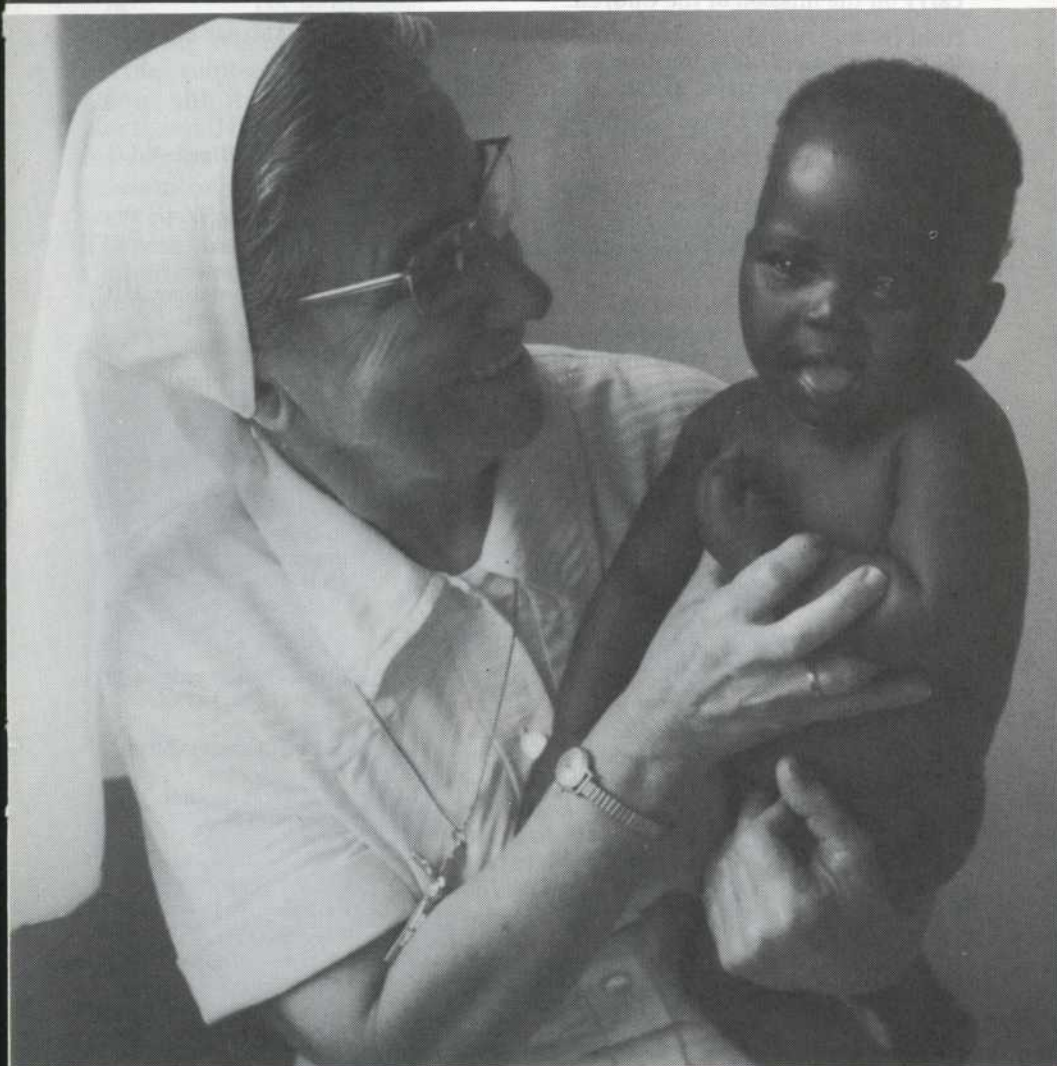


Series 15, No. 2
March-April, 1988

MIC

MISSION NEWS



THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Dear Readers,

I love going out to the parishes to meet our readers. The ones I meet and the ones I don't meet are important to me, to all of us M.I.C.'s. We depend on them for our mission publication. They are a part of our life. We promise them prayers in return for their support, they promise us solidarity. We need one another to carry on the mission of the Church.

