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MIC

MISSION NEWS



THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Dear Readers,

To witness missionaries receive their mission crosses and being sent forth to other lands in the name of their home church, captures the very heart of what we are about as a pilgrim people. Our baptismal call to mission takes on a dramatic importance when we witness the missionaries' response to that call by leaving homeland and loved ones to launch out in a new faith adventure trusting only in the goodness and grace of the Lord.

Each year, the Church sends off its messengers to the four corners of the world. Today, these missionaries spring from all countries. Some come from far to evangelize us here in Canada and the United States. That is why we like to share with you the new faith adventures of the MIC's in Arizona, in Ottawa, in Toronto. Old and young missionaries still believe that they must leave as pilgrim servants to overseas Church communities. They are willing to die to self, to begin life anew, to be evangelized in turn by the peoples and values of other cultures as they share their own faith journey.

Sr. Lise and Sr. Nancy are on the first lap of that long journey in life. They set off in hope as we see them receiving the crosses of the missions from the hands of the Bishop in Toronto.

Older missionaries are withdrawing and forced to come back after serving for 40, 50 or more years. But they all believe in the message and mission of Jesus which they will now carry on in their prayer life. "Thy Kingdom come."

The Editor.

Cover photo: Sr. Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.

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On Wheels Again



Sr. Patricia Blanchet, M.I.C.

Once more we're happy to bring you news from our Arizona mission. Three years ago Sr. Patricia Blanchet had written an article, "Evangelization on Wheels". Today, she's back to tell us how the mission has evolved and how the three M.I.C.'s there are dependent "on wheels".

McNeal, Arizona.
June, 1987

Dear Friends,

When one has waited as long as I have to give news about our apostolate in Southern Arizona, it is difficult to know just where to begin. So I shall just take the plunge and see how well I can answer the questions that many of you have raised.

As you know, two Filipina M.I.C.'s came to join me last year. Sr. Aludia Rufin and Sr. Primitiva Panesa courageously left their homeland to come into the desert of Southern Arizona as evan-

gelizers, as catechists and as all-round missionaries.

The adaptation wasn't easy for any of us. A new country, a new life-style, a new culture... and yes... even a new Church... It took lots and lots of love and patience. I am American, they are Filipinas. We all had adjustments to make to one another and to our people here. But the spirit of the Foundress lives on! Bringing the message of Christ with joy and thanksgiving, no matter how difficult or frustrating may be the work... that is the heritage Delia Tetreault left us.



Srs. Aludia Rufin, Patricia Blanchet and Primitiva Panesa.

There have been numerous joys coloring our everyday lives, helping make the difficulties and frustrations of the apostolate more tolerable. Joys of the Sisters' first driving lesson! Joy of seeing our new mobile home come down the road in two separate parts and being assembled together like magic! There have been many other spiritual joys as well. Seeing the children and adults finally listening to God's Word and doing something about it, is one.

My work is to direct and help in the Religious Education Program in Elfrida, Sunizona, McNeal and Double Adobe. It does keep me busy and happy.

Sr. Aludia teaches adult evangelization groups every week. She also taught adult classes for a while, and handled a Junior High religious class in Elfrida... and this nearly became her "Waterloo". Aludia had been used to our well

disciplined classes in the Philippines where manners are tops! But she won the battle and now these students all love her.

Aludia and I often handle the liturgy. She plays the guitar while I try to put more life into it—direct the singing in my stentorian voice! We'll never win the Tony Award but we manage to praise the Lord!

Sr. Primitiva (known to her friends as "Prime") is directress of religious classes in a school of Pirtleville. These younger children come in after a full day in public schools. They're hot, hungry and tired and it's not easy to talk about God to them in that state! We try to offer them a snack on our meager budget and somehow or other the Lord always provides each week. It is another multiplication of the bread and loaves!

