

MIC MISSION NEWS

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Joy of Life



*Like the bird, Lord, I need to sing
to tell you of my love,
my joy of being your child...
my joy of being alive!*

*I need to dance,
to tell your people we are saved,
our bodies are good, holy.*

*I need to play
on the surface of the earth,
to delight in Your wonder-full
creation!*

L. Naughton

JOY of LIFE shines through the following pages. We are challenged to celebrate life with joy because our Creator is the source of light and life.

We are led to recognize that the fullness of life which Jesus Christ came to bring is sometimes hidden by fear, fatigue or loneliness. Yet we discover, with grateful awe, that it is deeply present when we choose to celebrate life.

Indeed, missionaries are among those privileged to enter the world of other peoples, to listen to their stories and try to understand life from their viewpoint. May it be that their own wonderment give many others new eyes to see the grandeur and beauty of life all around us.

Ma. Anthea Raso, M.I.C.



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Initiation to Vocation

To help the youth become aware of their responsibility as members of the Church is a challenge. With the theme "Understand your vocation to better serve", ten students participated in the vocation camp organized by the M.I.C. Sisters at the college in Napo, Lima.

The participants expressed their reasons for coming to the camp. A common thirst emerged from this exchange of views... each one desired a deeper knowledge of self and of Jesus Christ. The group wanted to discover the specific 'mission' set aside by God for each one of them. Sisters Mésina Paulémon, Josselaine Audate and Ederlina Torres formed the team of animators for the encounter. Full of youthful dynamism, the M.I.C. novices and postulants also joined in the activity, happy to express their ideas and to contribute in the sharings.

A Desert Experience

Sr. Jeannine Boily guided the group in a spiritual experience of the desert. Following the example of Moses and the burning bush, the participants were invited to remove their sandals and to listen to the voice of Yahweh - "Remove your sandals... leave your preoccupations behind to enter this holy place." Called by

name, each one received a small symbolic sandal upon which was a Biblical verse. This, indeed, was an appropriate moment for shared prayers.

A Mission Exposure in Zapallal

Sr. Murielle Dubé gave a talk on the "Mission of Jesus". Sent by the Father, Jesus revealed His project of love to humanity. He took action towards the little ones, the poor and outcasts of society.

The participants were then invited by Sr. Murielle to set off for Zapallal, located outside Lima. They stopped at the house of Mr. Miguel and his wife. This couple have assumed the role of parents and mentors for thirty young people who are determined to stop taking drugs.

The visitors were greatly moved as they listened to the children's sad experiences and learned about the harmful effects of drugs upon them. All this misery could be traced to violence, lack of dialogue and affection from the parents and the participation of irresponsible adults.

After Mass, the group invited the young addicts to share a meal. A welcome period of more

personal sharing followed. In fact, this encounter created a special bond and called forth from the 'mission trainees' promises of soon returning to Zapallal.

A Deepened Awareness of Vocation

A session given by Sr. Marie-Paul Ross on affective life helped the participants to discover the importance of affectivity in their personal growth.

The last days at camp were dedicated to the topic of vocation in general. The group members realized that one's response to vocation is unique and rooted in

a concrete situation of a mission in the midst of the people of God. A journey through the Bible helped them to discover in today's world men and women who allow themselves to be seduced by the call to love God in their brothers and sisters.

At the end of the encounter, one single regret burst forth from the hearts of the participants: "It was too short, there is still so much to learn." Already these young women are more aware and want to take part in social action projects and responsibilities. May the Lord call them one day to give something more. *

Mésina Paulémon, M.I.C.

Sr. Mésina Paulémon (seated, center) and participants in the vocation camp share the joys of dialogue and teamwork.



A Gift of Presence



Listening with the heart... Sr. Suzanne Tremblay-Perron brings comfort and solace to a young patient and his mother.

"I have no money at all, but I will give you what I have: in the hope of the Risen Christ, walk joyfully."
Acts 3,6.

In 1990, I returned to Malita, Davao del Sur, after having been away for 9 years. How happy I was to find once again friends who had grown older as I had, but more especially, to become integrated in a dynamic Church.

