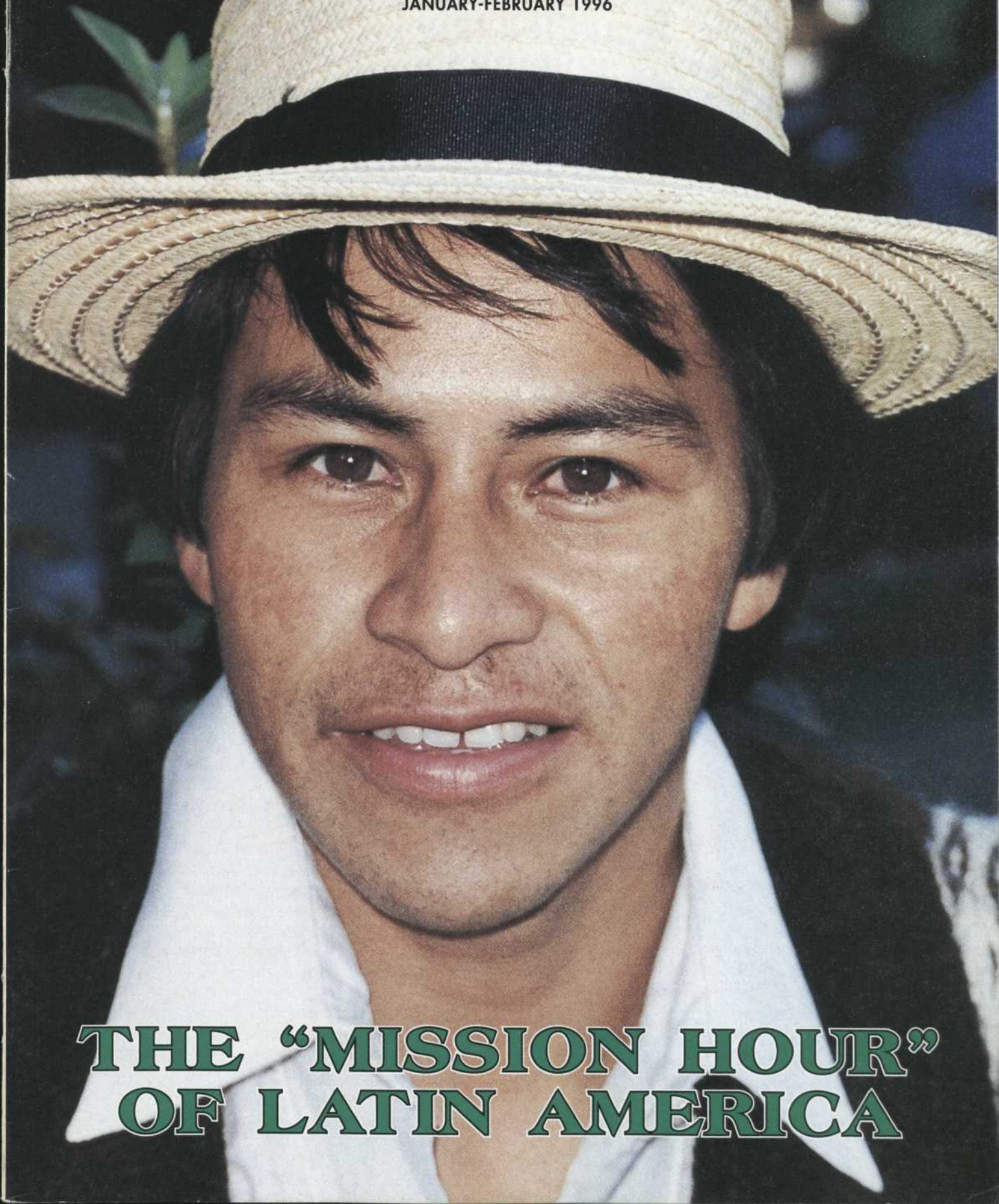


MIC MISSION NEWS

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1996



THE "MISSION HOUR"
OF LATIN AMERICA

MIC MISSION NEWS

BIMONTHLY MISSION MAGAZINE
PUBLISHED BY THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
VOL. 23, NO. 1, JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1996

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A NEW VOICE THIS YEAR:
THE WORD OF LIFE
BY
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FILM STRIPPING:

Film-O-Progrès, Inc.

PRINTING:

Transcontinental Inc.

SUBSCRIPTION:

\$ 8 1 year

\$ 15 2 years

\$ 23 3 years

United States and other Countries: \$ 15

TAX RECEIPT:

Registration number: 0940007-47

PRESSE MISSIONNAIRE M.I.C.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

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TELEPHONE:

(514) 663-6460

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ISSUED:

January 1996

PUBLICATION MAIL

Registration No. 0358

ISSN 0315-9655

Member: Association of Roman Catholic Communicators of Canada (ARCCC)

FRONT COVER:

*Delegate at the
5th Latin American
Mission Congress,
Belo Horizonte,
Brazil, July 1995.*

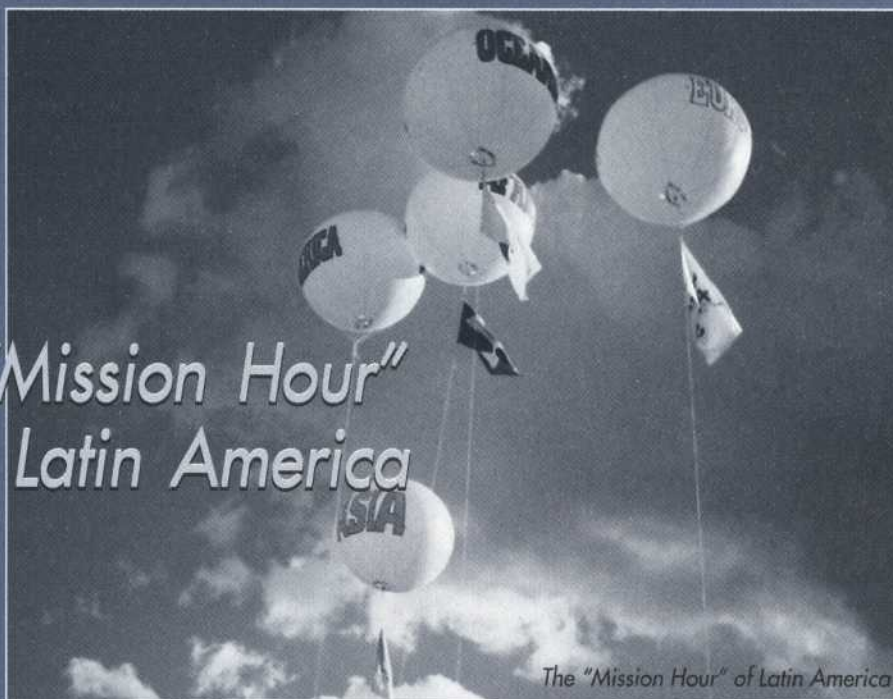
Photo: É. Gagnon, M.I.C.

CENTER PAGES:

*Young associates
(JASMIC) from
Quebec prepare their
trip to Bolivia*

Photo: M. Vinet

The "Mission Hour" of Latin America



The "Mission Hour" of Latin America

Photo: M.I.C., COMLA V

A few years ago, a major gathering in Santo Domingo celebrated the Fourth Centenary of the Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. Thousand of Church and civil dignitaries filled the site of the historic landing. This anniversary evoked centuries of "civilization" and "Christianization", two terms considered so controversial that much criticism accompanied the celebrations. One fact, however, cannot be denied: Latin America is the continent with the largest number of Catholics in the world: 411 million.

Another very important gathering took place in Latin America in 1995: the Fifth Missionary Congress, held in Brazil last July. Though it came after four other such meetings, the COMLA V, as it was called for short, seems to have marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the Church in Latin America: its "Mission Hour" had arrived!

Some of our Sisters who attended COMLA V said it was "a Pentecost experience". Others who lived many years among Indigenous People in the high plateaus of the Andes in Peru and Bolivia were enthusiastic about the theme: *The Gospel in the Different Cultures, a Way of Life and Hope*, which gave way to a serious study of the problems of these sometimes forgotten minorities and to decisions concerning new evangelization methods more respectful of indigenous cultures. A M.I.C. from Haiti currently working in Peru was so impressed by the cultural diversity she experienced there with the other 3000 participants that she ended up discovering her own roots. Even those living in remote areas felt the effects of COMLA V: a greater communication effort resulted in small parish groups hearing of the Congress - and benefiting by its fruits - as well as the largest urban congregations.

Coinciding with the Congress, the M.I.C. Provincial Superior visited the three countries where our Sisters work: Bolivia, Peru and Chile. Her report, like a painting, shows the situations prevailing there which are similar to those in neighboring countries. It speaks of the dawn of a new era for this continent, one of Mission! The time has come for the people of Latin America to spread far and wide the faith they received and was nurtured by missionaries for many centuries. To answer the call of COMLA, we M.I.C.'s are willing to give out of our poverty: a young Bolivian sister is preparing to go to Madagascar. Sharing was a two-way street for a Canadian couple just back from Brazil and will be for a group of young women currently training to go and work in Bolivia next year. You will meet them in the center pages of this issue. Here in Canada, our lay Associates (ASMIC) sponsor a project to support the promotion of rural women in Cochabamba. Yes, there are signs of hope everywhere! Faith is being shared, meaningful gestures are made, a dialogue is taking place. This month's MIC MISSION NEWS echoes these happenings.

