lucille Brouillette, M.I.C.
of Richmond, P.Q.*

Good afternoon, Lucille, I hear that you will soon leave for Cuba. This is not your first departure for that country, is it?

No, certainly not. I first left in 1956 for Marti, Cuba. At that time we M.I.C.'s had large schools. I taught piano lessons to the children of our Primary School Department. Then came the 1959 revolution.

When were you forced to leave the schools?

In 1961, our institutions were nationalized. There and then we found ourselves without work, without a residence for we were then living in apartments in the school building. For many of us Canadian Sisters that meant a return to Canada. The only Sisters who could remain in the country were the ones working in parishes. About 10 of us stayed.

Where did you go afterwards?

I was then assigned to go to Peru, Pucallpa, where once more I was in charge of the musical education in our secondary school this time. I was also responsible for the boarders in the school. However, this did not last long as the climate proved too harsh for me and soon the doctor ordered me back to Canada.

Your missionary dreams must have suffered a set-back there?

They surely did. But the Lord knows how to write straight on crooked lines. My health improved and I was re-assigned to Cuba, where a new type of work awaited me. As a missionary in the New Cuba, my work was limited strictly to parish work. We lived in the sacristy of the parish church while carrying on our apostolate. I had followed Red Cross courses so that gave me an opening to approach the elderly. It also gave me entry into hospitals where I could visit the sick and the dying. Several times at that period I had the opportunity to direct retreatants as there were no priests available for that ministry.

How do you carry out your work in the villages now?

In the village, the priest can rarely go for pastoral care. So with Sr. Marta

Romero, our Cuban M.I.C., we take up this worthwhile apostolate. We often succeed in bringing back people to the sacraments.

You seem very happy to be returning? Do you intend to stay long?

Yes, I am happy to return. I shall stay there as long as there is work for me. None of us Canadian Sisters are admitted on a permanent basis except for those who had stayed after the revolution. We are now 18 M.I.C.'s, 5 of us Canadians and 13 Cubans. We work in 5 dioceses. Most of the time, we are 2 or 3 in each community group. Our Provincial Superior, Sr Sarah-Olga Perez is a Cuban. We have now one novice in formation.

What values do you see as most meaningful to the Christians you deal with?

Most of them have returned to basics. All the accessories of faith have been set aside. They are more active, they participate better. Formerly, they were always the receivers, now they have become the givers. The Bible is better known; our young people study it with interest and are not afraid to proclaim that they are Christians.

Do you see much hope for these Christians?

Yes, I do. There are definite signs that the Church and State are making steps to approach each other. Dialogues have opened up between the ones governing and the Church officials. In February, 1986 will be held the National Congress with the theme: "*We Are Signs of Communion*". Each parish has organized a mini-council to make all the Christians aware of their obligations. By using the principle of SEE, JUDGE, ACT, people of all levels are now analyzing their life situations such as the media, the work place, religious life, senior citizens, emphasis has been on ACT, a concrete mode of action as a challenge to build the new Church rooted in Cuban culture.

A Woman from Home

Would you be interested to know more about the foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception?

VISIT

THE DELIA TETREAU CENTRE
314 St. Catherine Road
Outremont, Montreal, P.Q. H2V 2B4
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The Centre is the very same house where the foundress lived. There you may obtain documentation on her life, her works and her spirituality. You may browse through albums rich in mission history.



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(above Pont-Viau address)

This bureau is organized specifically for the promotion of the Cause of beatification. Send there your report of favors already obtained through the intercession of the servant of God, Delia. These, as well as your donations, may be directed to this Bureau. All donations will be acknowledged with receipt for tax deduction.

Did you know that...

The M.I.C.'s first went to Haiti in 1943.

There are 80 M.I.C.'s scattered over the land in 10 houses. 52 are Canadians, 27 are Haitians, one is from Madagascar. Together, they serve the Church in 5 main forms of ministry: Education, pastoral work, health care, catechesis and missionary animation.

Faith education

Bible sharing, catechesis and supervision of catechists, pastoral animation work, preparation for the sacraments. Retreats, recollections and sessions. Biblical formation and home visitation.

Missionary Animation

On the national level: Holy Childhood, missionary animation in schools and zones. Vocational and liturgical animation in parishes, in various Church movements and through organized sessions.

Ecclesial service

Youth movements, alphabetization, communion to the sick. Direction of a Pastoral Institute, Diocesan Bulletin, work on Justice and Peace commission. Work and education on the commission Haitian Conference for Religious. Communal homes for the poor.

Health service

Clinics, hospital, laboratory, mobile clinic and X-Ray

Educational service

Direction of Primary schools and one lower secondary. Alphabetization. Centre for the promotion of women. Craftshop, teachers' training centres.

Houses:

The houses are in: Port-au-Prince, Delmas, Hinche, Limbe, Cap Haitien, Trou du Nord, Coteaux, Chantal, Roche-à-Bateau, Les Cayes, Port Salut.

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