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MIC

MISSION NEWS



THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Dear friends,

Once more let us travel all over the mission world to meet some of our MIC friends. Starting right here in Canada, the lay associates of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, commonly called the ASMIC, inform us how, one day, like the disciples in the Gospels "they came to see" what this association was all about. They met the daughters of Delia Tetreault in action. They reflected on her spirituality which was compatible with their aspirations. Then they stayed on. Like the ASMIC members of Lima, Peru, which we talked about in a previous article, "The Little Delias of Lima", they too, accepted a "missionary send-off" from the MIC Superiors to go forward and mission in their working milieu.

Then we'll hop to Africa, at Chipata, Zambia, where a young novice from Tanzania, Jacintha Henry, tells us how she was caught up by the "God of Surprises" who invited her to follow Him in missionary life.

Ditma Luz, a Filipina MIC, has crossed many seas in her missionary life. Now in Taiwan, she sits by students, by migrant workers, by major superiors and by bishops to offer a helping hand with her many talents.

Again, because of Literacy Year, we invite our readers to visit another MIC school, this time in southern Mindanao, at Mati, Davao Oriental. We hear that thousands of young Filipinos have been educated in this institution, a school nestled among the coconut trees alongside a sparkling blue bay.

The winds of change have blown hard over the entire world these last months. Walls and people have visibly tumbled down. But the God of the Invisible has graced the missionaries with a more gentle breeze as they share with us their messages of hope to a broken world. All of these missionaries and associates want to share that faith that was brought to them by missionaries from other lands, at another time in history. They remind us all that each one has been called by name to accomplish a certain mission which no one else but myself can carry out. Something to think about, isn't it?

The Editor

Cover photo: Sr. Ditma Luz Trocio at her desk

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Amid the Coconut Trees



Morning assembly with the student body

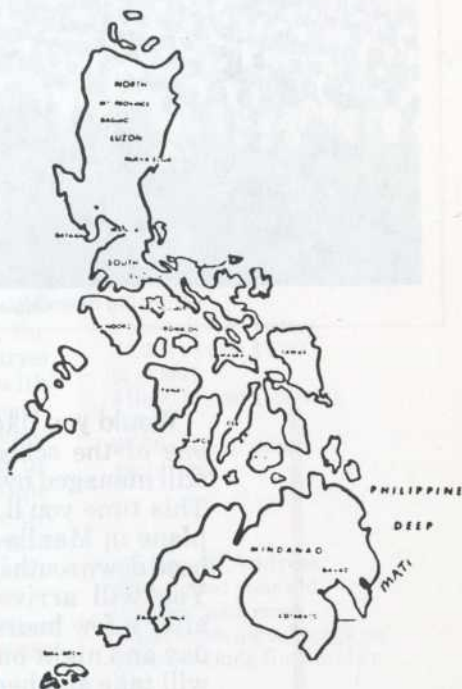
Would you like to visit another one of the schools founded and still managed by the MIC Sisters? This time you'll have to board a plane in Manila or take a bus to head down south in the Philippines. You will arrive in Davao City after a few hours flight or a long day and night bus ride. Then you will take another bus or a boat to



Mila Gomez, MIC, with some of the Primary school tots

reach Mati, the capital of Davao Oriental. There, in Mati, you will discover a number of buildings that house Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy. It is nestled among the coconut trees, alongside Pujada Bay. You might wonder how come that a school has such an ideal location by the seashore?

It was in 1947 when the Canadian MIC Sisters arrived to open a small school of primary classes for a group of young children. It was a humble new beginning where the classrooms were in a little copra warehouse underneath the living quarters of the Sisters and their young boarders. As the school population increased, a wealthy Chinese family allowed the Sisters to use the facilities of their larger warehouse for more classes. Then negotiations began



to acquire the present location of the school on a coconut plantation by beautiful Pujada Bay.

The town and the area prospered not only because of the coconut plantations but also because of mines that opened not far away. Then other industries came in as new roads were constructed to convey the goods. Today, Mati is the capital of Davao Oriental Province, the seat of a Church diocese.

This brought many new families to settle there and so the school grew. It now has a large kindergarten, a primary and secondary division with over 1,900 students benefitting of the high standard of education that the school still offers. (For some years they even offered college courses.)

Today, the MIC Sisters are still in charge of IHMA as it is commonly known. Sister Mila Gomez and her staff of Filipina Sisters and lay teachers aim to offer a well rounded education to the many students flocking to the school. Thousands of graduates now fill in influential positions in the Church and society all over the country.

The little school that started in a coconut "bodega" is now a well grown tree producing good fruit. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy of the east coast of Davao Oriental praises God for all the blessings received since its foundation in 1947. Last year the teachers with many years of service, were offered a bonus trip to Manila and the northern Philippines, a well deserved bonus for their many years of dedicated service.



Some of the teachers on their journey

The God of Surprises



I am a native of Tanzania, Africa. Some people wonder how come I am now with the MIC Sisters who work only in Malawi and Zambia but not in my country. Also, you may think that all of us in Africa have the same culture and traditions. Although we're all Africans each country is vastly different in its culture and language.