At the beginning of this century, Délia Tétreault, our Foundress, contributed to the "mission hour" of North America. Reflecting on the History of the Canadian Church, she saw that the faith received from missionaries had taken root and yielded its fruit, that the time had come to set up in our country groups that would join the missionary effort of the universal Church. Now the "Mission Hour" of our Latin American brothers and sisters has come. Let us rejoice and wish them for 1996, to live the motto of the COMLA V Congress: GO - SEE and PROCLAIM. □

Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

Overall Vision of a Pastoral Visit

BY MURIELLE DUBÉ, M.I.C.

How is life in Bolivia, Peru and Chile? Sr Murielle Dubé, Provincial Superior, visited the M.I.C. communities and she sends us her evaluation. She describes the political, ecclesial and community situation of each of these countries. Her letter is addressed to each and everyone of you, with feelings of solidarity and gratitude.

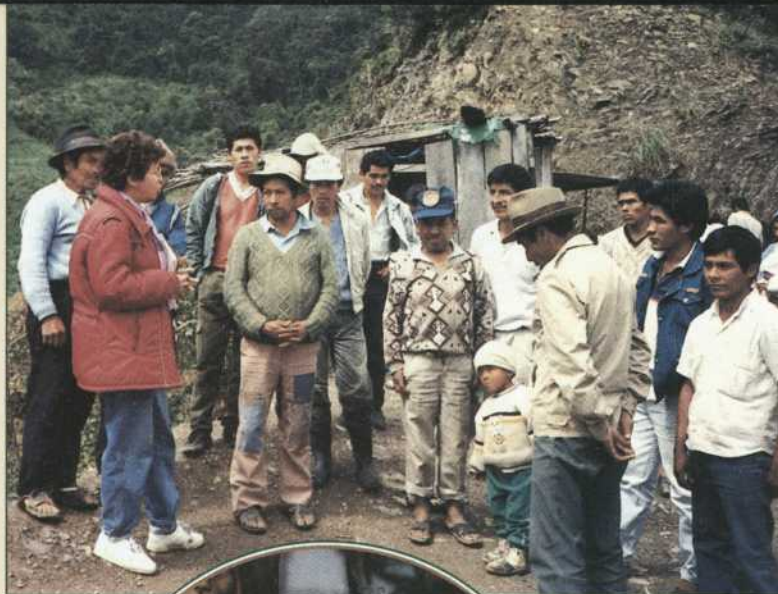


Photo: L. Frenette

*In Bolivia:
Nancy Paz, M.I.C.
(1st left)
with workers
in Yancrucera*

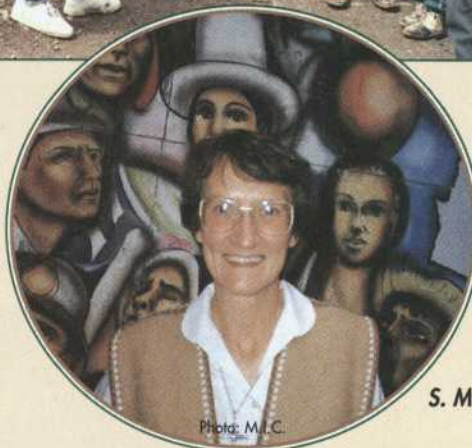


Photo: M.I.C.

S. Murielle Dubé



Photo: L. Frenette

*The promotion of women:
a priority!*

I feel like sharing with you, readers of MIC MISSION NEWS, the song that echoes in me upon returning from this visit of the M.I.C. houses of our South American Province, which is under the patronage of Our Lady of Peace. It seems to me that the benefactors and friends who are in solidarity with our missions in Bolivia, Chile and Peru, will be happy to hear from us. What is happening in those three countries?

BOLIVIA

The people of Bolivia experience a certain amount of tension as they go through a turning point of their history. A revolution is under way! Under pressure of the World Monetary Fund and/or through its own choice, the government proposes or perhaps imposes profound structural changes affecting several sectors: education, health, social life, decentralization, capitalization/privatization of State-owned enterprises, public participation. Some, for lack of information, others because of fear or out of conviction, are opposed to these changes, they resist and protest. This

is why the country, though under a democratic regime, is living in a state of siege. The situation is tense but in no way comparable to the once famous, and yet terrible coups d'états fomented in the past by the military. In the last few-years, powerful drug traffickers have "settled" in the land; they influence the political, economical and social future of the country. Finally, a good number of men, women and children are still illiterate and in a state of great poverty.

The Church, attentive to this complex reality, allows herself to be challenged, consults, reflects and works with the people. So do the religious! A meeting of the Bolivian Religious Conference (CBR) was held on the *Process of Change* under way in Bolivia; the purpose was to discover ways to make our presence meaningful and a vehicle of the Good News for the poor.

The M.I.C. Sisters live in three groups, they are few but active and present in this historical moment. They are involved, they search, they ask questions to find out more about

the new laws that slowly begin to change the Bolivian way of life. As a group, they see themselves as closer to the lower classes, to the young people, more and more united with one another in spite of the diversity of their commitments. They are present:

- in rural areas north of Potosi;
- at the Institute for Rural Education for young Quechua women in Cochabamba;
- in the COLOMI zone: health services, creation and training of basic Christian communities in rural areas;
- in urban areas with young people: pastoral care, mission awareness, vocational and guidance apostolate.

The promotion of women is a priority. The Sisters are active in the vocational project of the local Church and they work together on the M.I.C. vocational common project. Two of our novices and one young professed sister are the fruit of this good work! The ASMIC group (lay associates) is very much alive.

CHILE

Chile is in a period of economic growth but this benefits only the rich; the poor remain marginalized. The National Council initiated a plan to solve the problem of poverty by asking young professionals to put their knowledge for one year, at the service of development projects in deprived areas. 640 young people responded to this appeal; 107 of them were chosen and are actively involved in this cause, which, to their own admission, is quite worthwhile. At the end of their training prior to this experience, these young people said to President Frei: "Thank you for giving us the privilege to participate and this opportunity to serve". In the *Mensaje* magazine, as a comment on this event, it was written that "the response given to the project proves that when offered a real alternative, young people don't hesitate to get involved and to contribute in something meaningful to them."

The presence and influence of General Pinochet are a challenge for democracy. On the Island of Chiloe,



Nancy Campos, M.I.C. (2nd left) from Ancud and young friends at the ordination of deacon Hector Campos in Chaiten, Chile.

modern culture introduced through the media provokes a cultural shock and creates an identity crisis to which the Church tries to respond in the best possible way.

In Chile, the Church is asked to go back to the ways of closeness, solidarity, insertion, to the prophetic role she played during the dictatorship. The Conference of Religious (CONFERRE) is attentive to this reality. Through its excellent review *Testimonio*, this Conference helps not only the religious of Chile but also those of the whole continent. Lastly, the beatification of Fr Alberto Hurtado, S.J., on October 16, 1994, has created a renewal of faith and commitment. Fr Hurtado was an apostle of our times! He succeeded in uniting a strong spiritual experience with an unbelievable social action. He was the founder of several 'Homes of Christ' everywhere in Chile where the poorest and the most abandoned of society are welcomed and sheltered.

The Sisters are few in Chile, only eight. The opening of a house in Santiago brought a new life to them by increasing the possibilities of sharing personnel and experiences plus a common project lived in the capital city, Santiago, and extending to Ancud, on the Island of Chiloé, in the south of the country. An eighteen hour bus ride separates the two houses! In Santiago, the Sisters are integrated in a lower-class district where they work actively, but unobtrusively

- like ants - to make the Christian community in their care alive and responsive to the social needs of their area. In Ancud, there is a huge task of social development and promotion of human dignity on behalf of fishermen, farmers and bee-keepers. The Sisters also contribute to the Christian and missionary formation of children, the young people, married couples and faith promoters assigned to distant islands. Finally, they support the rural broadcasters working with the Diocesan radio station.

PERU

The strong majority vote given to President Fujimori at the last elections showed what was the choice of the nation. Some are very happy, others less. There is still much poverty in the country and many are unemployed. The aggressive consumer society creates needs that cannot be met by the majority of the population. A mounting frustration is the consequence.

The Church in Peru may seem to be silent. But challenging actions are taking place: a bishop comes to the defense of peasants against a logging company. He all at once defends the environment and raises awareness of ecological values. The Bishop's Commissions for Social Action and for Youth have just launched a share-campaign. The theme: *Youth: Ways to Development* is very challenging. The Episcopal Commission for Missions has set up a National Missionary Center (CENAMIS). This is a Church



Manuela Velasquez, M.I.C. (center) prepares a typical Chilean dish for Srs. Carmen Ménard and Pierrette Bélainsky.

Student of the Colegio Maria de la Providencia in Lima



Photo: M.I.C., Perú

which moves forward... opening up to universality! The Religious Conference of Peru (CRP) has courageously taken on two major issues: integrated formation and the defense of human rights.

The twenty-two M.I.C. Sisters of Peru share with eagerness the life of the people and of the Church. They "grace-fully" carry out the initial formation, the novitiate and the Provincial administration. The project of the "Colegio Maria de la Providencia" - building an extension - is part of a well thought out education plan, along the lines of the M.I.C. charism and in solidarity with Bolivian women. A special focus on Youth and involvement in the "missionary hour" of Latin America are living realities in all our M.I.C. communities. The training of Christian leaders is a priority everywhere. And commitment to work among the poor is real: mine workers to resettle, handicapped people, street children... Lastly, our presence in the Pucallpa Vicariate bears fruit: two novices, two ASMIC groups, two vocation discernment groups and Christian people committing themselves in their local Church.

