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MIC

MISSION NEWS



THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Dear Readers,

I wonder how many of us remember the theme and the poster of the Propagation of the Faith for this year? Remember? It was: "A Heart as Big as the World!"

It refers to Delia Tetreault, whose boundless zeal knew no borders, no barriers. She knew that God loved her, she constantly referred to that creative love to her Sisters. Today, these Sisters are sharing that charism of thanksgiving with a heart as big as the world, and in all parts of the world.

We first go to Manila where Natividad Flores gathers inner-city youngsters whose main hobby is searching for a "jackpot" in the city dumps! She tries to make them understand some of the Christian values in her lessons. Then we go to Lima, Peru, where Jeannine Boily undertakes a similar task of love with the "Little Delias". Together with the young ladies, associates of the MIC Sisters, they assemble these roaming and unloved children and even attempt to make them aware that they too can be apostles in their own families.

In the mission enterprise, one is never alone. There has to be a partnership with others to bring about the Kingdom of God. It's Edith Faucher's turn to unfold her struggles to become an equal partner in mission where she is returning soon. This is Kanyanga, Zambia, but it could be anywhere. Jocelyne Dallaire, a dedicated lay woman, an ASMIC, relates how vivid her experience was, when she attended a convention for lay missionaries in Peru last year. She came back convinced of her role in her local Church, her diocese. Finally, Odile Malboeuf, an elderly missionary of China, tells us from her sick room at the infirmary, her own struggles when she followed the call of the Lord. She brings us roaming from Sudbury, Ontario, to Manchuria, then to Hong Kong and Taiwan. Finally, she continued her mission in Canada with youngsters she visited in schools until her paralysis stroke a few months ago. Now, she is praying with her heart as big as the world on her sick bed.

We all have a chance to prove that we too have that heart as big as the world when we tend a warm handshake to a shy refugee, when we smile at a newcomer in our parish, when we pray and help those involved in full mission activity.

How big is your heart today?

The Editor

Cover photo: Jeannine Boily, MIC, with one of her little friends in Lima, Peru

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Little Delias of Lima

In an interview with Jeannine Boily, a recent arrival from Lima, Peru, we hear of two Associations recently founded there to help young people and children grow in their faith.



Jeannine, in what Latin American country were you evangelizing?

I've just returned from Lima, Peru where I have been very involved in mission activity during the past five years. Previous to this experience, I had spent 18 years in Guatemala.

Would you share with us what were your apostolic commitments these last five years?

I worked with youth, with young university students, with young ladies engaged in secretarial work, with teachers and other working. I really loved this type of ministry. It was a pleasure for me to accompany them on their spiritual journey as they faced challenges in their faith. I shared with them on prayer life. Together, we organized prayer week-ends, mini retreats, recollection days. They were starving to hear the Word of God as are many of our Peruvian youth today. This led them to make spiritual discernments on choices and options they had to make in life.

I know that you were Directress of a group of ASMIC, that is Associates of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. How did this come about?

Rather spontaneously, if you wish to call it that. An act of God in our history, if you want to give it a spiritual meaning. It was Alicia, a young university student involved in the Charismatic Movement, who first knocked at our door. She was looking for some form of apostolic work. We informed her about a lay missionary movement, but she came back to us. It wasn't what she was looking for.

Then I told her if she could find a few young ladies, we might organize a group of ASMIC. The very next day she turned up with four companions. That was the origin of Lima ASMIC! It was February 23, 1987.

Eventually, other girls heard of this association and joined it. Finally, after one year of instruction and sharing, eight of them took the pledge and were formally admitted into the first Peruvian ASMIC. Presently, four



Jacqueline Vasquez in her wheelchair and her co-members at the formal reception into ASMIC by the Provincial Superior, Therese Lebeau, MIC



A group of "Little Delias" of Lima

others are in their probation year and expect to be accepted as members soon. We made no propaganda nor advertisement at all. I would dare say it was Delia Tetreault herself that seems to inspire them to come.

What apostolic work do they carry out?