A recent survey showed that there are 97,000 priests, 21,000 lay brothers, 293,000 Sisters and catechists, 31,000 lay men and women in the missions. These include both foreign missionaries and natives of the mission lands.

One sign of active mission life is the fact that former mission countries are themselves sending missionaries to other countries. The articles here about the Filipina M.I.C.'s affirm this. In Malawi, Africa, where the M.I.C.'s are celebrating a milestone, they are now seeing their own take up mission responsibilities. These countries are now producing life of its own.

Last Mission Sunday, Pope John Paul II said: «Evangelization and mission work is not something optional, supplementary or marginal. The Church is missionary and for her to evangelize is a law of life.»

While most of us can be moral support for the missionaries, some can also assist by financial contributions. Two-third of the world is not yet Christian and the need for mission aid is great.

Hopefully the work of the missions will gain momentum during this Marian Year. It may be the time to ask yourself what have you done this year so far to enhance the mission cause? Did you ever think that inviting one or more persons to subscribe to a mission magazine could be one way to help? A few readers from the U.S.A. and Toronto have done just that recently. Maybe it will be your Lenten good deed.

The Editor

Cover photo: Sr. Jeanne Plante, M.I.C. in Malawi.

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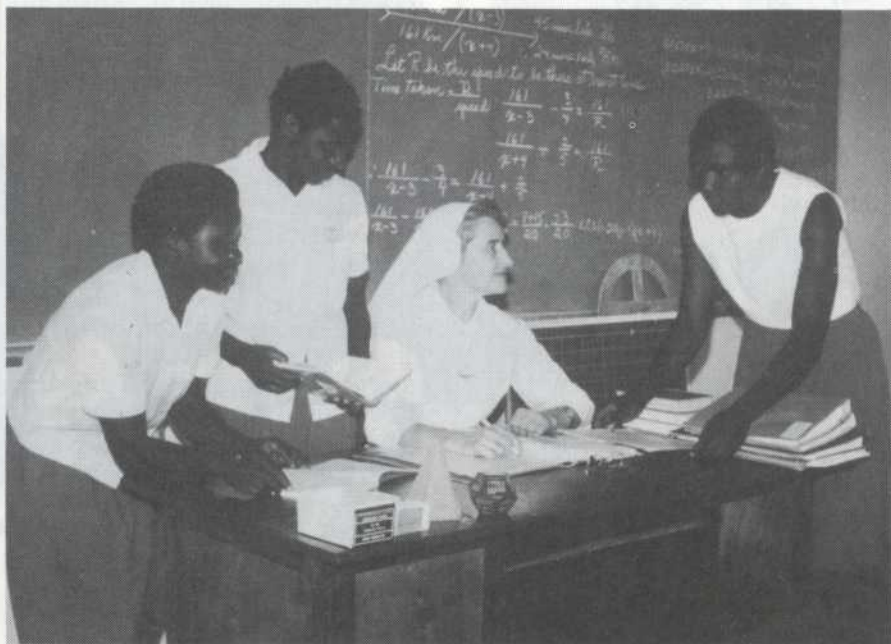
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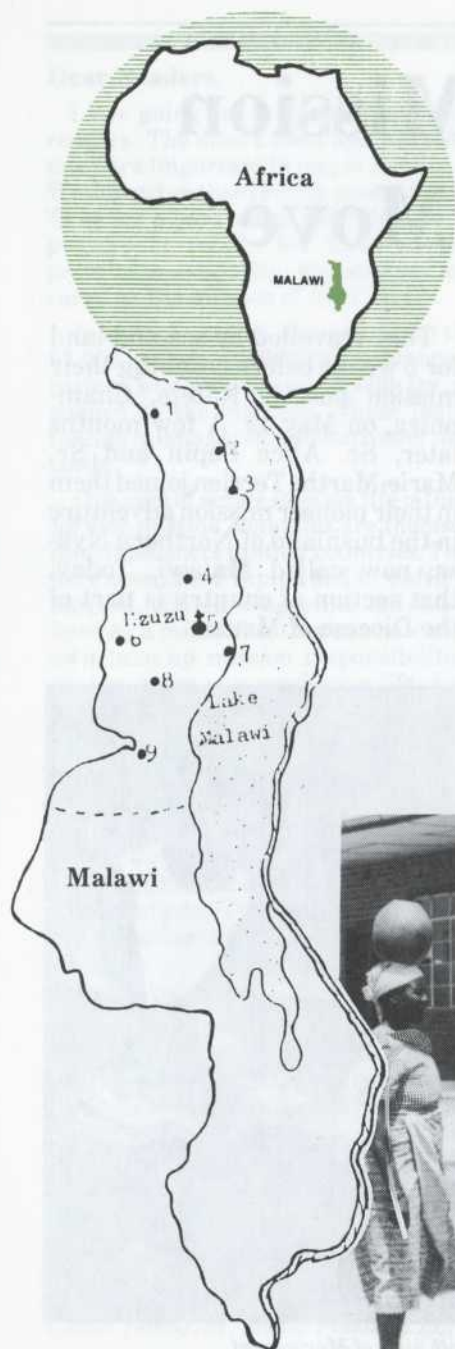
Malawi Mission on the Move