To respond to a request of the pastor of Santo Rosario parish, I

accepted the challenge of a new part-time ministry: to visit the patients of the 3 health clinics of the "poblacion" (village). At the level of pastoral care, there was no one to look after the sick who seemed to be most neglected.

For 3 years I've travelled the distance to these clinics to meet the sick, carrying no luggage but my friendliness extended in a firm handshake, my encouragement given through a broad smile and my faith expressed in shared prayer. These simple gestures witness to the presence

of the One who soothed so much suffering and healed the sick along His way.

I often feel helpless and powerless when faced with the sad condition of suffering patients. They are easily satisfied with bare essentials which hardly meet their needs. By my presence in their midst, I try to bring them the comfort and hope which they so badly need and awaken their faith in Jesus Christ which has often become dormant.

What comfort it gives the suffering patients to remember that Christ identified himself with them: "I was sick and you visited me." Mt 25, 36.

During one of my visits, a young man who had been wounded started to tell the story of his religious experience as a student. While sharing this, he forgot his suffering and he acknowledged that his Christian faith was revived and actualized.

Occasionally, I prepare patients to receive the sacraments before the priest's visit. A month before he died, a man in his 40's, his eyes sparkling with joy, told a friend: "I am happy and it's thanks to Sister Suzanne and Father Bouchard, p.m.é. They were God-sent... through them I was warmed by God's love!"

Many patients are youngsters and adults who come from the tribal minorities of the mountains. Their patience and accep-

tance in the face of suffering amaze me. When they reach the hospital, it is often too late for them to be treated and to regain their health.

I also meet families who are grieving. For urgent matters, I inform, direct or accompany those in need to "Caritas", an international mutual aid organization in the parish. I try to console them and soothe their sorrow. I pray for them and with them that out of their distress, the hope of the risen Lord may grow.

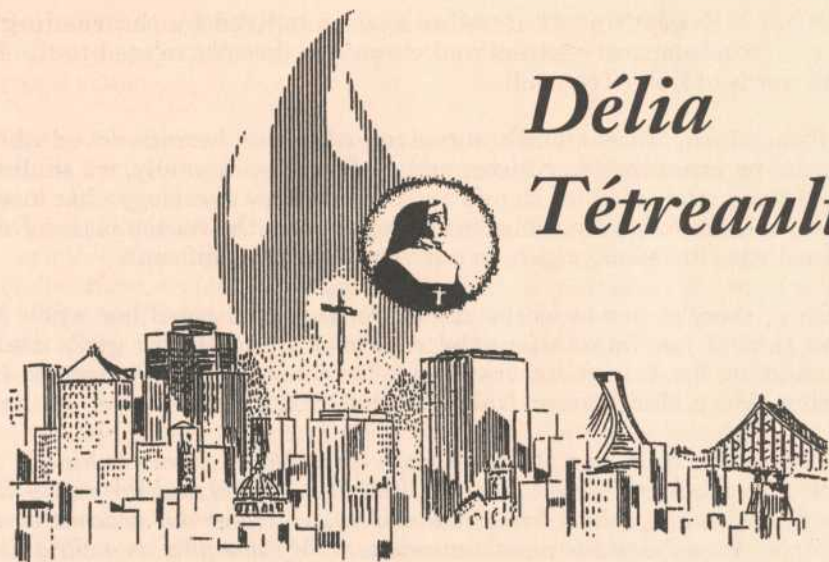
"Happy are those who put their faith in God, who put their hope in the Lord. They are like trees that grow beside the stream, that bear fruit at the right time, and whose leaves do not dry up." Ps. 1.

In my conversations with the patients, all kinds of subjects come up: religion, family problems, family planning, politics, economy, etc. I feel in solidarity with them in their struggle.

To visit and bring comfort to my Filipino sisters and brothers is a way of expressing my gratitude to the Lord for the gift of health and the beauty of life. As I journey along joyfully with my impoverished friends to share with them the wealth of our Christian faith, I thank the good Lord for having chosen me to be His helper along the way! *

Suzanne Tremblay-Perron, M.I.C.

