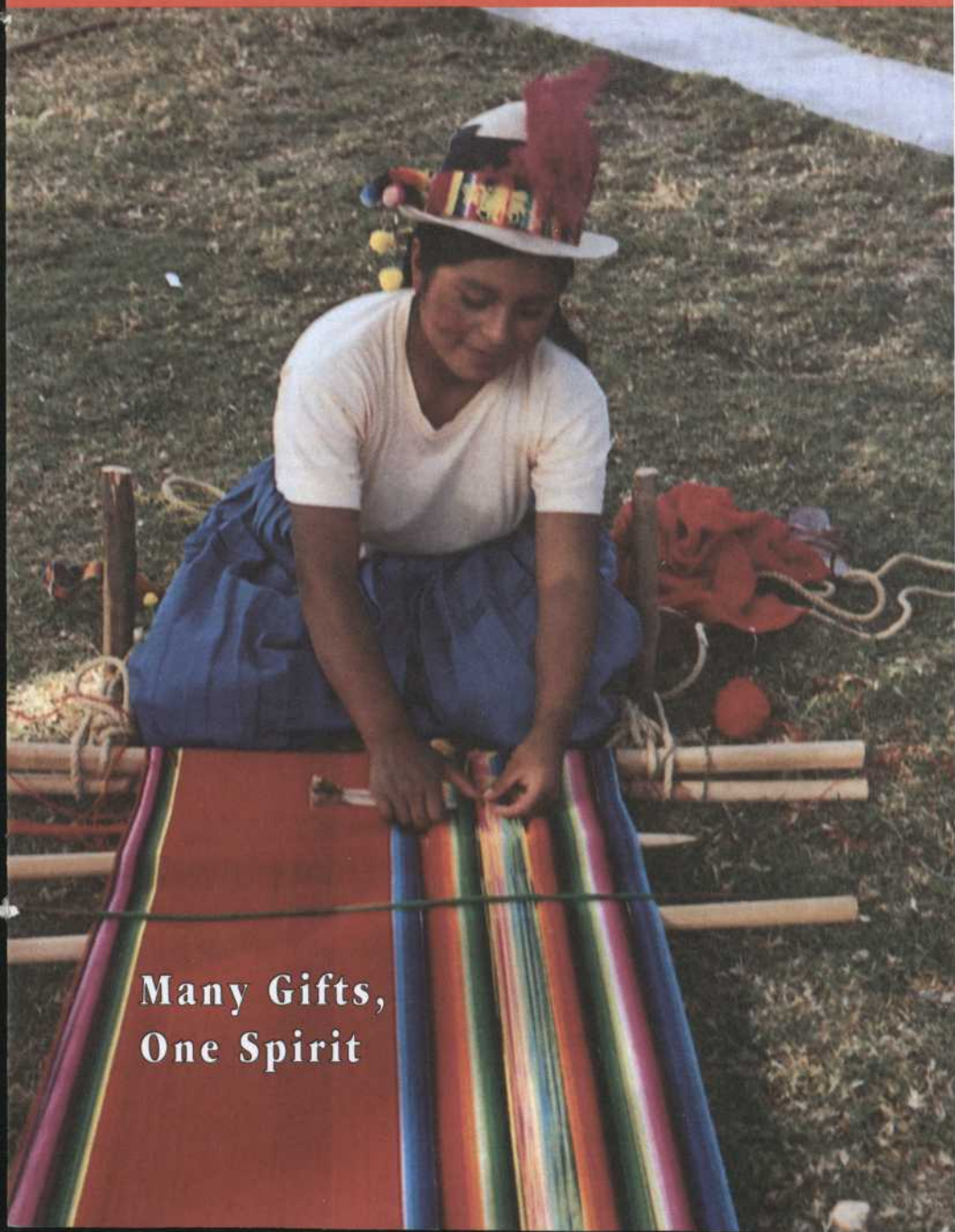


MIC MISSION NEWS

Series 21, No. 4
July-August 1994



**Many Gifts,
One Spirit**



Many Gifts, One Spirit

"...No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples."

Thus does Pope John Paul II stress, in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, the urgency of continued missionary activity. All around us there are signs that Christians from different walks of life are venturing out with new approaches to this evangelical task.