After World War II, in 1947, at the request of Msgr. M. St. Denis, the Apostolic Prefect for Northern Nyasa, 4 M.I.C.'s left for Africa to open up their first mission on that continent. They were Sr. Madeleine Loranger, Sr. Therese Gouin, Sr. Berengere Cadieux and Sr. Paule Ida Coulombe.

They travelled by sea and land for 5 weeks before reaching their mission post in Katete, Champhira, on May 19. A few months later, Sr. Alice Pepin and Sr. Marie-Marthe Terrien joined them in their pioneer mission adventure in the bushland of Northern Nyasa, now called Malawi. Today, that section of country is part of the Diocese of Mzuzu.



Sr. Marie-Claire Lacombe with girls of Marymount



M.I.C. Presence: 1948-1988
Northern Nyasa now Malawi
Diocese of Mzuzu

1. Kaseye Health Centre:
1951-19..
2. Karonga:
1951-1978
3. Vua, Chilumba:
1952-1956
4. Rumphu:
Health Centre: 1950-1971
Seminary: 1983-19..
5. Mzuzu:
1956-19..
6. Mzambazi, Euthini:
1949-19..
7. Nkhata Bay:
Health Centre: 1953-1974
Secondary School: 1975-1985
8. Mzimba:
1966-19..
9. Katete, Champhira:
1948-19..



When the Sisters first joined the White Fathers in Northern Nyasa, they all agreed that it was urgent to make the Church a visible presence among the local population. Therefore, for the first 15 years, buildings were erected for the traditional works of mercy.

In each mission post, there had to be a maternity clinic and dispensary, a primary school, a homecraft centre to provide the basic education of women. As the country evolved and finally gained its independence, new apostolic priorities arose and other needs had to be fulfilled.

The early M.I.C. missionaries of Malawi did not spare themselves then, nor are they sparing themselves today, to work alongside the people, to lead them to take on their responsibilities in the Church and the country. On the preceding page is a brief outline of the mission they have carried out from 1948 to 1988.

After Malawi assumed its state of independence, the Sisters passed on their Primary Schools to the Malawians and took on the education of students in secondary schools. At the same time, some M.I.C.'s began specializing in pastoral work, in religious education, in leadership training courses, and the preparation of catechists.

The newer approaches to mission work led the Sisters to train more lay leaders to animate their own Christian communities. This is going on now, in the organization

of Bible sharing groups, weekend retreats, courses for religious education teachers and catechists. Today much of this youth apostolate is carried out with modern methods of visual aids where possible.