Among the many funny events I could tell you, here is one about last Christmas when we prepared a Christmas pageant. One sixth grade girl of about 160 lbs came to me with a king size sheet asking me to drape it around her as she was representing an angel. I am not a fashion designer, so I sent her off to Aludia. Imagine my surprise when I met Lupita, not draped in a whitesheet but wearing my tightly fitted nightgown. I had brought it in case we ran out of material! (Those who know me, are aware that I have always been on the slim side.) On top of it all, she was wearing unfinished wings! We had started cutting the wings out of cardboard boxes, had covered them with absorbent cotton and trimmed them with silver and gold tinsel. Lupita's wings were covered only on one side. The other side showed the word: FRAGILE, that had been on the original box! Quickly, I grabbed a can of spray snow, gave Lupita a towel to cover her face and started spraying the letters till they all disappeared! You can well imagine how we laughed about this later that night!

We three travel far and wide to reach our families for catechism. Ours is a rural area and there are miles and miles to go each day, each week. Our CCD Centre is my own closet, Aludia's bedroom (especially under her bed), the living room and the trunk of the car. No chance for filing material. Is it any wonder that we are forever looking for things? We have learned to do without many comforts, without any luxury. We are poor with the poor here. Yet we are happy missionaries.

I love the desert area, its small settlements, its people. It is quiet, peaceful and far from everything... yet I love every inch of it. I praise the Lord for letting me work here and I am ready to stay as long as He wills it.

Lovingly,

Sr. Patricia, M.I.C.

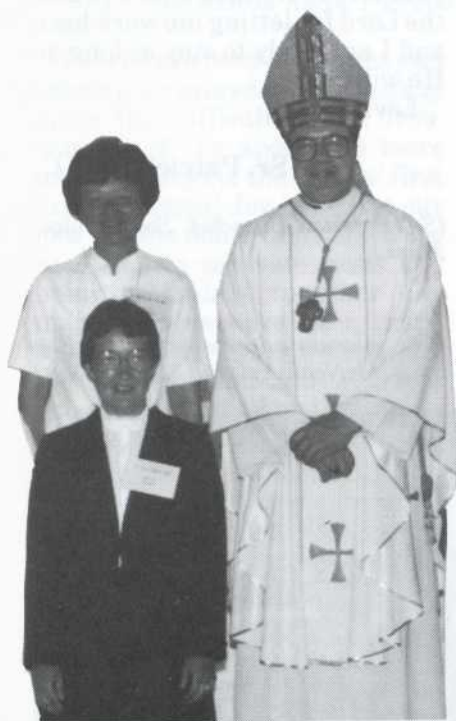
(Sr. Patricia Blanchet, Southbridge, Mass.)

(The mission address is: Rt. 1, Box 83-B, McNeal, Arizona 85617, USA.)



The mobile convent of the Sisters at Double Adobe.

Send-Off



*Most Rev. A.M. Ambrozic,
Sr. Nancy Vy-So (upper),
Sr. Lise Fortin (lower).*

Srs. Nancy Vy-So and Lise Fortin participated in a missionary send-off ceremony in St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto, last May. The Most Rev. A.M. Ambrozic presided the ceremony and presented each of the 12 participants a missionary cross, a gift from the Archdiocese.

Sr. Nancy is returning to the Philippines after serving several years in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, in Toronto. She will be engaged in pastoral work in the schools and parishes in Manila.

Sr. Lise, a Canadian, will be leaving for her mission assignment in Malawi, Central Africa. Lise was born and brought up at St. Octave de Metis, near Rimouski. She has served as a nurse in the M.I.C. Infirmary and in one of the clinics in Haiti for some time.

Recently, Lise spent 6 months in Toronto, brushing up on her English with the Sisters of St. Joseph at Providence Villa in Scarborough.

In Malawi, she will first undertake studies in tropical diseases and then learn the local language so as to serve the people in their needs, at local clinics.