As I said previously, because of their various type of work in life, they each have a different apostolic work. They meet once a week to discuss and study the charism of Delia Tetreault. They understand better their baptismal commitment of bringing the Good News to others. They have deepened their Marian devotion, so popular in Peru and they have discovered the spirit of thanksgiving in their lives. So, for active apostolic work, some teach catechism, others visit hospitals, a few prepare children for Baptism or First Communion. Some are giving lessons to the "Little Daughters of Delia".

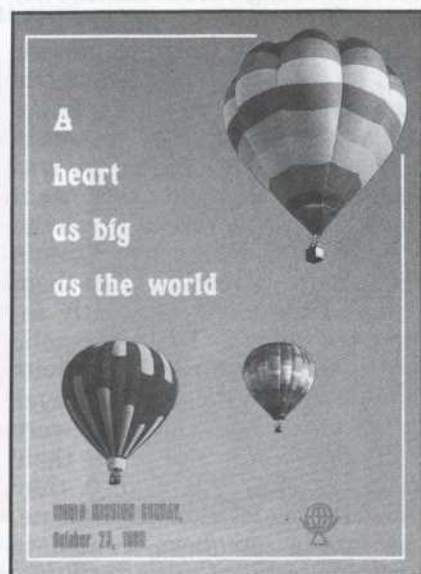
Who are these "Little Daughters of Delia"?

They're a group of little girls of seven, eight or nine years of age that one of the members, a handicapped ASMIC, went to recruit in a nearby public school, where they receive no religious education. They were often unloved, uncared for children whose working parents had no time for them. Their features were harsh, their clothes dirty, their manners unkempt when they first came. It was Jacqueline Vasquez who went herself in her wheelchair to invite them to come to the convent to join the group. Thirty-five of them came. They were gradually instructed and as their apostolic work, they were asked to invite their families to say a prayer before meals. Naturally, they were scoffed by their elders, by their brothers and sisters. But they persisted, and within a short time, the family members wanted to know more about God and religion.

They could see the transformation of their own little girl as she attended her weekly half-day meetings. Recently, four of them were baptized, and ten made their First Communion. Now, they too, like Delia, have a heart as large as the world!

How do you maintain financially such associations, for I am sure there must be expenses in books, in food and other factors?

Each ASMIC gives whatever she feels like giving when she attends meetings. This ASMIC Association, like the ones in Canada, is a spiritual association whereby members learn the Christian life, study the charism given to the MIC's by Delia Tetreault, and finally become involved in some form or other of apostolic work in their milieu.



MANILA-PHILIPPINES

Finding the Jackpot!

Dear Friends,

If you pass by our house on a Saturday afternoon, you can easily notice a group of poorly clad youngsters playing just outside the gate. To satisfy the curiosity of any passer-by wondering what is the purpose of the gathering, anyone in the group might give you this response: "We're waiting for our teachers."

Yes, there are four teachers from ICA, (Immaculate Conception Academy) who come to do volunteer work; they share their talent, time, energy, and sometimes their allowance to help me teach these children who are slowly becoming scavengers like their parents. During the weekly session, we try to inculcate in them some Christian, moral and human values. The activities undertaken, be it playing, taking snacks, doing art work, or participating in group discussion, are all geared towards the attainment of this objective.

This project sounds very simple, doesn't it? Well, not really. A visit to their one-room house which measures approximately 7 X 10 feet, will tell you the problems that such lack of privacy entails. When a child shares with you his experience of child abuse or wife beating, do you wonder why these kids fight at the slightest provocation? Knowing that they seldom get three square meals a day, you may feel a lump in your throat when you see them savor a half eaten sandwich unearthed in a pile of garbage.

The parents of these children still value formal education. They encourage their kids to go to school as long as they are able to support them. However, the great majority of the school-children drop out before they finish high school because of the inability to cope with academic requirements, lack of financial support, absence of strong motivation to persevere, emotional problems arising from home and environmental factors.

Therefore, we teachers, having all this information in mind, try to give value education or transformation sessions. In the process,

we are learning as much as we are giving, because these children can teach us great lessons on gratitude, self-forgetfulness, trust in Divine Providence, etc. For instance, a little girl was so happy to show her patched up pair of tennis shoes which her father had picked up from the garbage. Another one, looking desperate, as she was going home with her almost empty push cart, came across a pile of discarded dextrose bottles and called this "jackpot" for it meant a little bit more rice on the table.