To explain to you how I happened to leave my country would take a whole issue of MIC MISSION NEWS. I was working in our diocesan Religious Education Office in Tanzania, teaching part time in a secondary school. I often thought about becoming a missionary. I was hesitating between that and marriage. I wrote for information to three different communities including the MIC's of Chipata, Zambia. Within three weeks I received an answer from Sr. Jeannine Forcier, directress of postulants at that time. Her message was meaningful to me, so I decided to find out whether this was where the Lord was calling me.

My people could not understand why I was taking such a step, leaving a good job, my home, country and family. Some even thought I was getting confused in my mind. My vocation director, Fr. Isaias Bambara supported me and encouraged me. He even made sure that I would have a safe journey to Zambia.

A part of my journey was by plane, then by bus. Sr. Jeannine and Sr. Yvette Hervieux met me at the bus station in Chipata. There and then I felt a deep interior peace and joy on meeting my first MIC Sisters.

The first few months in Zambia demanded quite an adaptation for me. It was a hard experience for me to live in another country. Everything was new to me. The language barrier did not permit me to communicate with others except in English. It made me realize how the Canadian MIC's must have suffered as they entered into a new culture for evangelization the world over. I understood that the first challenge of any missionary is that of learning a new language as an adult.

These last three months I was assigned to work in a dispensary as part of my training in pastoral work with the sick. I dreaded this work as I had never given even an aspirin to a patient!

The first one was a lady who had been severely burned while cooking her nsima. Believe me, my legs were shaking and my heart was beating hard as I dressed her wound! Gradually things became easier for me day by day as the nurses instructed me. I even had the opportunity to help an elderly lady dying of cancer to prepare her for Baptism. Mary, that was the name she chose, died the following week. I hope she is praying for me and all of us now in heaven!

The work in the clinic helped me to understand suffering better. I came to love the work I had dreaded to take up. I discovered that in my life God is a God of surprises!

Jacintha Henry, MIC Novice



The MIC Formation Centre at Chipata, Zambia

Meet 1990 Miss



◀ Ditma Luz with some of her students

One of the busiest MIC's of Taiwan is surely Sr. Ditma Luz Trocio of the Philippines. Ditma has been well prepared for her ministry. She could have been sent to any part of the world, yet in dialogue with her superiors, she opted for Taiwan where she has been ever since 1982.

Besides being a CPA (Certified Public Accountant) from the Philippines, she has taken up pastoral courses at the East Asian Pastoral Institute of Manila where she has obtained her Master of Arts degree as a major in religious education while on home leave from September 1, 1987 to March 18, 1989.

In Taipei, Ditma wears many hats! At times she is tutor to some Chinese students who need help in English. Other times she is the community hostess welcoming guests at our convent. One of her favorite works is accompanying Filipino migrant workers in Taiwan. She meets them, regularly



*In Bangkok during the
for Interreligious
(Ditma in u*

*With a group of n
Philippines*

Meet a Missionary

her students



During the Bishops' Institute
on Interreligious Affairs.
(Ditma in white)

group of migrant workers from the
Philippines

to celebrate the liturgy with them and organizes Bible and social justice sharings, while introducing them to the Taiwan culture.

That is not all. She helps in the secretariate for English seminars and workshops organized by the Association of Major Superiors of Taiwan. These seminars are on vocation studies or other topics related to religious life.

For more than two years she was working in the office of the secretariate of the Asian Bishops' Conference dealing with inter-religious affairs and ecumenism. This obliged her to attend institutes held for Bishops all over Asia.

Ditma has a full time program in her missionary life. Young and zealous, she enjoys every bit of it no matter how demanding it may be. This is the way for her to interpret her own Constitutions which invite her to bring the Good News to all those who never heard of it.

Sr. Therese LeBlanc, MIC





What are They doing?

Taiwan

Marguerite Liao, MIC, found herself well occupied last year as she devoted some of her time in preparing two young ladies for Baptism and First Communion in Taipei. Besides accompanying

catechumens to enter the Christian community, Marguerite also finds time for vocation promotion work, spending time with young ladies who come asking information on religious life.



Sr. Marguerite (extreme left) with Bishop Ti-Kang of Taipei and some participants of the evangelization seminar



Suzette Jean, MIC, in her alphabetization class

Madagascar

"My wish is to help people stand up for themselves. I want to see them autonomous and sharing fully in the life of the Church and society. I am forever searching for new ways to help them during this year dedicated to Literacy," says Suzette Jean in Madagascar.

That is why I attempted to help the sacristan and guardian of the mission, Rakotomalala Basile. He had stopped school in grade three, years ago. I managed to find him a tutor. Mrs. Lucie accepted to teach him a few hours a week so as to help him to improve in his reading. It was amazing to see the progress he had made after only a few lessons. I felt rewarded for my effort in helping some person during this Literacy Year."

Come and See!