The medical mobile team leaving for a bush village with Sr. Jeannette Caron, MIC



Sr. Marguerite Legault with her Katete students

Photo credit: H. Turcotte, M.I.C.

The Sisters working in the health sector also gradually passed on their health centres to the Malawians retaining only a few. Now they often go on wheels to promote basic health care in the villages.

As always, one of their primary cares went for the promotion of the woman in her African society. This woman is the guardian of family traditions as well as the promoter of present day evolution in the family. Fully aware of the African woman's skill with her hands, the M.I.C.'s have taught her newer and more practical techniques of operation as well as some science for her to develop her potentialities.

Over the span of 40 years, 110 M.I.C. Sisters have given the best of their lives and love in the building of the Kingdom of God in that section of Central Africa where the Diocese of Mzuzu is situated. Three of the pioneers are still actively engaged serving that local Church.

Ever since 1952, the Sisters have contributed to the formation of the Institute of the Rosarian Sisters, now a flourishing African community. They have also provided a feminine presence at the Seminary of Rumphu by offering courses to the seminarians. A few former students have joined religious orders or the priesthood. Many are now prominent in their

society or in their Church. Gradually, an African laity has been trained to take over full responsibility for their spiritual lives with the development of Basic Christian communities.

Forty years seem very short for one to see all that was accomplished. This was done in a spirit of love and thanksgiving which the M.I.C.'s have inherited and shared with their brothers and sisters of Malawi.



Sr. Marguerite Cloutier buying dried leaves for a meal

Dear Sr. Therese,

You'll be surprised on receiving these notes and photos. I had been planning to send them for quite some time.

Did you know that our Sister Socorro Carvajal went with Fr. Gilles Belanger, P.M.E., to Kangko, about 30 kilometers away from Malita to give the tribal people an evangelization seminar?

The hike over the mountains took them more than 6 hours. But Sr. Socorro found it really worth while when they met with the 67 participating adults. In these cultural minority groups, 46 of the attendants had not been baptized. The people are really quite backward and very few of them can read or write. As you can well imagine, it is not easy to find teachers willing to go and live in these outlying districts of the mountains of Davao del Sur. It is not easy either to find leaders willing to lead the Sunday Liturgy of the Word. The seminar was a challenge to both Fr. Gilles and Sr. Socorro and their team of catechists. But it was rewarding, and they all forgot the fatigue.



Sr. Socorro Carvajal resting on her hike through the mountains



the Mountains!



Sr. Lolita with two newly married couples



h the



Sr. Lolita Villagrancia with students of Malita, Davao del Sur

As for me, while I was there in Malita, I worked on a project with High School students, a project which we called, «Caritas of Malita». The students volunteered to go from home to home, gathering donations for the most needy ones of the community. You can see the joy in their hearts by looking at the photos taken after the collection and sharing.

We also helped the parish priest, Fr. Jacques Doyon — on what we called the «Marriage Validation Day». Then, 13 couples came willingly to have their marriages validated by receiving the sacrament of Matrimony. As you see, we have plenty of apostolic work in our beautiful mission of Malita and area. I'm sure you wish you were with us, as you worked so many years in Davao Province as a younger missionary.

I am now living in the provincial house. My health is slowly improving after the chemotherapy treatments. Please pray for me. I have confidence in our Blessed Mother and in Delia Tetreault. I often ask them to cure me so that I can carry on my mission work.

Your loving Sister,

Lolita Villagrancia, M.I.C.

N.B. Lolita was once a student of mine in High School while I was teaching at St. Michael's Academy in Padada, Davao, during the 50's.

'Bye for Now!

Sr. Elizabeth, you are returning to Malawi, Central Africa, this week, I understand. Where will you be working?

I'll be working in the city of Mzuzu, in that diocese, where we M.I.C.'s have a large boarding school for girls. Marymount Secondary School for Girls, has a total school population of nearly 500 students.