OVERALL VISION OF THE THREE COUNTRIES

It is a time of grace. Women of different nationalities: Bolivians, Canadians, Cuban, Chileans, Haitian, Peruvians, Philippinas, we all share the treasure of the call to mission in international fraternities. We are frail ... yet we keep on walking with the objective of becoming more and more "evangelical fraternities for mission".

With Mary, in thanksgiving for the gift received, we want to participate actively in the "mission hour" of Latin America, to give the Father sons and daughters who will sing His greatness. What a marvelous mission!

Our works, the Colegio Maria de la Providencia, which we own in Lima, Peru, and the Institute for Rural Education (I.E.R.), under the Archdiocese of Cochabamba, Bolivia, are managed with care. They bear the seal of our concern for the promotion of women as the proponents of change in society, in a perspective of faith, justice and dignity. The I.E.R. is not financially sound; the Colegio is self-supporting for current expenses but cannot afford the new construction we have just started. These two works are looking for ways to continue their high quality service to the poor pop-

ulation of these deprived areas, without always depending on foreign aid. But at the present time, this is absolutely impossible without our benefactors. The management of goods, at both local and Provincial levels, is done with a great sense of responsibility but the shortage of cash remains... enormous! Our situation is precarious. We have put a great effort to train our Sisters of Latin origin for administrative duties. They are the future!

From July 16 to 26, seven members of our Province took part in the COMLA-V (Fifth Latin American Missionary Congress) held at Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The Provincial Council thought it was appropriate to send such a large international delegation (composed of five nationalities) because the "mission hour" of Latin America is at hand. The theme: "The Gospel in the Different Cultures, a Way of Life and Hope" generated great interest and enlightened several aspects of our Pastoral Plan. COMLA-V wanted to evaluate the evangelization process of Latin America and, in a penitential act, to recognize the historical debt of the Church towards the indigenous peoples of this continent. It also wanted to stir up the dynamism of local Churches for sending out missionaries and to inspire young people and women to participate in the Church of today and tomorrow. This is a grace for us to discover and enjoy!



Photo: J. Bailey, M.I.C.

Young M.I.C. Associates in Peru

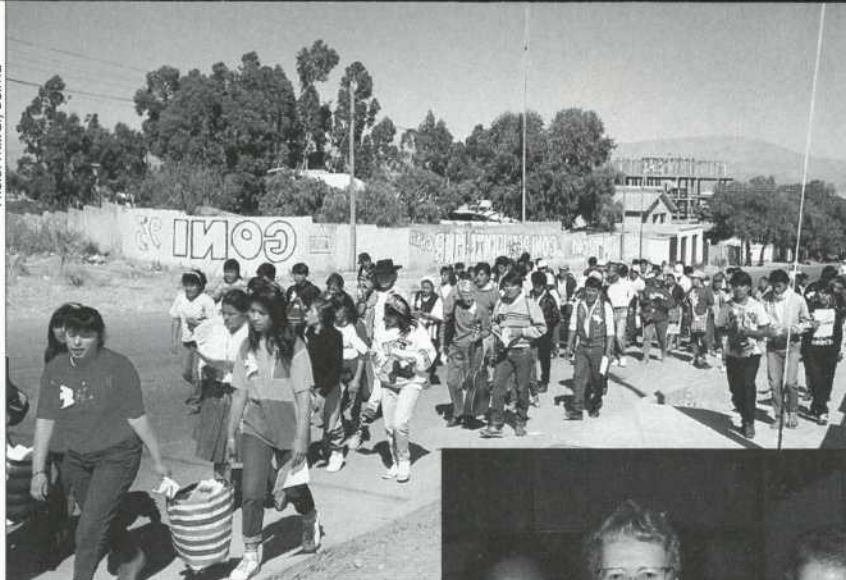
Lastly, as a Province, we are preparing to give out of our own poverty. One of our Sisters, Ana Martha Torrez Frontanilla, from Bolivia, will be sent to Madagascar next year. The mission goes on! I end by commending to you in a special way our young sisters in formation, women who show interest, a few aspirants, four novices and eight junior Sisters. Vocation work is a great challenge here! May we engage in it in a meaningful way... It is the Master of the harvest who calls. May He give us the grace of dedicated missionaries from this continent!

What do you say of this long sharing? I suppose it helped you to discover something of the mission entrusted to us in these three countries. Now, when you pray for us, you will know more about the missions you support; and when you share generously with your donations, it is this part of the missionary Church that

you carry in your heart! With feelings of gratitude, my ending is: *What can I say, Father, but a THANK YOU that will resound eternally!*

With all my affection and my best regards to all! □

Murielle Dubé, m.i.c.
Lima, September 5, 1995



A vocational outing with young people.



M.I.C.'s from several countries attended COMLA V. From l. to r.: Josselaine Audate, Éliette Gagnon, Sec. of the Pontifical Missionary Works in Canada, Ana Torrez, Gabrielle Tremblay and Murielle Hilaire.

PROJECT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN BOLIVIA

Presented: to ASMIC

(Association of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception) of Quebec
to all those interested...

By: the Institute of Rural Education (I.E.R.), a Center for rural development serving Quecha countrywomen, 17 to 25 years old, from different departments in Bolivia.

Courses offered: reading and writing, mathematics, cutting and sewing, marketing garden produce, hygiene, nutrition, first-aid, catechesis and Bible, etc.

Personal contribution: according to their possibilities.

Current expenses: food, teachers' salary, material, electricity, maintenance, etc.

Suggestions for help: contribute to a student's bursary, teacher's salary (lay Bolivians), teaching material...



Women students at the Institute for Rural Education.

All donations to the I.E.R. and to the building fund of **Colegio Maria de la Providencia** (cf. Sr. Murielle's article) will be forwarded through the Procure of the M.I.C. Missions. An income tax receipt may be issued on request. On behalf of the beneficiaries of these projects, THANK YOU for your generous support.

MISSION PROCURE,
121 Maplewood, Outremont, Qc Canada H2V 2M2
Tel.: (514) 274-5691

Photo: M.I.C., Bolivia

Photo: M.I.C.

Photo: C. Belley, M.I.C.

COMLA ECHOES FROM CHILE



Photo: E. Gagnon, M.I.C.

**Belo Horizonte,
the host city
of COMLA V**

BY THÉRÈSE LEBEAU, M.I.C.

The Church in Latin America is at a turning point of its history. Being aware of its heritage of faith received from sister-Churches, it is now ready to join in the mission of the universal Church. It is said that now is the "mission hour" of Latin America, the continent of hope for the mission! Sr Thérèse Lebeau writes about the Fifth Missionary Congress for Latin America (COMLA V) held last year at Belo Horizonte, Brazil, from 18th to the 23rd July. A congress definitely turned towards the mission in the year 2000.

I attended the COMLA with a group of 71 delegates from Chile, sent by my Provincial Superior, Sr Murielle Dubé, and my M.I.C. companions of Ancud. What I experienced there was the overriding of all frontiers through the presence of 3 000 persons from all five continents and from more than forty countries. Ten M.I.C. Sisters from several countries were among them. The theme of the Congress COME, SEE and ANNOUNCE and the theme proposed by the Pontifical Missionary Works and the Conference of Brazilian Bishops rallied us all around the major concern of Vatican II, as expressed for the Congress: "The Gospel in the Different Cultures, A Way of Life and Hope".

A PENTECOST EXPERIENCE

This Fifth Congress had a dream to fulfill: to live a new Pentecost within the Latin American continent, "Land of Missionary Hope". As Fr



Marcello Azevedo, S.J. said in his conference: "This Congress must help us to put in common and look deeper into our problems and questions. Furthermore, COMLA V will be a living experience of God's strength in us and of the richness of our mutual presence, by sharing it generously with the brothers and sisters the Lord puts in our way. COMLA V will be a real living experience of the gift of the Spirit..." (Cristianismo, una experiencia multicultural - Como vivir y anunciar la fe cristiana en las diferentes culturas?), p. 2)

This profound dream came true. In the light of the experience of the first disciples united with Mary, it was truly an hour of Pentecost. The abundant fruits generated by the presence of the Spirit were visible. For instance, the peak moments of prayer and fervent celebration in which the universal dimension, revealed in all its colours, symbols and rites, was felt by all.

COMLA V: a time of fraternity, communion and gratuity, a time for warm welcome, multicultural experiences, without frontiers; a time to wonder about the real meaning of "*ad gentes*" mission, to reflect on the quality of today's evangelization linked with the respect of cultures; a time for getting closer to indigenous people by giving them a special place at the Congress and enabling them to have their say! Hours of discovery or awareness of the Signs of the Spirit! Penitential time also in the acknowledgement of our omissions... and errors against the people of other cultures.