The person and the word of Jesus are messages that can directly reach anybody's heart at all times. More and more we are learning that as we bring the Good News of Jesus to others, our own understanding of that Good News is deepened and broadened. We not only teach, we also learn. Those to whom we go in mission are in turn missionaries to us.

May we come to a greater awareness of ourselves as bearers of unique gifts from the Spirit — gifts meant to be shared with one another in the context of God's one mission of the Church serving the Gospel in the whole world. May we commit ourselves to the task of evangelization with consciousness and sensitivity so as to foster, in the Pope's words: "... a new evangelization which will reach out to peoples and cultures, an evangelization new in its zeal, in its methods, in its expression."

Ma. Anthea Raso, M.I.C.

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Front: C. Belley, M.I.C. (Bolivia)

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Village catechists receiving their mission cross during a send-off ceremony.

MIC MISSION NEWS
a bimonthly published by
the **MISSIONARY SISTERS
OF THE IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION**
Issued: August, 1994

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Printed by "Imprimatic"
Montreal, Canada

Publications mail
Registration No. 0358
ISSN 0315-9655
Member: Association of Roman
Catholic Communicators of Canada
(ARCCC)

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Reflection

The Missionary Vocation: a Multifaceted Diamond

- *When I think about Jesus, I see Him, what He is doing and the people with Him.*
- *Jesus became fully Himself and gradually allowed the facets of His Incarnation to unfold.*
- *And what about myself? where? how? who? which facets?*
- *There are multinationals, multimillionaires and 'multimissionaries'.*

Since I first arrived in Taiwan in 1968, the 'mission' presented itself to me somewhat like that of Jesus: to become my true self and to commit myself, through the years and through my experiences, in avenues not always too obvious at first sight.

It is thus by contemplating Jesus and working with His people that I discovered the numerous possibilities of allowing Him to convert the grey zones of my personality. My choice regarding the way I would live out my mission was first enlightened by my training in nursing and in pastoral counseling.

A very meaningful image occurred to me: a horn of plenty.

In its spiraled body, one can almost feel a motion of energy circulating from top to bottom and from bottom to top. I can't help being moved by it. It is like the experience of the eternal dimension in all its history, creation and individuality.



As a counselor, I am involved in the sacred field of human persons where the image of God is found. And this image is often wrapped very preciousely in many protective layers. Peeling an onion makes one's eyes and soul cry. When this image is then revealed, it is so vivid, so true, so agonizing that it dazzles me in my prejudices and makes me



Sr. Huguette Chapdelaine encourages a young friend to discover the 'magic' of a flute.

aware of those areas of poverty within myself which are not yet converted.

In the exercise of my ministry, all the themes and concerns are touched upon: poverty, justice, faith, religion, sexuality, family, politics, arts, love and so on... In all this, I have a vision of an approach called 'Integration'.

I facilitate workshops on conscientization, communication, active listening, psychospiritual integration, prayer and retreats. I meet adults and youth from different social levels: psychiatric nurses, seminarians, social workers, "moms at home" and the mentally handicapped.

The locus of our encounters is at the very human level of our desire to grow and of our need to be ourselves in communion with

others and/or with God. The same fears and weaknesses dwell in us — the same interior solitude as well.



Together with Kevin Gallagher, a volunteer from Scotland, and Hsueh Chen, a nursing teacher at Hua Kuang, we developed a program of knowledge and expression of self and others in Sexual Education, in which we use audiovisual aids, dance movements and psychodrama.

"Humanizing the human being" is the first facet of the mission. When I want to consider the consequences of my encounters with nurses and other people, I recall testimonies of the blessings which conscientization and communication have brought to their families: children get

closer to one another, spouses resume their proper places, mothers stop thinking they have to be 'heroines and saviors' and learn to care for themselves.

I conduct days of prayer and reflection with our Associates (ASMIC), with priests or with a small group of Catholics. Together, we study the men and women of the Bible, drawing inspiration from their personalities and conversations with Yahweh. Such a study has been helpful to us in our personal prayers and in composing our own psalms.

Participating in the dance therapy session.



Music therapy at the Counseling Center.