In the early days of the foundation, Mother Delia Tetreault already was inviting lay persons to become associates in our mission enterprise. It was in Outremont that the first groups of associates were organized. Gradually, as society changed after World War II, these groups were discontinued. It was in these recent years that the Church suggested to religious communities that lay associates should be invited to share in their spirituality and mission. The first group of Canada was founded in Montreal in 1981. They were called

the ASMIC, that is Associates of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. It was a French speaking group now counting 23 professed members. Soon, an English speaking group of Filipinas and others expressed a wish to become Associates also.

A few months ago I was invited to attend one of their meetings. I had many questions to ask them; I was curious about their identity, about their activities. This is what they answered me quite at random.



Paulette Gagne, MIC, (standing left) and Therese with some of the ASMIC members



Commitment Day for some of the ASMIC members

When was the English-speaking group of ASMIC founded?

The real birthday of our ASMIC group is Sept. 14, 1986.

How did this happen? Was it a spontaneous foundation or a well planned one?

It started slowly. Several of us Filipinas used to meet with the MIC Sisters for days of recollection or prayer meetings. Later we had a prolonged evangelization seminar. We then expressed a wish to become involved in some mission work. What could we do here in Canada?

Who were the Sisters that you met with?

There was Sr. Angie Yap, Sr. Felicidad Dacayanan, Sr. Editha Telan, Sr. Agripina Fernandez.

Then later on, it was Sr. Cecilia Hong and Sr. Paulette Gagne.

What motive led some of you to join this group?

"I wanted to live a deeper spiritual life. I was searching for a spirituality," one member mentioned. "I found the life of Delia Tetreault interesting and was inspired by her spirituality of thanksgiving," admitted another member.

How is the recruiting of members carried on?

It is a very spontaneous thing here. Most members are introduced to the ASMIC by a co-member. It is a repetition of what Jesus said one day to his future disciples: Come and see!

What apostolic work do you carry out?

"We are missionaries in our own milieu. The message of the Gospel passes through us by our being, each one in her own way. One member teaches Sunday school in St. Gabriel Parish at St. Hubert. Another member visits and comforts mentally disturbed persons in St. Malachy's Parish; she even accompanied some of them on a therapeutic journey to the Caribbean to help them recover. Some members help in parish retreats. One member is an active Promoter of MIC MISSION NEWS.

How often do you meet? How is the meeting carried on?

We meet once a month on a Sunday afternoon. We have a prayer, a spiritual reading or a Gospel sharing. Some of us give informal reports on our apostolic work as well. We also prepare together for the MIC feast days such as Pentecost and Immaculate Conception.

Now that you have studied a little bit about Delia Tetreault and her message, what does it mean in your life?

"To me Delia is a model of obedience, of a person fully accepting God's will in her life. I

admire her for that." Another member calls her "a lady of thanksgiving". One person brought out the fact that she was grateful that Delia had written down so many of her prayers that remain with us yet. One reminded us that Delia wanted the Sisters and the Associates to live out one day at a time. One has discovered her great love of Nature, of small things in Nature.

How many members are you?

We are already seven professed members. Five made their commitment and received their formal "send-off" from the Superior in June, 1988. Two others were received last year. There are now eight aspirants or candidates preparing themselves.

Are you communicating with other ASMIC groups?

Yes, we have written to our Sister Associates in Lima, Peru. In Canada, we occasionally meet with the French speaking group. We'll try to get in contact with groups in other countries. We realize now that we also have a heart as large as the world, like Delia Tetreault. The whole world is our mission.

(Interview with Therese LeBlanc, MIC)

For further information about ASMIC, please write to:

ASMIC Directress

Mother house of the MIC Sisters

314 Chemin Ste Catherine, Outremont, H2V 2B4

Guess Who?

Hi there!

I just arrived from a long journey in a postal bag. Wow! Was it hot in there! I really thought I was going to suffocate. I wondered what they were going to do to me once I reached my destination. I expected to be destroyed, though, I really wanted to live on.

Imagine my surprise when a kind old gentleman in an office took out his scissors to cut around me and then deposit me in a box. There I found other brother stamps. I was delighted, so we started shouting for joy!

A few days later, we were all transferred to a large house at Pont-Viau. There some Sisters started sorting us out and placing us gently in packages. I learned many of the names. There was Srs. Madeleine Blais, Lucienne Renaud, Berthe Surprenant, Marie-Reine Trudeau, Lucille Michaud and others. Some one told me they were supposed to be retired Sisters. But they surely worked hard with

us for retired persons. Some were even in the infirmary. We were deeply touched to be handled by such gentle hands. I even heard that these hands had worked hard in the far off missions for years and years. I felt privileged to be in their company! They prepared us to be sold to some philatelists. We knew we had great value, I know for a fact that, by selling me, they will be able to give food to some starving child in one of their missions, perhaps help a handicapped person learn a skill, or help a refugee settle in a new environment.

Thanks for saving my life, all of you... that really helps the MIC missions. So, don't forget to collect all your stamps and forward them to the address below:

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Miss. Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

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Procession during the 40th IHMA Foundation Anniversary

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