Brazil, the COMLA's host country, had made an intensive preparation for the event by declaring 1994 a "Missionary Year". At the opening of the Congress, the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Works, Fr. Joao Panazzolo said: *The Missionary Year was truly a 'Kairos'. This period of grace is now coming to an end, but not really to a stop... COMLA V is an event which generated a dynamism for the mission. From this work of the Holy Spirit, in a surprising way even beyond our expectations, has emerged the joyful discovery of the mission of every baptized person and of the entire People of God.*

AN OVERALL VISION OF COMLA V

Missionary congresses are in fact but a striking reminder of our responsibility as baptized people at the heart of the Church, with a specific call to be sent to the world to reveal the gratuitous Love of the Father. The main objective of the congress was clear: to impress more deeply on our local Churches the responsibility towards the universal mission through a sharing of experiences and evangelical witnessing in the different cultures, enlightened by the preferential option for the poor which will strengthen the way of hope in all peoples. (Basic study document Pre-Comla V, PMW, Brazil).

Among the main objectives of COMLA V, let us mention those that best reflect the aims of the congress:

- To awaken the spirit of and dy-



Everywhere a gratuitous welcome! Socorro Gumnad, M.I.C. and Ana Torrez, M.I.C. (1st-3rd right, 2nd row) with a group of delegates housed at the Immaculate Conception parish of Pedro Leopoldo.

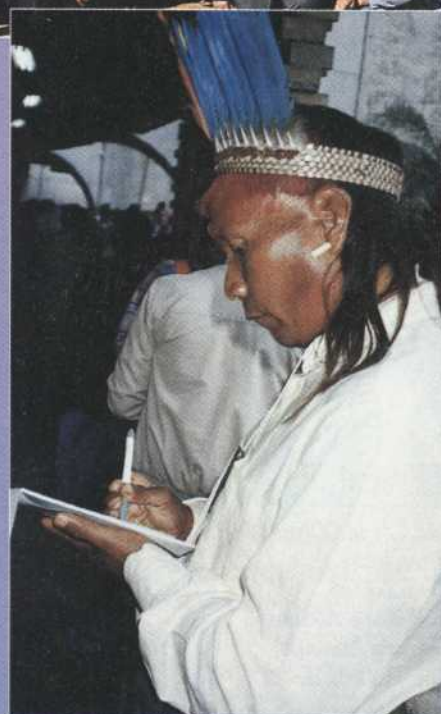
namism for the "ad gentes" mission in Latin America and in the Caribbeans, by providing deeper insights into the missions in today's world, using experiences and witnesses.

- To encourage the local Churches of Latin America and of the Caribbeans to intensify the sending off of "*ad gentes*" missionaries. (idem).

The main theme of the Congress: *The Gospel in the Different Cultures, a Way of Life and Hope*, divided into subthemes, was studied in workshops. Each congress delegate, when filling the registration paper, indicated his choice. This study allowed us to deepen the mission "*ad gentes*" under three major aspects: the inculturation, characteristics and requirements. The workshops on the *horizons of the mission* considered evangelization and dialogue in foreign missions, in indigenous, Afro-Americans and urban cultures. Those on *characteristics* looked at the mission in the local Church, in inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue and as a way of liberation. Finally, to respond to the *requirements* of an incultured mission, the study dwelt on the missionary dimension in the formation and spirituality.

INDIGENOUS CULTURES

I chose the workshop on *Evangelization and Dialogue with Indigenous Cultures* on account of my



Indian delegate at the COMLA V.

past experience with rural populations of Quechua (Inca) culture in Peru: in Yauri (Cuzco) for six years and in Bolivia, Tiraque (Cochabamba) for two years. This in addition to my past contacts with the Quichés-Mayas of Guatemala and my present discovery of the Mapucho-Huillliche culture in Chiloé in the south of Chile. What a joy it was for me, during this congress, to get to listen to, admire and share with Indigenous People, men and women from the northeastern part of Brazil, from Ecuador, from Potosi (Bolivia), and Quetzaltenango, (Guatemala)! All of them expressed very well in their own languages, rites and symbols, the deep faith they have and their understanding of the mission today; they challenged us also on a new way of evangeliza-

tion more respectful of cultures. With pride and confidence, sometimes also with suffering, these Indians told us of their hopes and their cry for respect of their rights to life, land, their own language, their own culture and their own religion...

From these moments of celebration, work in small groups or in half-plenary sessions, we keep in mind

Photo: M.I.C.



M.I.C.'s at COMLA V.
From l. to r.:
Carmen Tito,
Josseline Audate,
Socorro Gumnad,
Thérèse Lebeau
(author),
France Royer-Martel
(from the Post-COMLA
IV Team),
Murielle Hilaire
and Petronila Chira.



Children and family groups were present at the Congress.



Photos: E. Gagnon, M.I.C.

the priorities and commitments stressed by the main speakers. The indigenous delegates and the pastoral agents working with them are conscious of the great challenges which the influence of contemporary society represents for them. Together, we searched for the presence of seeds of life and identified with greater lucidity the signs of death, that we may move forward in more concrete ways in dialogue and in the evangelization of indigenous cultures.

This workshop underlined the main challenges we face, hinting to the new pastoral commitments awaiting us: a firm commitment of Churches to indigenous people; creativity in pastoral care expressed in concrete ways, as in liturgies and theology; research in methodology to help the inculturation of the Gospel; attention to the formation of missionaries; efforts to promote the faith and autonomy of the Indians; knowledge of languages as a condition for pastoral work; inculturation of the pastoral approach in min-

istries; permanent discovery of the novelty of the Gospel by and for indigenous cultures; listening attitude and integrated presence on the part of missionaries; conscientization of society regarding the Indian issue, beginning with the teaching of the History of these people. The importance of anthropology was underlined more than once as an essential condition for the evangelization of cultures wherever missionaries are sent.

In all these contributions relating to the speakers' experience, the three fundamental elements of incultured evangelization came out clearly, as shown by Fr. M. Azevedo in his conference to the congress participants:

- To perceive the human being in his spiritual and material reality. Evangelization cannot be separated from the dimensions that refer to the human identity of persons. Faith is lived individually and communally.
- Any human being is part of a culture. Evangelization must express a link between faith and culture. It is an education process which includes dialogue with the human being as a whole, which works with men and women in concrete ways and adjusts itself to their social context.
- In various cultures, and above all in traditional cultures, the religious dimension is vital. (op. mentioned, p. 52).

COMLA V : CONCLUSIONS

I found a definition which, in my opinion, summarizes the conclusions of COMLA V: "Inculturation, not a new reality, but a new way to respond to reality." This is the important challenge! The invitation "to go out at sea", to foster to the maximum a deep "acculturation", to hear the cries of those in the outskirts of cities and towns, to constantly and actively support the preparation and the sending "ad gentes" of young Latin Americans. These calls I perceived as an invitation to remain faithful to the common mission of the M.I.C., following in the footsteps of Mary in her Visitation and in the spirit of Délia Tétreault, our Foundress. □

Discovering my Roots

BY JOSSELAINE AUDATE, M.I.C.

Delegated to the Latin American Missionary Congress, Sr. Josselaine, a Haitian M.I.C. working in Peru, had no idea she was on her way to a rendezvous with the Holy Spirit... The theme of the Congress gave her a deeper insight of the reality of cultures and enlightened her life through the discovery of her own roots. What a tremendous grace! Here she shares her impressions of the Congress.

Last July, Belo Horizonte in Brazil became, for a moment, the missionary capital of the world as the city hosted the COMLA V conference. This great ecclesial event, bathed in an atmosphere of joy and prayer, was an awakening of consciousness concerning the work to be done and a commitment to go further. Professing the same living faith, we gathered there without distinction of race, nation or language. For me, it was truly a rendezvous with the Holy Spirit.

RADICAL INCULTURATION OF THE GOSPEL

The theme *"The Gospel in the Different Cultures, a Way of Life and Hope"* spoke to me very powerfully because Brazil contains all the realities of Latin America: Afro-Brazilians, Mestizos, Whites, Indians... The Gospel has reached all

cultures, all barriers have fallen down, God is celebrated and shared with others. The moment of truth on the respect of cultures has come once again in the history of the Church in this continent.

The missionary dimension of this Congress caused an awakening of consciousness for thousands of baptized people here. The cultural awareness manifested by the Church for the *"ad gentes"*

mission now extends universally, embracing the cultural reality of every social and ethnic group. It is impossible for anyone to uproot the seeds sown by God in each human being. It is out of the deepest roots of a Black person or of an Indian that God calls him, speaks to him, reveals Himself to him, and this human person responds, celebrates, gives thanks with his own cultural values. This fact is central to the mission. The COMLA experience made me go into my inner self to discover my own roots. I understood that God transforms his people through suffering to lead them to total freedom. Let us give thanks to the Lord for He is good!

HOSPITALITY FREELY GIVEN

It was said that Brazil was a closed country because of the Portuguese language, but it was not! The families of Belo Horizonte who hosted us had learned Spanish to be able to communicate with their guests. They prepared carefully for a full year through well organized sessions. Whether rich or poor, they were all incredibly generous; their hearts were open to the whole world. Flore, the mother of my hosting family, even studied French as she wants to keep corresponding with me. I felt so much at home that it was very difficult to say good bye. What a marvelous experience of inculturation! My THANKS are a prayer of praise to God and also a promise of faithfulness to the commitment of COMLA as expressed in the theme song:

Blacks and Whites, Indios, Mestizos

God is the Father of all

One Faith, one Savior

A World to Evangelize. Come, See and Proclaim. □



Photos: M.I.C.

Sr. Josselaine Audate, from Haiti, met her own culture in Brazil.



Brazil, a country where various ethnic backgrounds coexist.

Photo: É. Gagnon, M.I.C.