Beautiful lesson indeed if you take time to listen to their life experiences and if you are open to hear what God is trying to communicate through their instrumentality.

by Sr. Natividad Flores, M.I.C.

P.S. As part of the social outreach project of the MIC Community of Rosal St., I am trying to find a benefactor who is willing to shoulder the financial obligations of a school child who is strongly motivated to study in spite of the odds along the way. Donations for this project may be forwarded to "Mission Procure", 121 Maplewood Ave., Outremont, P.Q., Canada H2V 2M2 or MIC Sisters, Provincial House P.O. Box 468, 1502 Greenhills, Metro-Manila, Philippines.



Natividad Flores, MIC, with her inner-city youngsters



My Mission... Yeste

by S. Odile Malboeuf



Odile Malboeuf, MIC, in Hong Kong in 1955

My mission... where is it, O Lord?
In Africa... in Asia...
or elsewhere...?

During my youth days,
you called me...

You wanted me to be a missionary.
I was then seventeen or eighteen;
Working in a store,
then in an office.

A priest I met in my parish,
With whom I was at ease,
re-assured me:

"One day," he said, "you will be
a missionary".

"Father," I replied, "What will
my dear Dad say?"

"Your Dad," continued Father,
"is a fervent Catholic,
He never misses Mass on Sunday."
That was true, but he had already
warned me clearly,
He would never allow his beloved
daughter to enter a Missionary
Congregation.

"Be patient," said the priest,
a Jesuit, assistant at our
Ste-Anne's Parish,

"It is a question of patience,
of hope, of perseverance..."

Odile Malboeuf, MIC, a well known missionary in Hong Kong and Taiwan, reveals her intimate life and country to bring the Good News over the world. Today, on her sick bed, she continues her mission by praying and suffering for others.

Your daily Eucharist
will help you, I'm sure."

And I waited...

I had just reached 21...
Three times my appeals had been
refused...

A decisive NO was the answer...
How many tears did I not shed...
My mother's encouraging words
were of great help and brought
balm on my wounds.

I could feel my Dad's great love
for me,
And at the same time,
Christ's love calling me.

After four years of expectation
and hope, I left Sudbury.

And this, without my Dad's
permission...
What suffering for my father
and for me...
But the call was so strong,
and God's assistance also.
(For Dad, my leaving home to
become a missionary was, as he
said, putting me in the tomb,
because, at that time, few
missionaries would ever return to
Canada.)

Yesterday... Today...

Malboeuf, m.i.c.

I known missionary of China, Hong
intimate struggles as she left home
d News to her Chinese friends all
sick bed, Odile still continues her
ring for them.

My entry into the novitiate took
place 1st March, 1929, and was
followed in 1931 by my profession;
it was a feast of Mary.

In 1932, 4th of September, how
happy I was to leave for China!
But what a wound
in my father's heart!...
My heart was bleeding too,
but the joy of leaving for the
mission was undescribable...

MANCHURIA... my first mission
Fifteen years were spent there
(4 of them in concentration camp)
The Japanese occupation coming
to an end, Russian and Chinese
Communists took over and the
Missionaries were forced to
leave...

Adieu, beloved Manchuria...!
Adieu, dear Szepinghai...!

On leaving Manchuria, another
mission was awaiting the
missionaries; Some would be
welcomed in Hong Kong. In this
city of over five million
people... Life was wonderful...
and days were happily going by,
in Tak Sun School with 2000 boys,
later with 3000 girls in Good Hope
School.

Twenty-five years in Hong Kong...
With days full of joy, happiness
and consolation.

Advancing in age, I was compelled,
one day to leave Hong Kong.
Taiwan became my next mission...

Yes, there, in Taipei,
for four years, I continued to be
a missionary.

In 1976, another route opened
before me...

This time in Canada,
and my mission took another
direction.

Yes, Canada was opening its heart
and arms to me:

As promoter for our magazine
"THE PRECURSOR".

Eight years after in missionary
animation in primary schools, in
Ottawa, Sudbury, Niagara Falls,
etc.