Taiwan imports many small-scale workers. They come from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand. Social justice is an important issue. How are we to approach these people who have left families and friends to provide a better life for themselves and their loved ones? Exploitation, accidents, imprisonments, mental illness, unfaithfulness: these are all too frequent among these uprooted and exploited people, in need of other incarnations of Jesus, other 'multimissionaries'.

Dear readers, you can finish my text. The harvest is indeed great, the invitation is always urgent. Other precious facets can be polished to make the diamond of our large human family more resplendent. *

Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C.

Responding to a Need

I reached a turning point in my missionary life 3 years ago. At that time the Lord called me to move on to where the need was greater. After some twenty years in Malawi, I was called to Kanyanga, Zambia, a parish without a priest for many years. Some time later, in dialogue with the pastors of the neighboring parishes and with the cooperation of catechists, a renewal program consisting of a retreat was introduced in three parishes. Lay leaders who showed interest in learning how to become retreat animators were approached to join our team.

This renewal program included several elements. The content of the retreat promoted Gospel values as well as the prophetic vocation of Christians as individuals and as members of a community. Likewise, it enhanced unity among the participants and concern for growth in their personal and spiritual life.

Prayer groups were formed in communities which had experienced the retreat, and in these groups a greater concern for one another developed. Parishioners became more confident and willing to take part in the leadership of various activities. A program of ongoing formation through regular meetings was given to the lay animators to help deepen their understanding of the themes of the retreat.

A village scene: lay animators gather to discuss upcoming activities.



H. Turcotte, M.I.C.



Sr. Emeldah Katongo received her initial formation as a religious missionary at the M.I.C. Novitiate in Chipata, Zambia.

Last year, a priest was appointed to Kanyanga Parish. Some months later, a newly

professed M.I.C., Sister Emeldah Katongo, joined the parish team. By then it was time for my homeleave in Canada. I was confident that the work in the parish was in good hands.

There is still so much to be done and I am happy to return. It is with great joy that I will resume my activities in that part of the vineyard where Jesus calls me to be His follower. I look forward to continue my work in the ongoing formation of lay animators, and with them to introduce the renewal program in other parishes. I firmly hope that the local Church in Zambia will become more and more a sign of the Kingdom, an instrument of justice, peace and salvation. *

Pauline Brodeur, M.I.C.



Missionary Intentions 1994



July

Mission Spirit in the Family

That Christian parents educate their children in missionary spirituality and solidarity.

August

Media and Evangelization

That communications media help missionary and evangelizing activities to be more direct and effective.

▼ É. Plamondon, M.I.C.



M.I.C. Sisters accompany people:
(counterclockwise) Sr. Prima Silvestre
(Philippines) and Mangyan farmers,
proud of an abundant rice harvest.
Sr. Céline Bourbeau (Canada)
welcomes a new pupil to Aizu-
Wakamatsu school in Japan. Sr. Ileana
Grau (Cuba) joins the neighbourhood
youth group for an activity.

▼ M-P. Charbonneau, M.I.C.



A Profile: The New Evangelizer

Given the multicultural reality of our society and having stated some concerns we face in evangelization, for what graces should we pray as the new evangelizers? What graces do we need to be effective in ministering to a people torn by a loss of meaning of their lives, the impact of consumerism, and the perils threatening our youth? I propose that we consider God's alternative as shown by the evangelization which took place at Tepeyac in 1531. Let us explore what graces Guadalupe possessed which led to the conversion of the thousands untouched by previous evangelization efforts.

The first grace we pray for is inculturation. Our Lady of Guadalupe is the prime model of inculturation. She took on the natural culture, the language, the looks, and the symbols of the people. Evangelization begins with a willingness to become as immersed as possible into the world of the other. This assumes that we are fully integrated in our own culture and can venture inculturation into another's reality without losing a sense of who we are.

To be multiculturally sensitive is not only about being interested in the customs and lifestyles of peoples, but rather, it is about fostering life's changes, that is, creating opportunities in which people can grow together in justice and charity. We pray that we may receive the grace to embrace diversity in being open to inculturation.