Martine and Yves at the Manacupuru market.

A missionary Couple in Brazil

BY MARTINE SANFAÇON

More and more lay people commit themselves in the great missionary field.

Martine and Yves, from Quebec, responded to this call as a couple affiliated to a missionary community. Enriched by her experience in Brazil, Martine shares the joys and challenges of her missionary commitment in the Church. For those who follow Jesus, mission means a call, a response and a being sent!

After four years of missionary formation, my husband Yves and I left for Brazil for three years, as associates of the Quebec Foreign Missions Society. As a nurse, my hope was to get involved in the prevention of sickness. I thus left with the aim of bringing my nursing skills in the name of my faith in Jesus Christ. Moreover, living this mission as a bridge between Churches was an important dimension of my missionary project. Besides, my husband and I received strong support from our parish of St. Pascal-de-Maizerets, in the Diocese of Quebec. We were provided accommodation at the rectory before our departure and upon our return and storage for our

furniture for three years, not to forget correspondence with a few parishioners.

TEAM PROJECT

In July 1991, the members of the central Council of the Quebec Foreign Missions Society (P.M.É.), proposed that Yves and I join a team. We finally left with Nicole Duchaine from Chicoutimi, Claude Comeau from New-Brunswick, both lay missionaries, François Paré, a diocesan priest from Sherbrooke and Guy Labonté, P.M.É., originally from Quebec.

After having spent four months at Brazilia to learn Portuguese in a language school, we arrived in Ama-

zonas, N.W. Brazil, in the small city of Manacapuru near the Amazon River. The first year was really one of SEEING. It was a time of adaptation, of knowledge of the milieu and of the existing needs. I mostly accompanied the Franciscan Sisters in their work of pastoral health care in the city and the rural zones. Working as a team during this period of time was greatly enriching and allowed us to put in common our first impressions.

Towards the end of 1993, after consulting the pastoral agents of the different parishes and Dom Gutenberg, Bishop of the Church of Coari, our team decided that some of us would go to Anori. In February 1994, François, Yves and I left for Anori, a small city located approximately eighteen hours by boat from Manaus.

CHALLENGES AND JOYS

My first challenge was that of novelty: a new project for the Foreign Missions Society, a new project for the Church of Coari, a new way of living the mission as an ecclesial team with all the richness of our differences. Linked to this novelty, the challenge of personal and community discernment was equally

demanding. What does God expect of me, what does He expect of us in this missionary project? What are the choices, the commitments to favour in order to serve the Church of Coari while keeping in mind our strengths and limitations?

For my part, I had left as a nurse, but little by little, as I listened to the needs and requests of the people, I became involved as a pastoral agent in the parish and went beyond my commitments in health care. This required openness and availability to serve the Church which had welcomed me. This demanded courage and confidence for me to go and live in Anori, so far away from Manaus. Before I left on this mission, I never would have thought myself capable of living this. What helped me was my faith in Jesus who called me, sent me and accompanied me (Mt 28, 19-20), the witness of courage and faith of the Amazonian people, my frequent sharing with Yves and the team, not to forget the support of our families and friends and of our confrères of the Foreign Missions Society.

But the many challenges I encountered weigh little when com-

pared to the joys I experienced all along my missionary commitment. I truly met fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters as Jesus promised to those who accept to leave everything for the Gospel. Yes, I experienced the hundredfold joy of simple daily encounters with the people. Parting from loved ones is always a heart-breaking experience. Leaving my dear ones in Quebec and those in Anori was really not easy. But the joy of continuing to communicate with my friends of Amazonas, men and women, is priceless.

TEAM LIFE AND LIFE AS A COUPLE

The experience of living the mission as part of a team such as ours was both enriching and demanding. It's like a family: there is rejoicing when a brother or sister lives something joyful, and everyone is affected by the others' difficulties and sorrows. Our differences in personality, formation and strengths enabled us to complement one another wonderfully in mission. The fact of relating to one another as equals and of being able to take part in all decision-making was most enriching.

It was also rewarding to be allowed, as a couple, to work together and to take time out for prayer and recollection in a monastery every three months. Faced with the many needs in Anori, we could have lost ourselves in activism. The Word of God meditated and deepened in our daily life was truly a light on our way of solidarity and continues to inspire our lives as a couple. This is a great treasure which our friends in Brazil passed on to us by evangelizing us through their living.

The mission continues for us in Quebec. The wave of despair which we've perceived among Quebecers since our return, summons us to witness to the faith we shared with the Church of Coari. As Jesus sent us to Brazil, He now invites us to extend our efforts so that each person may have life in abundance. Shall we dare to let ourselves be questioned? Happy journey along the ways of solidarity! □



Martine, Yves and the pastoral team of Anori on the parish boat.

JONAS: THE GREAT



Photo: F. Gervais

Christian Beaulieu
(2nd row, 2nd r.),
Ida Brochu, M.I.C.
(3rd row, 1st r.)
and young people of
the "Souffle de Vie"
community.

BY CHRISTIAN BEAULIEU

To enlighten life with the light of the Word and to discover therein the mission which the Lord entrusts to us... this is what Fr. Christian Beaulieu promises us to do all along this year. It is a great privilege and joy to obtain his precious collaboration. For a long time, director and editor of the publication Je Crois, which is no longer published today, Fr. Christian is well known for his books, lectures and numerous commitments with young people going through difficult periods. His source: the Word of God enabling him to speak with words of the heart. At the beginning of this year, the spotlight is on Mr. Jonas...

The most touching moment of each of my days will perhaps always remain the one when, as I take the messages from my answering machine, first thing in the morning, I hear a young person crying out for help: "Don't let me down, I have no one else but you..."

And I was just waiting for the opportunity to tell him the same thing: "I have news for you: your parents, your friends, your grandparents, God... have no one else but you..."

God has no one else but you for your loved ones, for the work that awaits you, for the mission that is yours. No other arms but yours to embrace your loved ones, no other eyes but yours to make the eyes of your loved ones shine in your light...

Haven't you heard this very strong invitation: "Stand up, I need you..." And God wants you to be yourself and no one else! You are his man, his woman of confidence! Once a person hears this call, he can never again be the same! Who wouldn't feel a sense of pride upon hearing such words?

This is the fantastic and unexpected experience Jonas had when, startled, he heard a voice saying: "Stand up! Go to Ninive, the large city..." Jon 1,2

ADVENTURE AT SEA

A TREMENDOUS MODESTY AND OFTEN ALSO... A REFUSAL!

Faced with a mission which is proposed to us, who would not experience a sacred agitation, an extreme reserve. A tremendous modesty and often too... a refusal. Trembling in one's whole being! As though one anticipated the dangers of such an invitation, of such a great demand!

Haven't you heard this reaction of a young man faced with the woman who could turn out to be the love of his heart: *"I am too impressed. This is beyond me; I have no idea how to go about it. Therefore I stay away from her..."*

How often we beat around the bush before responding to our mission! How many times we choose roundabout ways to get to our destination! Yet somehow, through all our twists and turns, things manage to fall in place for us, for every road leads to Rome.

What youth would want to let the promised one, his own unclaimed treasure pass him by? Who wouldn't hope to see his / her parents together again, all hurts healed, even after long periods of separation? Who wouldn't wish, deep down, in body and soul, to fulfill his / her mission as completely as possible? But then, is he or she prepared to pay the price of sweat and tears?

Like Jonas, young people also run away. And so do we! *"And Jonas set out in the opposite direction"* Jon 1,3. To get away to the other end of the world, to Tarsis in Spain...

But then, what was Jonas running away from by setting out in another direction? Why did Jonas instinctively refuse his mission? Because of what it involved. Tell me, what is stopping each one of us on the way to our mission? We run away because we see the gravity, the serious implications of our mission.

120 THOUSANDS SOULS... ON HIS HANDS!

Overnight, Jonas found himself with 120 thousand "new converts" to look after. What an awakening! Not such a bad result! This was quite a commitment for years to come! But then, also, the beginning of many problems and headaches! Perhaps he would have preferred things not moving so fast!

Imagine a good pastor finding himself overnight with 120 thousand new parishioners - all practicing at that! Imagine a very young couple coming out of the delivery room for the first time with triplets on their hands! Can you imagine that - three at a time! Imagine a young man never before loved by anyone, finding himself overnight with a girl friend who is head over heels in love with him - especially if this proves to be a lasting love! Poor guy! He knows right now that this is the beginning of the end of his "ego trips" and of the "wild times" of his teenage years. What wouldn't he do to push her away!

I can hear the reactions of all those people: *"I wasn't asking for that much!" "Where is all this going to lead me?" "How much is it all going to cost me?" "What price will I have to pay for such fertility?"*

Now you understand better the congenital fear we all have, like Jonas, to respond to our mission.

The fear of the mission is...

the fear... to lose everything by heading for the open sea, by going far away;
the fear... that too much will be demanded of us;
the fear... of the price to pay;
the fear... of playing all the cards in one's hand;
the fear... that our most beautiful dreams will turn into nightmares...

Once we are invested by the Word: there is no escape! Let us allow the Wind of the Spirit to blow into our sails! Let us allow ourselves to be carried away by the movement of the Spirit! □

Come, see and



and Proclaim!





Lucette Gilbert, M.I.C.
from St-Prime,
Diocese of Chicoutimi.
Returned to Haiti
in September 1995.