Exile or Exodus

In May, I attended the National Canadian Campus Ministry Conference in Montreal. This session opened my eyes to the nation wide pastoral concern for youth in our various colleges and universities.

The theme was "Exile or Exodus". The well known speakers made us reflect that we are all a community in diaspora, one that needs to be saved, challenged and transformed. We are community on the way to the Promised Land, a land where peace, respect for human dignity are in the forefront.

As Christians, we are all called to bear witness to the Good News. We are invited to let go of our own security and comfort to be one with our brothers and sisters in *exile*. We chaplains are called to accompany students slowly finding their way to liberation. It demands that we risk living out another *exodus*.

In my own experience in Campus Ministry among Asian students at Ottawa University, I realize more and more that these students are living out a constant *exile and exodus experience*.

I see them trying to fight alone their loneliness, their work pressure. Like the Israelites, they too are dreaming to be delivered, to be freed, to be recognized and accepted in society by the very fact that they are persons.

Among the many I met were two students from Hong Kong whom I accompanied as they prepared on their two year journey toward Baptism. I walked side by side with David and Thomas Yau as they struggled in their growing faith and as they gradually discovered God's presence in their lives.

They were baptized in a solemn ceremony at the Tabaret Chapel of the University. David gave a testimony of faith expressing his joy in knowing that he has a Father in Heaven. Thomas repeats to all that God's presence in his life is more meaningful and important than any material thing.

For them as for many others, their *exile* has become their *exodus*.

Sr. Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.



Sr. Cecilia at the Baptism of David and Thomas.

Challen

Many of our older readers might still remember the visits of the "White Sisters with the Blue Sash" in their classrooms. They came to speak about children and youth of others lands.

Those were the days before TV's, before McDonald's, before the jets, before the refugees came. Young people responded well to the plea of the Sisters to help, both by prayer and funds.

Today, the M.I.C.'s (no longer in white nor with a blue sash) are still invited to schools to speak to young people. This generation may be more informed about what is going on in all parts of the world, but they still love to hear someone who has lived there tell them about their lives. They also respond well to challenges.

This challenge may be one of accepting the newcomer in the neighborhood, of laying down the racial barrier at school. The Sisters invite the Canadians to pursue an in-depth study of the values that other cultures bring us, that they invite us to live out.



*Sr. Celine Cloutier at the
Cardinal McGuigan High School.*



lenging



Searching for these values with youth, is one of the aims of Sr. Celine Cloutier, M.I.C., as she goes about various classrooms of the Toronto schools. She has a unique method whereby she presents these values through the breaking down of a Chinese character, namely that of LOVE.

She points out the values of Chinese family life such as she witnessed them in Hong Kong where she missioned for many years.

Sr. Marguerite Roy, a former missionary in Haiti presents the values that Haitian families live in spite of their dire poverty. She too challenges them and makes them reflect on their lives and how they can make this world a better world.

And so the tradition of the M.I.C. Sisters goes on as they still visit classrooms here and there, bringing a mission message to the youth of Canada.



*Sr. Marguerite Roy, M.I.C.
at the Toronto Seminary.*

Then and Now

Fifty years ago, Canadian missionaries were heading out in all directions to bring the Word of God to all nations. It was then that a group of young PME Fathers first landed in Davao to take up a mission post in a region fairly occupied by Moslems, known as Moros.

In this issue of M.I.C. MISSION NEWS, we would like to pay homage to the PME Fathers (Fathers of the Foreign Missions of Quebec) on their Golden Jubilee of Mission in Davao, southern Philippines.