Délia Tétreault



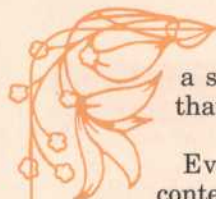
A Trinitarian Spirituality with Cosmic Components

Excerpts of the presentation given by Fr. Benoit Lacroix, O.P., during the colloquium on "Délia Tétreault and Missionary Montreal".

A number of serious authors have been wondering for some time to what extent spiritual people may or may not be influenced by nature, the universe and the cosmos. Hence the audacious title of this presentation. We already knew how sensitive Délia Tétreault was to the mystery of the Trinity, marked as she was by the spirituality of her time.

We would like to know whether Délia Tétreault's way of praying and thinking about God, Christ and the Spirit was cosmic, let us say ecological. To what degree was she interested in the environment? Was she concerned about nature, trees, flowers and even animals? Why? How? Was it in a spiritual sense? or merely for the sake of observation?

The point is that we sometimes think of the Trinitarian spirituality as of a series of exercises done in the chapel or in one's room, or else, as



a sort of high-flying life detached from the earthly realities that enflesh our daily lives. Was Sister Délia of this kind?

Everything that follows was inspired by the reading of contemporary letters and chronicles directly related to the life and words of Délia Tétreault.

First of all, we shall ask ourselves what our heroine loved about nature by examining her tastes and preferences. Secondly, we shall see the human and spiritual significance of her sense of ecology - her love of nature. If the following remarks are repetitious, the reason is that Délia herself was insistent, which, in our view, is very significant.

Now, there is one essential reference which pervaded her whole life and that of her foundation: the reference to a country girl's dream dreamt in the fall at harvest time. "*I remember*", she wrote to her bishop, Msgr. Gauthier, on November 1st, 1922:

I remember that, as a child, I always looked for a chance to hide in the attic of my father's house to read old Holy Childhood and Propagation of the Faith annals, which I had found in a box. Never did it dawn on me that, one day, I could become a missionary. My thoughts as a child went no further than admiring the religious who had this joy.

It would perhaps not be out of place to tell you of a dream I had at this time. In this dream, I was kneeling beside my bed and, all of a sudden, I saw a ripe wheat field as far as the eye can see. At a given moment, all the ears of wheat changed into heads of children and I understood, at that moment, that they represented the souls of pagan children. I was struck by this dream and told no one, not even my mother, to whom I usually told everything.

There was more, however, to Délia Tétreault's life than ears of wheat and dreams: there was reality, the universe, the cosmos and nature. She truly loved nature. Allow me a few testimonies. At least 32 sisters knew her and each one, in her own way, made the same positive observation. For example, Sister Marie-de-l'Ascension, who died in Pont-Viau on March 2nd 1985, recalled: "*Our Mother had a sense of beauty, goodness and wonder: water, a creek, a small bridge decked with green vines, flowers, baby chicks, playful kittens, etc. In all these she saw a reflection of the beauty and goodness of God.*"

Sister Éliette Gagnon notes with the same conviction: "*Délia participated to a rare degree in the transparency of God's gaze on the creation that sprang from His hands. Everything sent her into raptures: the star-studded sky, the sunset, the seagulls on our beautiful St. Lawrence River, the snow in the sun, the creek trotting along the side of the convent*

in Outremont, the branch of an apple tree loaded with fruit, the simplest flower..."

Also consistent with her love of nature, Sister Délia paid special attention to animals; she observed them with both a realistic and a spiritual vision.

Sister Alice Buteau, once a missionary in China and Taiwan and now living in Joliette, gave a particularly significant testimony of Sister Délia's attention to all animal life:

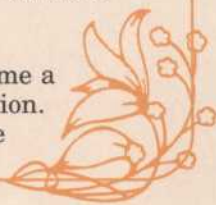
As a symbol of abandonment and trust in God, Mother Délia used to tell us about the mother hen who, in time of danger, calls her baby chicks to shelter them under her wings. When we had the chance to travel with her, she would recommend that we admire the beauty of nature, give thanks to the Author of all gifts and thank Him on behalf of those who do not know Him. Her sense of life prompted her to make us love all creatures. She would tell us to make little animals happy: birds, dogs, cats, etc. and to feed them well for this life was their only heaven!