Jeannine Forcier, M.I.C.
from Springfield, MA,
Diocese of Springfield, U.S.A.
Returned to Malawi
in September 1995.



Jeanine Blanchard, M.I.C.
from Sherbrooke,
Diocese of Sherbrooke.
Returned to Japan
in September 1995.



Blandine Massé, M.I.C.
from St-Sylvere,
Diocese of Nicolet.
Returned to Haiti
in September 1995.

MISSIONARIES OF THE GOSPEL



Jeanne Ostiguy, M.I.C.
from Acton Vale,
Diocese of St-Hyacinthe.
Returned to Cuba
in September 1995.



Agnès Bouchard, M.I.C.
from Petite Rivière St-François,
Diocese of Quebec.
Left for Cuba
in October 1995,
after having worked
in Peru.



Thérèse Leblanc-Cormier, M.I.C.
from St-Sylvere,
Diocese of Nicolet.
Returned to Madagascar
in November 1995.



Gabrielle Tremblay, M.I.C.
from St-Bruno,
Diocese of Chicoutimi.
Returned to Peru
in October 1995.



Louise Pagé, M.I.C.
from St-Éphrem,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Peru
in September 1995.



Madeleine Alarie, m.i.c.
from St-Fidèle,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Haiti
in September 1995.



Rose-Alice Brochu, M.I.C.
from St-Gabriel,
Diocese of Rimouski.
Returned to Peru
in September 1995.



Léa Nelson, M.I.C.
from La Boule, Haiti,
Diocese of Port-au-Prince.
In mission awareness
work in Canada
since September 1995.

*As the Father sent me.
so I am sending you.*

In 20, 21



Noëlla Fréchette, M.I.C.
from St-Apollinaire,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Zambia
in October 1995.



Françoise de Varennes, M.I.C.
from Quebec,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Madagascar
in November 1995.

MISSIONARIES WITH US

YOUR DEPARTURE GIFT HELP
OUR MISSIONARIES

ENCLOSED THE AMOUNT OF _____ \$

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ APT.: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

TEL.: () _____

DO YOU WANT A RECEIPT?

YES ☐ NO ☐

ADDRESS TO:

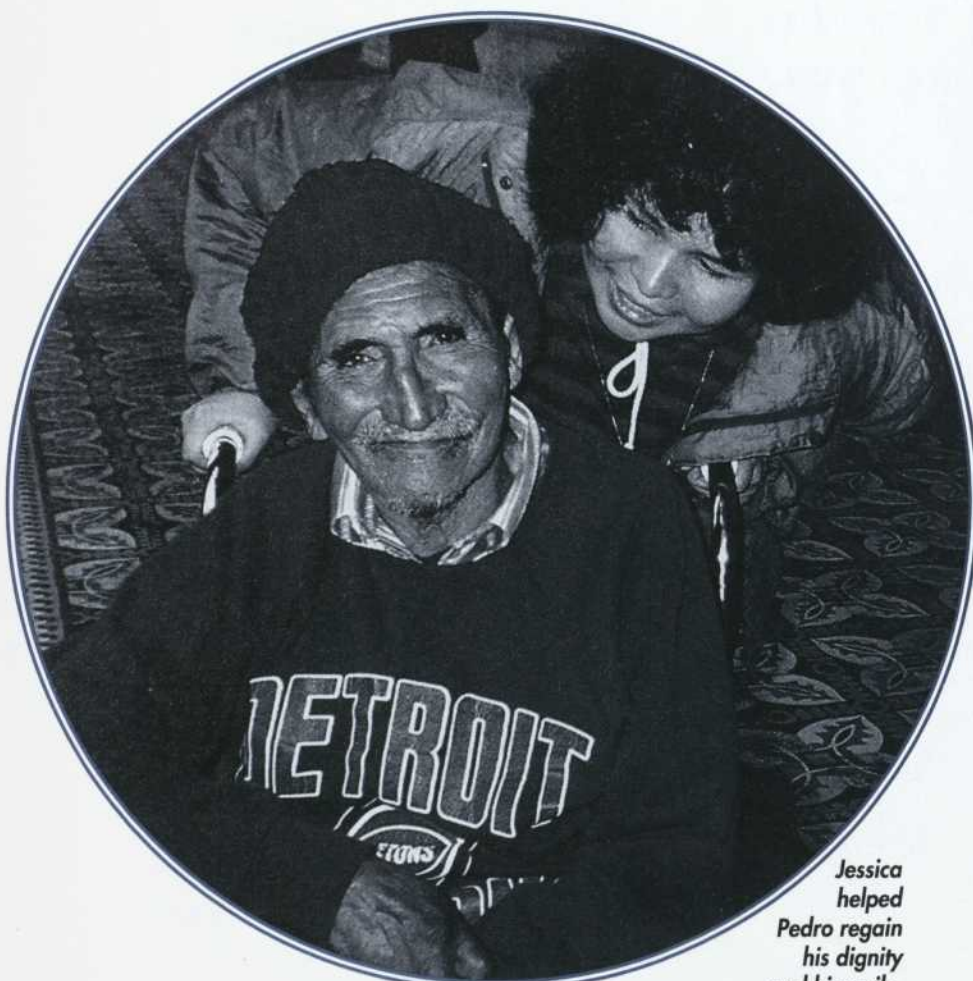
**MISSION PROCURE
MISSIONARY SISTERS
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
121, MAPLEWOOD AVENUE
OUTREMONT, QC CANADA
H2V 2M2
TELEPHONE: (514) 274-5691**

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SOLIDARITY**

To See God in my Neighbour

BY JESSICA ARÉVALO

Meeting someone who is poor can be an event full of surprises! Isn't it in the poor that Christ reveals Himself beyond all our expectations? Jessica is an M.I.C. novice who lived this experience. As she reflects on this event, her sharing allows us to witness the many different ways in which God is recognized in our neighbour.



Jessica helped Pedro regain his dignity and his smile.

Photos: M.I.C., Peru

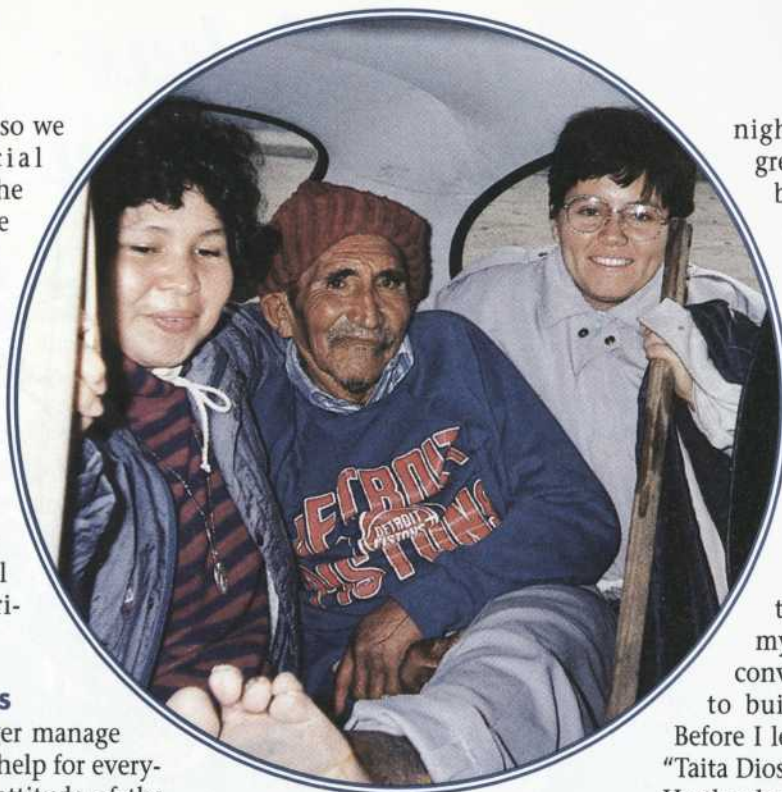
My experience with Pedro is a Good News! I have seen and felt Jesus present in my life. It is an example of the Lord manifesting Himself in suffering humanity, in those who plead silently while they do things that speak of the goodness of God.

How I Met PEDRO

Pedro was a destitute, homeless man who had been sleeping in the street near our parish church. For several months, every time I went to church, I passed him by but I could not help being questioned and disturbed by his presence. His situation was inhuman: he was sick, alone and exposed to the damp, cold and rainy nights of winter in Lima. For the last two weeks, he could not stand up any more. His left leg, with a large infected wound, could no longer carry him. He could hardly move it. Besides, he was suffering from a dislocation of the left shoulder. All this misery left him almost without feeling or dignity. The more I looked at him, the more uneasy I felt. It came to a point where one day, I shared my concern with my companions. We decided to do something for him. The first thing I did was to stop and talk to him, to find out about his situation. After a few days, I couldn't even sleep at night as I lay thinking about Pedro in the street, alone, abandoned, helpless, suffering and cold.

To our amazement, one telephone call of my companion Rosario Zari, M.I.C. was enough to find a bed for Pedro at the Home of Peace of the Sisters of Charity of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. God was certainly with us as it is usually very difficult to find a place in a city of eight-million people such as Lima, where such cases are many. We wanted free medical care at

the hospital for Pedro; so we contacted the social worker in our parish. The next day, after mass, she asked us to bring him immediately to the hospital as this was the only time she could come with us. We were somewhat embarrassed... as we had not had time to clean him at all! But this is where I can say that God was present all along this new experience.