The second grace we pray for is simplicity. Our Lady could have chosen anybody to be her co-evangelizer, yet she chose Juan Diego, the poorest, the simplest, the least educated, the marginated, the least self-confident. The new evangelization is new according to Leonardo Boff, "because its primary agents are the poor themselves. They evangelize other poor people and the whole Church..." We pray for the grace to be simple, allowing ourselves to be evangelized by those who are the least among us.

The third grace for which we pray is compassion. We pray that we may be empathizers. Our Lady entrusts to Juan Diego a divine commission to communicate to the Bishop to build her a place where she could show her love and compassion for the suffering people of Mexico after the conquest in 1521. In sending him to the Bishop, she

dignifies Juan Diego, giving him his rightful place as worthy of carrying a divine command and, thereby, raising his self-worth. It is this confidence that she places in Juan Diego and, through him, in all the oppressed and the suffering that occasions the conversions. Gerald Arbuckle, anthropologist, best defines the type of empathy to which we are called:

Empathy should beget a genuine desire to struggle with and for people so that they have the chance to become agents of their own destinies... empathy is not something that one automatically learns; rather, it is the fruit of ongoing conversion to the Lord and to the other. Through the gift of empathy one is able to touch the depths of people's culture.

We pray for the grace of compassion, knowing that it means we must invest in inward change and out of that fruit reach out to others.

The fourth grace for which we pray is courage to announce the Gospel message with boldness. In her request to Juan Diego, as her representative, the Lady instructs him to speak with self-assurance as she gives him the message to take to the Bishop. We see Juan Diego grow in this attitude as the account progresses. He becomes more insistent with the Bishop and less fearful of the priest servants who become the obstacles to his seeing the Bishop to deliver the message.

Let us pray for a gift to be bold in our proclamation, knowing that fear and insecurity will always be a part of what we are.

A fifth and last grace for which we pray is to be missionary. An interesting part in the account of Guadalupe is Juan Diego's taking a different route to avoid seeing the Lady. He is preoccupied with his uncle's illness and wishes to find a doctor to help him; he figures the Lady's request can wait. She, however, intercepts his path and appearing to him on the avoidance path assures him that his uncle is well. She reiterated her commission to him. It is so easy for us to be distracted, to be confused, to misplace our priorities, and to have very valid reasons for not attending to the mission. We are consumed by anxieties born out of beliefs that we, as individuals, must do everything. We forget that the mission is equally God's. There is a beautiful response that the Lady offers to Juan Diego when his confidence was failing and she assured him: "Juan Dieguito, what do you fear, am I not here, who am your Mother?" We pray for the grace to be clearly focused on our personal and communal mission. *

Excerpts, Address by

Sr. Anita de Luna, MCDP

President,

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

General Assembly 1993 (Dallas, Texas, U.S.A)

More Than a Language School

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25, 38)

Origin of the M.I.C. Center

From the very beginning of the Institute, our Foundress, Délia Tétreault, showed great concern for immigrants. In 1919, while establishing a house in Quebec City, she had in mind an apos-

tolate for Chinese immigrants. Already in the spring of 1921, a school was set up for the teaching of French.

Around 1965, this language school was affiliated to the

At the M.I.C. Center: language students representing 11 countries, with Sr. Hélène Fontaine, M.I.C. (center, back row).



C.E.C.Q. (Commission des Écoles Catholiques de Québec), first under the name of "Formation Center of Our Lady of the Cenacle", and later as "M.I.C. Center". In 1970, Gertrude Laforest, M.I.C., proposed the opening of the Center to all other nationalities. Since then, the M.I.C. Center has become 'international'.

Today, the Center welcomes about 150 immigrants of more than 40 different nationalities. The M.I.C. Sisters continue to undertake activities favoring this priority of our local Church: the integration of immigrants coming from all parts of the world. Has not Canada become a welcoming land?

Goals Pursued

To favor the integration of new Quebecers to our milieu, we unite our efforts to assure quality in the process of learning the French language. The M.I.C. Center contributes to helping immigrants become fully autonomous citizens of our society.