What do you expect to teach there?

I expect to keep on teaching needlework as well as Bible Knowledge as I did previous to my year of furlough in Canada and the U.S.A.

I understand that you are American. Where was you home?

In Framingham, Massachusetts. I have two sisters living in that area. They are both Sisters of Charity; my other sister lives near Montreal. We were six in our family.

Coming back to your mission, how many years were you there?

I left Canada in 1969. I worked both in Malawi and in Zambia for the past 18 years.



Sr. Elizabeth Gagné, MIC.

What is the standard of education in the school of Marymount? In what language do you teach?

I always taught in English. The standard is relatively high. The students write the Malawi Certificate of Education. They may continue their studies here or overseas.

You are now in your mid'50's, how do you feel about leaving?

Very happy! I entered this community to serve my brothers and sisters in the missions. The students I will work with are very studious and highly motivated. They appreciate all we do for them. They belong to a variety of religious denominations. They love Bible studies. It is rewarding for a teacher and a missionary to work with them. Some of them, unfortunately have to leave school sometimes due to financial difficulties. I hope some of our readers will be willing to help them - and I am counting on the prayers of the readers of M.I.C. Mission News. Bye for now!

One More Step

On November 30, 1987, some 400 M.I.C.'s assembled at Pont-Viau to attend the official diocesan closure of the inquiry into the life of Delia Tetreault.

«The Cause», as it is commonly called in Canon Law language, had been introduced in the Montreal Diocese on May 19, 1985.

This means that over 50 witnesses were interviewed by 3 members of the diocesan tribunal appointed to carry on this work. Another group of theologians had scrutinized her writings and all documents related to her life, according to the norms of the new Code of Canon Law.



DELIA TETREAULT
Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit



Archbishop P. Gregoire of Montreal signing the documents to be sent to Rome before two members of the diocesan tribunal, Jean Langlois, PME and Roger Brousseau, CSV.

The closing ceremonies were solemnly held in the chapel of Pont-Viau in the presence of the Archbishop of Montreal, Msgr. Paul Gregoire, and two auxiliary bishops, Msgr. M. Andre Cimichella and Msgr. G. Tremblay. In the M.I.C. group attending, was the vice postulator of the Cause, Sr. Pauline Longtin, M.I.C. Another interesting factor was the presence of Sr. Angeline Tetreault, niece of Mother Delia, an Assumption Sister from Edmonton, Alberta.

On a table in the sanctuary were laid the 38 volumes which were now to be forwarded to Rome for further study and investigation by members of the congregation working for the Cause of the Saints.

These 12,900 pages of the bound volumes consisted of formal documents such as her baptismal certificate, her numerous letters to bishops, to her Sisters missioning in China, Japan and the Philippines, as well as the mission posts in Canada.

Each day, the Office of the said «Cause»—in Pont-Viau, receives numerous letters from friends informing them of favors received through the intercession of Delia. Often, visitors come to pray on the tomb where her remains have been placed outside the Pont-Viau chapel. Everyone is welcome!



(Left to right): Sr. Odila Plante, MIC, Sr. Helene De Serres, MIC, Sr. Pauline Longtin, MIC, and Sr. Angeline Tetreault, Assumption Sister

I'm Here to Stay!



The last few years the media has kept us informed nearly every day about the events going on in the Philippines. A more moderate news coverage has been made on those of Bolivia. They have many common factors: a revolution, an on-going process of democratization, social reforms. Sr. Socorro Gumnad, a Filipina M.I.C., recently arrived in her mission in Baures, Bolivia and discovered many other common traits, between her country, the Philippines and her mission country, Bolivia.

«When I first arrived in Cochabamba, Bolivia, from the Philippines, I was greeted at the airport by a few M.I.C.'s. It was a great joy for me to meet them for the first time, the companions with whom I was coming to share my life in a common mission project.