Jessica Arévalo and Tania Diaz, M.I.C. novices, take Pedro to the hospital.

GESTURES OF KINDNESS

Pedro could no longer manage on his own; he needed help for everything. First, I saw the attitude of the social worker, who was suffering herself from back pain. She helped us as we lifted Pedro in and out of a taxi. As I observed her, the words of Mother Délia came to my mind: "Like Mary, we will have to cross over hills and mountains to help our dear neighbour." The "hills and mountains" were very near us, in "our dear neighbour". The same attitudes of kindness and patience were present in the taxi driver who accepted readily, without showing any signs of disgust, to bring us to the hospital. On the way, we prayed inwardly for Pedro to be admitted in spite of his loathsome condition.

At the hospital, we had to wait for our turn and I sat with him on a long bench where there were already several patients. They all walked away very quickly... I was surprised at my own sturdiness going through this ordeal, as I am normally so fussy; it was as though I had lost the sense of smell. I talked with him while Rosario and the social worker went through the office work for a destitute case. Then, without knowing how it came about, I realized that my heart was full of love for Pedro, that I had recognized Christ in him. A strong desire to alleviate his sufferings and sorrows, had surged in me. I felt that being with him at this moment was

a great grace, one that was perhaps not understood by others.

It took us the whole day, going from one doctor to another, from the X-Ray department to the surgical ward, to complete the examinations. My companion and I were witnesses of the grace of the Lord working even with the medical staff. Our rather "special" patient did not raise any offensive remarks. On the contrary, he was cared for with much kindness and we were even invited to skip the long waiting lines. Personally, yes, I saw God at work that day. His presence in everyone was evident for me. I was amazed because the unselfish love bestowed on Pedro could not come from anyone but the Lord Himself!

PEDRO REGAINS HIS DIGNITY

During this long wait, our conversation soon became friendly. When listening to Pedro telling me about his life, I felt he was becoming a human being again. His patience, his abandonment to Divine Providence and his silent trust challenged me deeply. Once he had received all the treatment he could get, we drove him to the "Home of Peace" around ten at

night. He was expected and greeted warmly and given a bath and a good meal. At long last, he had a home! Rosario and I went home tired but so happy to have succeeded in giving back to Pedro his lost dignity and the sense of being a person again.

I feel that this experience marked a turning point in my life. Recognizing God's work in and through me and through my brothers and sisters, has convinced me that it is possible to build a civilization of love. Before I left him, Pedro told me that "Taita Dios" (Papa God) was with him. He thanked Him and was full of gratitude. Isn't the aim of our Institute, which fills me with wonder and to which I feel attracted: "That all God's children may recognize His kindness and sing His praise!", as was the wish of Mother Délia. □

(Original in Spanish)

1995 MISSIONARY INTENTIONS

January

Lord Jesus,
you prayed for unity. Grant us a greater awareness of our Mission, so that we may have a firmer ecumenical spirit

February

Crucified Lord, on this World Day of the Sick, grant that all who suffer may come to know that in uniting their sufferings with yours, they further your Mission.

A Seed which has Germinated in my Heart

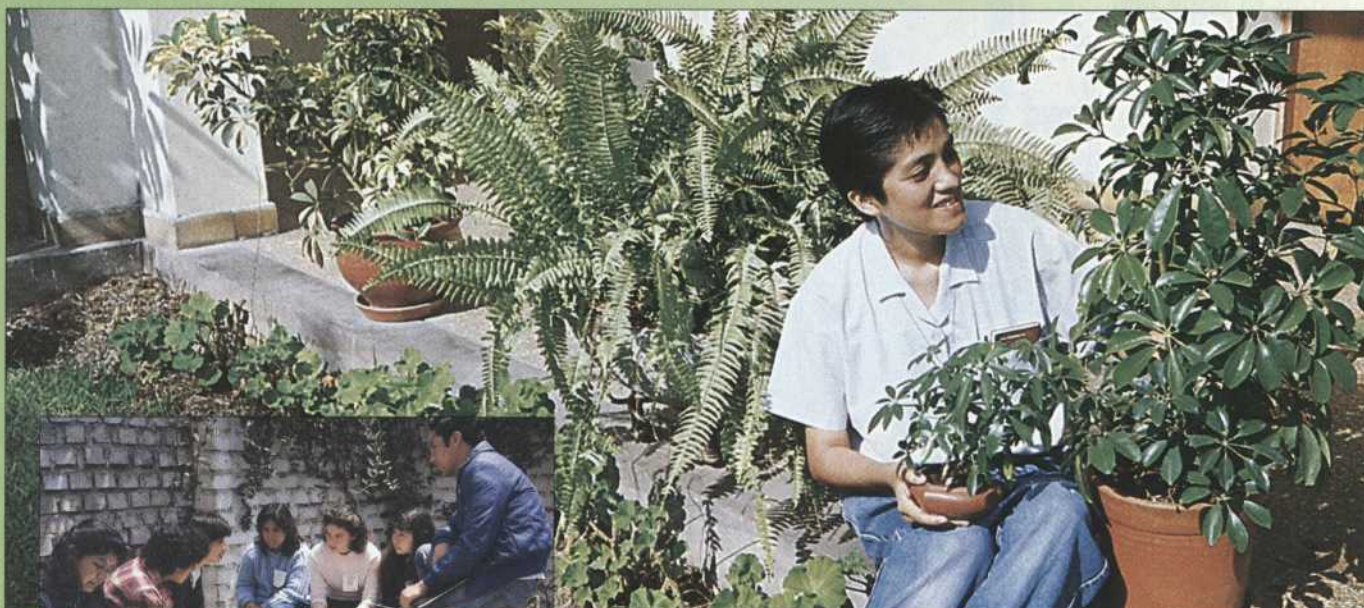


Photo: M.I.C., Peru

Maria Arroyo, M.I.C.



Photo: T. Lebeau, M.I.C.

A Meeting of "Youth Without Frontiers" in Peru

BY MARIA ARROYO, M.I.C.

At a meeting held in Pont-Viau to reflect on our ways of carrying out missionary animation in Canada, Sr. Maria Arroyo, a Peruvian M.I.C. who followed a period of training last year, was one of the invited panelists. She draws her vision from the source of her missionary vocation and is a witness of the fruits of an animation which has challenged young people to cooperate in the mission of Jesus.

Thanks to the mission awareness inspired by M.I.C.'s to a group of *Jovenes sin fronteras* (Youth Without Frontiers) of our Maria de la Providencia School in Peru, and through my involvement in the *Pontifical Missionary Works*, I discovered my vocation. This is how I can be with you today and this makes me very happy! *Jovenes sin fronteras* was for me a source of living water which strengthened my faith. This movement helped me to discover God's love, taught me how to be a friend of Jesus and enabled me to feel the strength of the Spirit who is the breath of the mission.

AN EXPERIENCE OF MISSION AWARENESS IN PERU

Certain approaches are of vital importance in missionary awareness among young people, adults and, why not, also among children... There were three determining moments lived by the group:

- **INFORMATION** on the work of missionaries, the challenges of mission, the needs of our brothers and sisters and of the Universal Church. This information was given to us through lectures, slides, missionary publications, panels, etc.
- **FORMATION** through weekly meetings, courses, silent retreats and the witnessing of many missionaries.

- **COOPERATION** by taking part in the collections on Mission Sunday in the month of October and through the organization of the study day in schools and parishes. I also participated, in my country, in the missionary project *Mochila y Mision*, that is, "school bags and Mission". Missionary prayer and sacrifice also played an important role in this movement of *Jovenes sin fronteras*.

It is a long process but it guarantees the awakening of missionary awareness and the maturity of a missionary vocation. Following this experience, young people can no longer remain indifferent to all that is experienced by the local as well as the Universal Church. Something necessarily changes. Their way of seeing things is no longer the same. They can't just sit back and look on any more. They feel the time has come for them to be actively involved and, in the manner of Mary, to be faithful disciples of God, saying: "Here I am, Lord, to do your Will"! In this way they contribute in making the Kingdom of God present and visible... a Kingdom of justice, peace, equality and solidarity, which they attempt to establish, first of all, in their homes, their surroundings, their school, their parish, their province and later perhaps, in another country.

In the course of these nine years of journeying with *Jovenes sin fronteras*, I learned and discovered that a young person doesn't just undertakes to become a missionary. This is a vocation into which one is formed and over time transformed by the love of God.

A LOOK AT MISSION AWARENESS IN CANADA

I am aware that the socio-political, economic and religious context in which you carry out mission awareness is different and difficult. But I believe that these three methods already mentioned: INFORMATION, FORMATION and COOPERATION can enlighten and help you in your missionary task in Canada. It is certain that even today, the Lord continues to invite us to spread the Good News in all corners of the world. Pope John-Paul II

tells us in his Encyclical: "There is no witnessing without witnesses just as there is no mission without missionaries." R.M. No 61

The Spirit of the Lord invites us, perhaps, to go further in our manner of doing mission awareness in Canada:

- by getting closer and more present in schools, colleges and universities;
- by helping us to raise the awareness of these children, young people and adults concerning the real poverty experienced by many of their Canadian brothers and sisters;
- by giving young people more of our time to help and motivate them to be witnesses of their faith and find meaning in their lives, and to help them discover their role as promoters of the mission;
- by reformulating the missionary projects we present to young people so that they may be living witnesses, first of all in their own country, and later on, abroad.