Thus, the Center is not only a language school — it is a place of welcome where a missionary service continues. It is open to internationality, to conscientization of the complementary richness of the different cultures and to collaboration in building a society of mutual aid. Most of all, it provides a milieu for the

revelation of the Father's tenderness in Jesus living today. This ministry allows us to welcome God's children from all corners of the world. Délia Tétreault wrote in 1928: "*Our Community must consider all nationalities as members of one and the same family.*"

Along with our lay collaborators, we assist our 'students' at the Center in various ways: interest in their families and respective countries; visits at the hospital or in their homes; help in finding a job, convenient living quarters or a day-care center for a child; accompaniment in a particular difficulty at school and the possibility of meeting a French-speaking friend to favor a speedier mastery of the language. Together we try to create a climate of joy and gratitude for all that comes our way from the "God of all", whatever name one gives Him.

Fulfilling a Dream

We hope that our witness, our prayers and our activities continue to bear fruit. Little by little, prejudices disappear and bonds of sympathy and affection are created. The ground is thus prepared for the sowing of faith in the hearts of our brothers and sisters who come from far and near! Is this not the great dream of our dear Mother Délia? *

Fernande St-Pierre, M.I.C.

Sounds of Thanksgiving

Sr. Veronique Bernatchez (right), with her sister Fabienne, M.I.C. Originally from Neuville, Quebec, both missionaries have spent a total of 68 years in mission: Sr. Veronique, 43 years in Cuba, Chile and Peru; Sr. Fabienne, 25 years in Cuba and Peru.



I hear the church bell ringing. For all I know, it could be tolling for the end of the 43 years that I spent in mission — the end of my sharing of life, hope, joy and sorrow, especially with the Peruvian people with whom I discovered shadows and light. Indeed, it is the end of a gratifying time for anyone who has known, understood and appreciated the Latin-American culture and has equally felt accepted and loved.

But no, the bell isn't tolling... nothing is ended, life goes on! The warm welcome of my community and of my family reveals the loving bonds between us which time and distance have only strengthened.

In Peru, my task was family catechesis, particularly with adults and young girls. During our meetings, I felt privileged to see the work of God's grace enabling each one to sow the Word of God in fertile soil. Here is an example:

Learning From the Poor

Thomas and Martha live approximately 3 kilometers away from the parish. They come to Mass faithfully each Saturday evening. They participate in the weekly meetings of couples who are catechists. The preparation and animation of the Sunday liturgy are the responsibility of these couples.

One Tuesday evening, at the time of the meeting, Thomas came to me. "Madre Veronica, I want to tell you why Martha and I did not attend mass last Saturday. During our supper on Friday, a child from the neighborhood came to our home and asked us: 'May I collect the fish bones which are in your plates? Mama needs them to prepare a broth for us.' The child took the fish bones and left. We are poor but this family is poorer. I told Martha: 'Tomorrow, when you go to the market, buy more food so as to prepare a meal for the family of this little one. We will have supper with them'. This is why we failed to come Saturday evening. Do you understand?"

Needless to say that I understood! What lessons I learned from the catechists. Emotions welled up in my heart as I listened to their sharing. They revealed openly the good things happening within themselves since they started praying together, listening to the Word of God and reflecting on the mean-

ing they wish to give to their lives. How simply they told one another the difficulties or indifference they met in their families. In humility and simplicity of heart, they gave thanks to God for the favors received since they embarked on their apostolic involvement as catechists.

An Abundance of Graces

With nearly eight decades to my credit, and having returned to Canada for good, I discover that new hours of grace are sounding for me: an enrichment in religious knowledge, more time for reflection and prayer, participation in our ministry through the missionary press - all these opportunities are graciously offered to me.

In the midst of our daily community life, of my family joys and sorrows, and with the hopes, the greatness and the weaknesses of my home country which I must assume, I am part of history... especially of the History which cannot end unless Love, which brings all things and people into one, has accomplished its work among all nations. In my heart, I unite these countries which suffering tears apart, but in which wounds are healed by hope. Praise be to God! - it is in thanksgiving that this bell rings on my return. *

Véronique Bernatchez, M.I.C.

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Pope John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio, No.83



C. Chun, M.I.C.

**Sr. Cecilia Hong, M.I.C. (Hong Kong) and Agnes Mao (China) invite
parishioners at Assumption Church in Ottawa to take a subscription to
the M.I.C. MISSION NEWS**



"Go tell the Good News to the whole world."

Mk 16, 15

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