The time has come to recall the human and spiritual meanings that flow from this obvious love of nature, birds and beasts. We believe that, in this, Sister Délia could be a source of inspiration for any Christian life. Her spirituality with cosmic components was simple, concrete and easily imitable. Of course, we keep in mind that she was born in a rural environment. Her love of the earth was natural, almost instinctive. She was too deeply rooted in her past and had too good a memory to forget certain sceneries and facts of her childhood. This included her dream of the ears of wheat.

In quoting and reading again the testimonies of her sisters as well as those found in the Chronicles, we perceive the depth of her cosmic spirituality, of her feelings and of her wishes to her sisters. Not only did she profess towards nature a devotion reminiscent of Saint Francis, she also hoped that her sisters would feel the same attraction so as to draw lessons from it for their spiritual life.

The testimony of Sister Saint-Ignace (+1981) is explicit. As her spiritual daughter was leaving to go and promote the Work of the Holy Childhood, Sister Délia said to her: *"When traveling through the countryside, you have seen beautiful grain growing in fresh soil and abundant harvests being taken in. Well! it is the same when we sow in the souls of children; they are like fresh soil: the seed really grows! Spread plenty of seed, therefore, and ask God to make it fruitful in these wholesome little souls."*

It goes without saying that the cosmos and nature became a chosen environment for thanksgiving and spiritual elevation. Sister Marie-du-Bon-Conseil (+1946) recalled a word of the



Foundress, a word that says it all: "My children, we must make use of created beings to the extent that they lead us to God, no more, no less."

The testimony of Sister Saint-Jean-l'Évangéliste (+1987), who was a missionary in the Philippines and in Hong Kong, is even more explicit: "She told us... of her keen desire to see all her daughters get into the habit of inviting, always and everywhere, all created beings to bless the Lord... 'As missionaries devoted to gratitude and called to go and live in pagan countries, we must try, by means of all the beauties and wonders of nature, to get people to give the Creator the praise which so many millions of souls never think of offering Him because they do not know Him.' She had a burning thirst to have others admire God in His works and love Him!"

Following a great Christian tradition, all of creation became, for Sister Délia, a chosen space for many forms of spiritual teaching. As Saint-Paul would say: *per visibilia ad invisibilia*. From visible things, let us pass to invisible realities! "Look at a tree; there is the trunk and the small branches which produce flowers and fruit. The trunk represents the Mother House; the little branches are the local superiors; you are the flowers and the fruit! Remember that you are the flowers and the fruit, be beautiful through your attachment to the trunk and branches." This was one of the memories of Sister Marie-de-la-Foi (+1979).

While Délia Tétreault, or Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit, is associated by her name to the Trinitarian life, it was good to note to what extent, as a citizen of the universe, she wanted her missionary community not to forget its relationship with nature. Perhaps I should recall that, until the liturgical reform submitted to Vatican II, the community chanted, every day after Mass, the famous Canticle of the three children in the furnace found in the Book of Daniel. This public worship through nature carried into vocal and mental prayer has changed forms in the course of recent decades; nevertheless, the M.I.C. Sisters have never forgotten it and we congratulate them for this.

Let us conclude with a testimony from Canton dated July 16th, 1926, and given for the novices of Pont-Viau: "It was our Mother who told us: 'My daughters, do you wish to spread happiness? Get others to love what God has made you love... Get them to love nature, get them to love what is beautiful, good and true; get them to love the Source of all beauty, of all truth and of all good, get them to love God.'"

Benoit Lacroix, O.P.

English translation:
Antoinette Kinlough

TAIWAN

Dreams Come True

The Church of Taiwan is reaping the first fruits of a long and arduous effort to awaken her sons and daughters to active mission. The Spirit seems especially inclined to move the laity. Thus, when I returned to my mission country after a 3-year leave, I was overjoyed to witness a strong sense of newness in the local Church.