*Odile with a group of young Canadians
during her years of mission animation
work in the schools of Ontario*

My mission... today:
 Assistance to refugees and
 immigrants.
 Can I say that I'm still a
 missionary?
 You know, Lord, wherever I go,
 all my energy goes towards
 helping people to know
 and to love You...
 When I was in Manchuria,
 Hong Kong or Taiwan
 Was I not really missionary?
 Now in **Canada**, Lord, you want
 me to be **in mission...**?
 Are we not all missionaries?
 And everywhere?
 Is our unique desire not to help
 people sing your praise...
 Young or adult, sick or healthy
 Let us not forget
 whoever we may be,
 we **all must be missionaries**
 Missionary by prayer,
 such as St. Theresa,
 Missionary in action,
 such as St. Francis Xavier,
 Missionary, in suffering, such as
 this priest paralyzed for more
 than thirty years,
 and for all of us
 in our daily sufferings...

O LORD, take my prayer, my
 work, my sufferings,
 Offer everything to God,
 the Father,

And make me more and more,
 a real missionary!
 In mission field, missionaries
 we all are,
 In Canada, missionaries
 we all are
 Everywhere, missionaries
 we all are.

May every moment of our days
 be full of love, and we will all
 be missionaries

WITH MARY, OUR
 IMMACULATE MOTHER
 WITH DELIA, OUR
 FOUNDRESS.
 LET US ALWAYS BE
 MISSIONARIES IN
 THANKSGIVING!

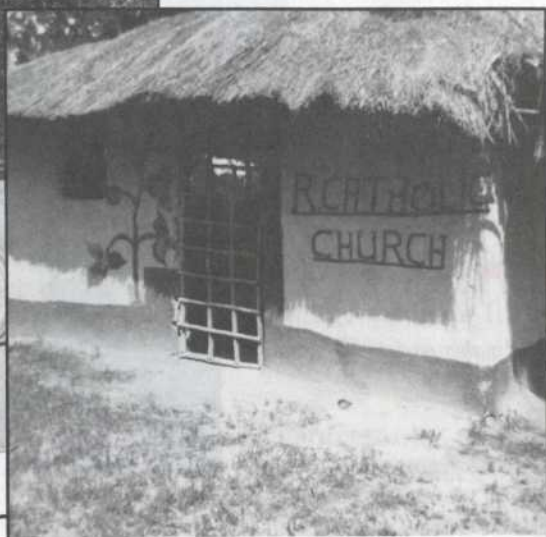


(At this moment, Sr. Odile is in the MIC Infirmary, slowly recovering from a paralysis stroke she suffered this year while in mission at Vancouver at the age of 82)

So the Cook Becomes Pastor...



Edith on her motorcycle leaving for a visit to a far-off chapel



One of the 15 chapels of "her" parish in Kanyanga

by
Edith Faucher, MIC

At the age of five, I had dreams..

At the early age of five or so, I was sick in bed for two weeks. My mother gave me old magazines to browse over. Among them were some "Precursors", showing me Sisters working in Africa. There and then, I decided that one day I would go with these Sisters to Africa!



Sr. Edith administering baptism in Kanyanga, Zambia, during the Easter Vigil

Greeting her parishioners after a celebration



Fourteen years among pots and pans

At 20, I entered the congregation of the MIC Sisters. For the next 14 years, I was assigned to work in the kitchen in one of our retreat houses of Quebec City and Ste-Marie-de-Beauce.

I was 34 when I received my formal assignment for Africa. After the first three months of

intense inculturation, that is, learning the language skills and the local customs, I found myself at the head of the domestic science department in one of our missions. Not satisfied with only these subjects, I decided to teach the Bible to these women and give them some religious instruction. On week-ends, I also became involved in youth activities in the parish.

My mission in a parish without a priest...

In 1983, I graduated from the African Catechetical Institute in Rwanda. Then, I left for Kanyanga, a far off post in Zambia. This parish, without priest, covered an area of 400 square kilometers. We could count 1000 baptized adults, 300 catechumens preparing for Baptism and thousands of sympathizers who attended services regularly with the Catholics. Once a month, the priest came for his pastoral visit.

The only woman on the parish council...

On the parish council, I happened to be the only woman! I had to make my way and overcome my natural shyness to bring in my point of view at each meeting. Both priests and catechists were not accustomed to hear a woman voice her opinion on this council. After some inevitable conflicts, of "getting to know you", they finally accepted me. They were willing to allow me to be in charge of the catechumenate, preparing our adults for Baptism. Three years later, I was raised to the status of "pastor of Kanyanga".