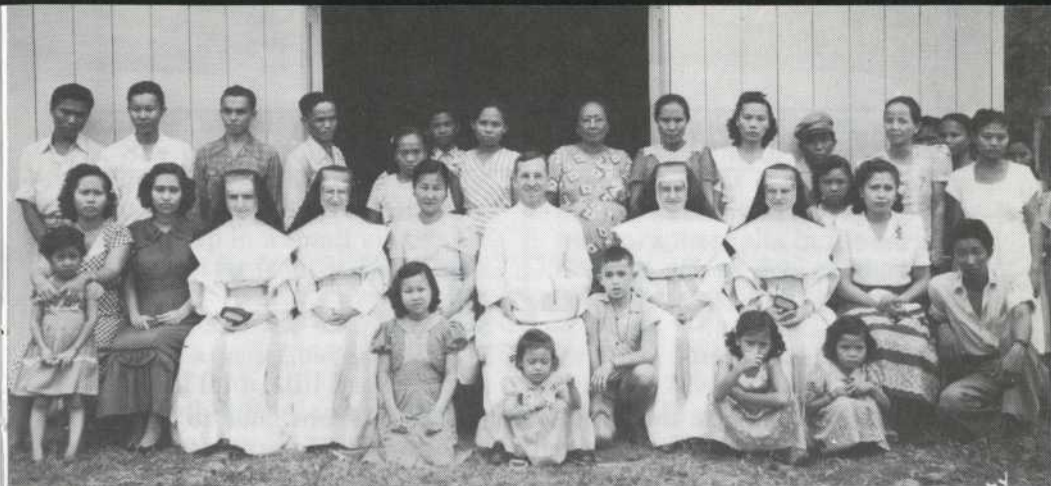
The PME's first arrived in Davao in 1937, before World War II. They had left their seminary in Pont-Viau, outside of Montreal, to take up mission work in an immense territory formerly entrusted to the Spanish Jesuits. They were asked to serve 300,000 inhabitants, scattered over a wide area, much of it virgin jungle land. Each

mission post was either along the Pacific coast or along the river banks, besides the innumerable barrios lost in the high mountains of Mindanao.

The Church there and then counted only four parishes. This soon grew as more and more settlers came down from the north. Soon 35 parishes were opened by the P.M.E.'s as well as 28 secondary schools, and 2 seminaries. They initiated a variety of projects in the media, social work and other fields. They served there alone for some 25 years. Today, the same territory counts 4 dioceses and 65 parishes serving 2,500,000 people.



(Left to right) Sr. Rachel Demars, Fr. Maurice Michaud, PME, Sr. Georgine Beneteau (R.I.P.) in 1948, Mati Davao.



In 1949, at a barrio fiesta with Fr. Alain Lecompte, PME. (I am on his left).

There are still 40 PME's working alongside the Filipino clergy under the leadership of four Filipino bishops. It is always with regret that one of them has to withdraw due to ill health. Some younger ones were transferred to missions in Indonesia, Sudan or Hong Kong, as the diocese can now subsist by itself.

The M.I.C. Sisters have worked side by side with them ever since 1947 when we first arrived in Mati, Davao, on the invitation of Mgr. Maurice Michaud, the parish priest at that time.

I had the privilege to be one of the Mati Sisters for years. I was witness to their total dedication and missionary zeal among the people they chose to serve. I saw them leaving for far-off barrios in the mountains to bring the Word of God and the sacraments to those people meeting the priest once a year at fiesta time. They would come back exhausted but happy after 2 or 3 months, full of hope and optimism for their Filipino brothers.

They lived the poverty of the people. Today, they do the same. They go even further in their dedication among the mountain tribes, among the Moslem groups of Jolo. Their zeal knew and knows no bounds. They adopted the language, the customs of the people they worked with. Their inculturation was really exemplary.

I am proud to be their Sister, as we both stem from the same missionary roots. Our foundress, Delia Tetreault was the one who instigated the Bishops of Quebec to found a missionary society of priests. This was accomplished in 1921. Together with them, we share the same missionary dream. We live side by side with them at Pont Viau, we work in a number of missions in Davao and elsewhere with them.

To each and every one of the Davao Missioners of today and yesterday, we offer our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for the years to come among our Filipino brothers.