I am delighted to share with you one powerful sign of hope occurring now in the Church of Taiwan. Back to my teaching

post at Fu Jen Catholic University, I renewed contact with one of my young colleagues, Miss Miranda Ni, who soon shared with me a dream that had been haunting her. Having an ardent desire to do something to render the celebration of the Eucharist more lively, more vibrant and closer to the cultural experience of her people, she formed a group and created a répertoire of sacred dance. Its expression comes from the inner soul of the Chinese culture.

A liturgical dance performed at Mass draws inspiration from the rich culture of the people.



However, Miranda must cope with great obstacles: she has no training in liturgical dance; she knows that this kind of sacred dance exists in the West and she has seen photos in reviews and books. Another challenge facing her is that students signing up to form this group are non-Christians, except for one young man. She wonders how they will be welcomed in the Christian community and how they will be able to express a Christian spirit through their dancing movements.

Miranda faced the challenge and set out to make her dream come true. She prepared a choreography for Easter. Her parish priest, Fr. Joseph Murphey, an American Jesuit, not without some hesitation, agreed to allow her group to perform for the Easter Sunday Mass. Fr. Murphey's support was all the more remarkable knowing that this venerable 82 year-old missionary dared to believe in the Spirit at work in Miranda's project.

Easter morning finally came. Instead of the customary reading, Miranda's group danced the Easter Gospel, and believe me, it was beautiful. The audience spontaneously broke into a thunder of applause.

Encouraged by her Easter experience, Miranda is increasingly able to draw from the rich treasure of her ancient culture new modes of faith expression which resound deeply within the

soul of her people. At last, here is a faith inculturation attempt coming from the grass-roots, here is a promising innovation that offers the Church of Taiwan a unique and refreshing means to incarnate her faith in a way that is truly hers.

I decided to do more than give Miranda moral and spiritual support. I want to help her to set up a monetary fund to allow her to acquire costumes, other necessities, and to help defray travel expenses. Such a fund is also essential for her in order to pursue experiments with her pilot group.

The Church of Taiwan stands among the poorest in Christendom in terms of personnel and finances. The Catholics of Taiwan hardly reach 1% of the total population. The local Church is now willing to encourage Miranda and her project, but cannot afford to give any significant financial support.

If Miranda's dream finds an echo in your hearts, and if you are willing to contribute in a concrete way to sustain her dream to create a unique Chinese Christian sacred dance, you are welcome, no matter how small your gift. Thank you on behalf of Miranda and the Church of Taiwan. I will keep in touch with you and give news of Miranda's project which has become very dear to me. *

Francine St-Onge, M.I.C.

USA



9-year old Julia Ugarte (with brother Mikel) presents to us her friend, the sea.

Images of the Sea

*When I am down beside the sea
It seems to try to follow me,*

*In and out and up and down,
Trailing it's cerulean gown.*

*It calls to me in a whispery voice
And makes a bubbly wooing noise,*

*But I have also heard it roar
Crashing upon the ragged shore.*

*On the beach it leaves a trail
Of shells and sand dollars white and frail.*

*But in it's dark and secret deep,
The real treasures it does keep.*

*Beneath the froth and lacy foam
Are plants and animals that call it their home.*

*There are whales and seals and porpoises
Threatened by man's selfishness.*

*When I am down beside the sea
It seems to want to talk to me,*

*To catch my attention and to be heard
It comes rolling in with it's warning word:*

*"Don't harm me by pollution and neglect
For your duty is to preserve and protect.*

*If you nurture me with your care,
With you my treasures I will always share."*

Julia R. Ugarte



Missionary Intentions 1993

July

That concern for the environment based on respect for creation be integrated into Christian spirituality.

August

That traditional Christian countries once again feel the fire of missionary enthusiasm



H. Turcotte, M.I.C.

Father and son tend a tiny backyard garden with great care and pride.

In Zambia, Central Africa... and in most countries served by the M.I.C. Sisters, the land is bountiful but the poor get little of the harvest.

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**We stand in awe at the wisdom of our Creator
who has fashioned us and gifted us with the works of His hands!**

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