Some time later, on August 15, Sr. Lucille Baril and I flew to Baures on the small plane carrying meat for the people. We had been waiting for that ride for a whole week! As soon as the Sisters heard the plane overhead, they rushed to meet us. With them were crowds of curious young children, eager to give us a helping hand with the baggage.

Finally, I was here in Baures! My mission! Baures is simply a small village where most of the street traffic are chickens, cows, horses, cats and dogs, a few jeeps now and then! The homes, constructed in heavy primitive bricks have a roof of palm leaves, similar to our nipa huts of the Philippines.

My first visit in the parish church made me think I was back in a rural parish of my country. It was packed. The priest gave a beautiful homily on the Assumption of Mary whose feast we were celebrating.

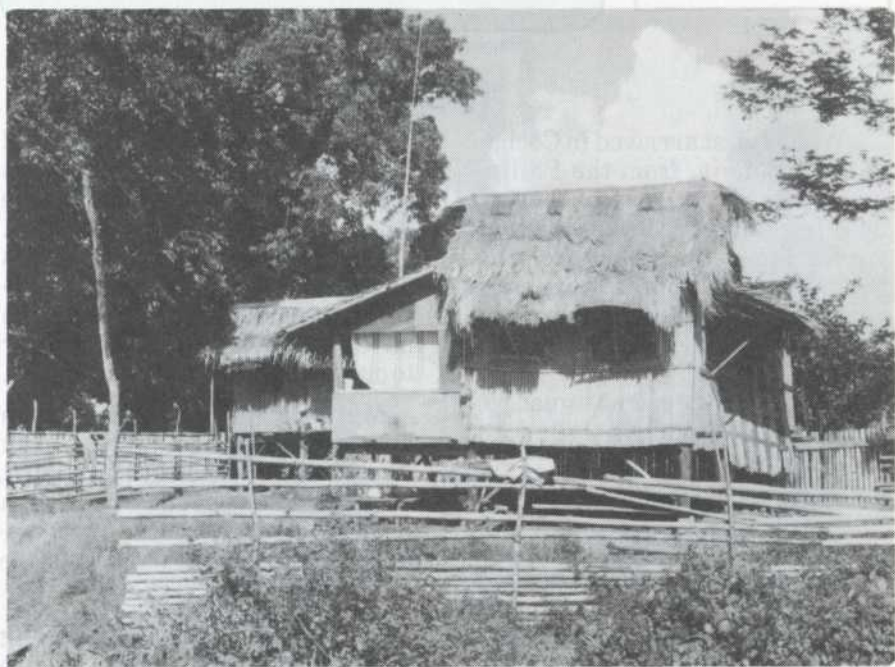
He also welcomed me explaining to the people that I had come to share their life here in Baures.

I soon discovered that they celebrated patronal feasts of their parishes in many similar ways to us, back home. They begin the celebration on the eve of the feast, by prayers and hymns. They end up with a Eucharist when possible, if not, then, a Celebration of the Word.

For their fiestas, everybody chips in to prepare enough food and drinks for all. In the afternoon, they have sports competition and games followed by dances where all join in the merry making.

You can see for yourself now, how many traits we have in common for our celebrations: the religious preparations, the hospitality, the preparatory work in common.

For me, a new arrival, a foreign missionary to these people, it was a joy to be present, an enriching first experience. I have come to share the lives of the people, I want to be with them in their joys and sorrows. *I'm here to stay!*»



A home in the rural Philippines

Our Lady of the Barangay



(In the Philippines, «barangay» means a group of people. Each evening in the barrios and villages, the people assemble to recite the Rosary and invoke Mary as Our Lady of the Barangay. This is how they picture the Blessed Mother watching over them.)

We come to you, Mary,
Mother of our Lord and Mother of us all,
to thank you for your Yes
that gave us the incarnation of God's own Son
and brought life to its fullness.
We ask you,
teach us to follow you in saying our Yes
with faith and courage.
You know the cost of living the Yes;
protect ours in integrity and joy. Amen.

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