Pastor of Kanyanga...

It took me three years to look around and assess the whole situation. Because of the lack of priests, the Christians were really deprived of spiritual guidance and help. With the permission of Mgr. Medardo Mazombwe, I now have permission to preach the Word of God and to give out the Bread of Life on Sundays. I teach, I preach,

I give Lenten retreats, I preside over Sunday celebrations, the Offices of Holy Week. I baptize, I help the dying, I give a hand to the sick. I spend much of my time forming leaders. The Fathers and the five catechists are always there behind me to help when they can.

The role of the women in the African Church...

The task more dear to me is that of slowly helping the woman take her place in the Church, in a real ecclesial service, not merely as a cook or a housekeeper. My efforts are being rewarded. Already several women are teaching catechism to children. Some are even leading the Sunday services, others are active members of the parish council. The hardest task for me was to deal with office work. I had to counsel young married couples, always keeping in mind their old tribal and village customs that must be respected.

Visits to 15 centres

Four or five times a year, I visit each one of the 15 centres so as to encourage my "parishioners". In my free time, I can encourage them as they carry on the heavy burden of constructing chapels or residences for priests and catechists. I have to be mason, carpenter, architect and designer. I must be the purchaser of the wood for the beams, the door and window sills, etc... So you can see for yourself, that I have to put my entire trust in Divine Providence which always arrives on time.

The Barefoot Missionary Lady

by Jocelyne Dallaire, ASMIC

(Associate of the MIC Sisters)



When I arrived at the Congress for Lay Missionaries in Chacacayo, Peru, last September, I met 25 women and 16 men coming from Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia, Argentina, Peru, Spain, Ireland, U.S.A. and Canada.

This meeting of lay missionaries had four objectives. The first one was to make an analysis of the socio-economic, the political, the cultural and the religious realities of our day and age. Secondly, it was for a sharing of our actual lives today, our specific mission

experiences as lay missionaries, our difficulties, our successes. Thirdly, it gave us time to reflect on our identity, on our vocation as lay people fully involved in the Church, and finally it was a search together to find new ways in our actual working milieu.

I found time to chat with some men and women working in refugee camps, in the slums with the poor and the marginal. It was new and marvelous for me to listen to these people who give so much of themselves with the poorest of the poor. It made me realize that I wanted to do more in Canada.

About 20 years ago, in 1971, I had been struck by the sight of men and women walking barefoot on the cold cement floor of an airport in Peru. I could never put that picture out of my mind. This time, I was the one who was literally barefoot as I landed in Peru. I felt poor, I felt powerless, I felt my limitation in health, in language. I felt insecure facing a task assigned to me as a delegate of my diocese.

But in contact with the other lay missionaries, my insecurity vanished. The cordial friendship they offered me warmed both my feet and heart. There and then, I realized that I had to keep those feet and heart warm, and that meant intensifying my involvement with the ASMIC, the Associates of the MIC Sisters. Treading in a spirit of thanksgiving, behind Delia Tetreault, I want to use all my skills, all my talents, in the service of my brothers and sisters all over the world.

I remember that as a child at home, I had often seen my father make wooden crates to pack the clothing my mother had sewed for the poor African children. It's not surprising that I have inherited that love for the missions from my parents.

In 1983, I was ill, and I suffered moments of doubt, of fear, of despair. But this illness brought about a metamorphosis in my life.

I felt Delia Tetreault helping me to rise on that hospital bed. I felt new joy, new hope and trust surging in me. Life began to have meaning once more. I came out of that experience more alive than ever, more determined to serve the Lord.

Now, I am fully involved in mission pastoral work in my diocese of Longueuil. I also work in an organization helping the Third World.

Thanks to this Congress of Lay Missionaries in Peru, I feel renewed and more decided than ever to serve the cause of the missions. I feel closer to those working in Mexico, in Guatemala, in Venezuela. I'm a missionary in my own diocese in solidarity with all the others.

I may be a barefoot lay missionary, but my heart is all warmed up!



Jocelyne Dallaire (2nd upper left) with her colleagues at the convention

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