Sr. Therese LeBlanc, M.I.C.

We Need You!

Years ago the M.I.C. Sisters went from door to door looking for subscribers. Today, Sr. Gemma de Grandpré drives from village to town recruiting volunteer promoters for our mission publications. Sr. Gemma's zeal for the cause of the missions knows no bounds.



If Sr. Gemma could only speak English! You'd surely have met her. She would have convinced you that the M.I.C. Sisters need a helping hand in reaching out for more subscribers to their mission publications.

"Did you know, that you too, could become a missionary? No?

Well, you will be just that, if you help us get a few more subscribers to our French publication, *Le Précurseur*". This is her refrain!

And there you are, promising to help her find more subscribers in your village. It's as easy as that with Gemma!

But let me tell you who Gemma is. She comes from a beautiful, large French-Canadian family, named "de Grandpré". She was brought up in a small village, St. Simon, not far from St. Hyacinthe.

Today, Mrs. de Grandpré, her mother, a jovial old lady full of zest as of faith, still finds interest in everything she sees and hears in spite of her 83 years. Gemma, with her bubbling enthusiasm, is a replica of her old mother. She is quite irresistible as many a lady in Chicoutimi, in Amos, in Joliette, in St. Hyacinthe, and dozens of other places will assert. No small wonder that a missionary priest, hearing of Gemma's activities nicknamed her "bull dozer" — and a "bull-dozer" she is, for the sake of the missions!

She spent many years in Haiti where she was Provincial Superior until she was recalled to Canada to carry on similar administrative work.

Gemma believes in her work, in her call to bring the Good News to everyone. That is why, you often see her packing her booklets and her paraphernalia in the car and driving off as far as northern New Brunswick, or northern Quebec. She meets people in groups, she gives homilies at Sunday Masses, she speaks to children in schools. But most especially, she is on the look-out for prospective promoters for her "Précurseur" and sometimes, even M.I.C. MISSION NEWS.

To this date, Gemma has found 630 ladies in N.B. and Quebec willing to give her a helping hand to find new subscribers. (We Sisters depend so very much on it!)

"It is your mission in the Church" she keeps reminding them. "Because of your Baptism, you, too, have the responsibility to help spread the Good News. And our

(Left to right) Mrs L. Cloutier, Mrs G. Ouellette, Sr. Gemma, Mrs. R. Desjardins at Grand Falls, N.B.



mission publications do bring you that good news from your brothers and sisters all over the world, in all our sister—Churches.”

Somehow or other, even if Gemma and I are the best of friends, I envy her. She has many friends to help her find subscribers. This leads me to ask you ...yes ...you... if you would be willing to become a promoter for M.I.C. MISSION NEWS. We know it is a small newsletter, but it brings

you to the four corners of the world, with the M.I.C. Sisters and their work. You too would be taking your baptismal responsibility seriously; you too would be a missionary in your own way.

In case you decide to do something, look at the coupon below, and write to us or call 663-6460. I'm in the office every day... and I'd love to meet you!

Sr. Therese LeBlanc, M.I.C.

M.I.C. Mission News
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Like Our Lady who brought the Good News to Elizabeth and others, I too, would like to share this Good News with more people. This will be my missionary challenge during the Marian Year. To show my sincerity, I have found the following subscribers:

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MARIAN YEAR



In each country, Our Blessed Mother is pictured in art and sculpture according to the local tradition. In Japan, Our Lady can be seen as a Japanese woman. Mary is the symbol of love for all people, no matter whether she is seen as a Jewish woman, a Japanese woman or others.

*Prayer: Almighty Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
You have revealed the beauty of your power by exalting the lowly Virgin of
Nazareth and making her the mother of our Savior.
May the prayers of this woman bring Jesus to the waiting world
And fill the void of incompleteness
with the presence of her child,
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God forever and ever. Amen,
(From the Roman missal, the Annunciation)*

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The Mission Procure, Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

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