Yes, the Spirit of the Lord invites us to give a new momentum to the Canadian Church by making its faithful co-responsibles and frontline agents of the mission. Today, every local, national and world event speaks to us about investing time and energy to awaken people to this mission awareness and to this vocation *ad gentes* and *ad intra* which will make possible the upbuilding of a more human and fraternal world making visi-

ble the Kingdom of God. In order to be prompted to action, a young person needs to experience the love of Jesus Christ, of this Jesus who takes him seriously and counts on him to act in His name.

CHALLENGING YOUNG PEOPLE

Let's not be afraid to challenge young people and to invite them to witness to their faith. Let's not be afraid to talk to them about God, to invite them to communion, to reflection. Let's take the risk of asking them the questions: Do you believe that the Lord needs your hands to continue touching people, your feet to carry on the journey, your mouth to continue speaking the Word and your heart to continue loving? Do you believe that He is saying to you: I need you? These questions are not that simple for young people. Let's accompany them in their quest.

Finally, allow me to tell you once again how important is the witness of your being, of your heart and of your preoccupation for all humanity. Our Mother Foundress, Délia Tétreault, had good reasons to say: "How sublime is our vocation!" and "What better way of repaying Him - as much as a weak creature can in this world - than to give Him children, chosen ones who also will praise His goodness forever more."

LET'S CONTINUE PLANTING THE SEED...
IT WILL GERMINATE SOME DAY! □



A mission awareness visit to the native people of the North Shore (Quebec) by Yolaine Lavoie, M.I.C. (right) and Perpétue Razafindrahaingo, M.I.C. Both Sisters left for Madagascar in 1995.

Photo: CAM

Mission in



Bolivia...
the motherland of the
Incas.



Photos: E. Allary, M.I.C.

What is the mission Jesus wants us to accomplish here?

IN COLLABORATION

In the present socio-political context of Bolivia, the M.I.C.'s committed themselves to the transformation of the humble milieu of Huancarani. Srs. Isabel, Leticia and Rita share with us the reality and the meaning of their commitments. Among these poor people, the Spirit prepares the ground and forms his future evangelizers... In another respect, Sr. Elmire tells us what steps have been taken to improve the situation of women in this milieu by showing us signs of hope, signs of spring...

Bolivia, the motherland of the Incas... Working in this country, we are particularly attentive to the situation of the Inca people who are the most marginalized and the most affected by the present situations of conflict. We live among our brothers and sisters of the small village of Huancarani. We participate in the activities of the community to which everyone brings his strength and ideas to achieve some measure of progress. We work with them, learn with them, struggle with them, pray and celebrate with them.

ATTENTIVE LISTENING AND DIVERSIFIED ACTIONS

These humble people have their way of thinking, their own dreams, their particular struggles, their very

special methods of education and an original way of expressing their faith. What we hear them say may seem negative at first, but then we discover in it their cries, their new-awarenesses, the beginnings of decisions which are likely to bring about change! They say:

- We feel inferior to everyone and unable to be more.
- We're always thinking about trying to please others.
- We dream of having what North-Americans have, what our neighbours possess.
- We raise our children to do things out of fear.
- We turn to God in times of difficulty.
- We believe He protects or punishes us according to our behaviour.

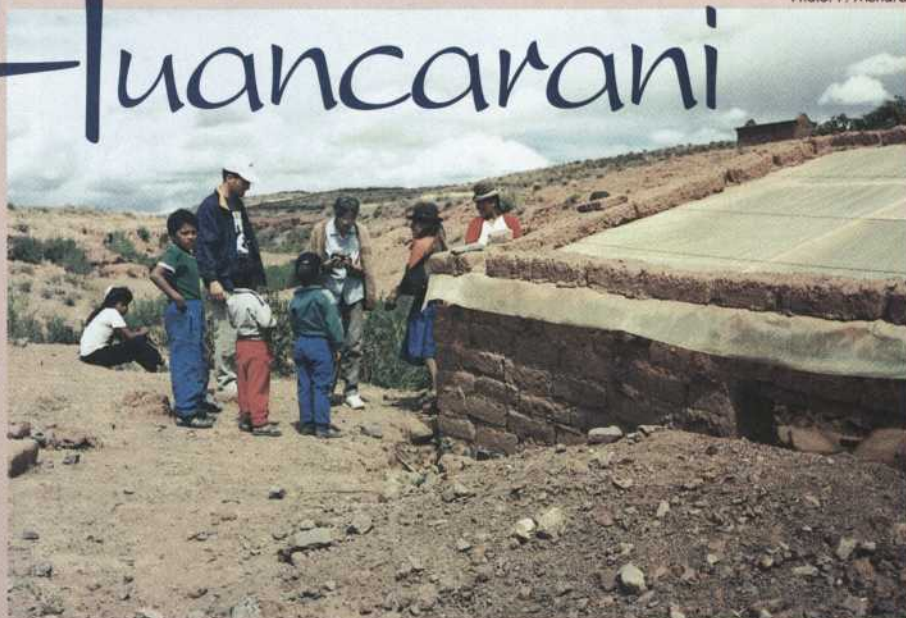


*The Lord chose
disciples among
the people of
Huancarani.*

Photo: M.I.C., Bolivia

Huancarani

Photo: F. Ménard



Sr. Elmire (center) near the hot-houses where nutritious food is grown.

- We offer Him our produce and we light candles to obtain His favours.

What is the mission Jesus wants to accomplish here? How do we awaken people to this mission among their own? We don't want to reduce our mission to one of humanitarian service nor create a dependency that would render them passive. We want to be a consciousness-raising force and encourage them to take on their own responsibilities. This is how they can become the initiators of their human and Christian development and evangelizers of their own milieu.

- In the children's workshop, the children come freely and choose their activities: puzzles, reading, drawing, cutting-out, gluing, table games, etc... By doing things together, they learn to respect one another, to lend, to share, to be honest in games, to maintain order, to think of others, to know Jesus and make Him known in their families.
- In the youth group, we try to make them aware of responsibilities at their level and in keeping with the mission here.
- We accompany a group of women as they become increasingly aware of their feminine and Christian values in order to become better teachers and evangelizers at home.

- At the College we are part of the teaching staff to update the pedagogy in order to form men and women who will be more free.
- We participate in the formation of delegates of the Word and of catechists who will be able to provide this service in their milieu.

THE MISSION CARRIED OUT BY THE POOR, AMONG THE POOR

Those who come to us for what we have, we send back to their own resources by making them discover the value of their creativity. We concentrate our leadership efforts in the community on fostering the free, conscious and responsible participation of all members, the maintenance of what they all have in common, the education of their children and the Christian education of each and everyone. Many of them react to the change of attitude by refusing it. They neither understand nor accept that we are no longer an NGO (non-governmental organization) and it seems that few of them expect of the missionaries the light of the Gospel to guide their daily lives... They don't yet believe in themselves, in their possibilities of being agents of social transformation and of participation to the liberation and inculturation of the Gospel.

As Jesus chose His apostles among the poor, we firmly believe that today,

He wants the poor of Huancarani to be His disciples spreading the Good News in their own milieu. We feel that the Spirit is at work in everyone in their hearts and we try to listen to Him attentively with the different groups we facilitate, so that all of them may join in His plan of action from which agents will certainly emerge for the mission here and abroad. □

*Isabel Ayala, M.I.C.,
Leticia Dotollo, M.I.C.,
and Rita Ostiguy, M.I.C.*

A REALISTIC AD

Among our community priorities, the focus on women is often emphasized. A ministry of the promotion of women is being developed in the different environments in which we live and work. The Pius XII radio station of Bolivia headed by the Oblate Fathers runs a very meaningful ad-type message: "Do you work? - No, I don't. - Then what do you do? - Well, Sir, I get up at 4.30 in the morning, I prepare my husband's breakfast because he leaves very early. After that, I hurry up and get the children ready for school. Then, I get down to house cleaning, washing, grocery shopping... By the end of the day, I haven't had a moment to sit and rest. - But, Madame, how can you say that you do not work?" Why are only the women who get a salary considered to be working?... Isn't this the case of so many women of all countries?

THE CONDITION OF WOMEN AND LITTLE GIRLS

In Cochabamba, about thirty young girls enroll each year at our Institute for Rural Education (IER). They learn sewing, knitting, weaving, hygiene, then continue their academic education and receive a formation which enables them to participate in the organization of their community. In Huancarani and the surrounding areas where I work, many groups of women meet every week. They analyze their daily work, their role in the family and community, they reflect on their dignity as women and on the values they convey to others. Gardens and small greenhouses spring up here and there

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A GIFT OF THE HEART

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Missionary Sisters of the
Immaculate Conception

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HEARTFELT THANKS



*Women become more
and more conscious of
their dignity*

aiming to improve
the eating habits and
thereby the health of
the family.

These small vil-
lages into which we
come to live and to which we travel
by jeep or by foot for lack of roads,
are somewhat like Nazareth. What
good can there be here? These peo-
ple are ignored even by their broth-
ers and sisters of Bolivia, they have
no access to international news and
are sometimes not even aware of the
existence of other nations in this
vast world. The women are poor and
there are intolerable consequences
for them and their children. Oftentimes, the only schooling little
girls ever get is the first two grades
of primary school, the only ones
available in their village. The father
of the family does not accept his lit-
tle girl going away from home to
pursue her studies; it is better for her
to tend the small flock of sheep as a
shepherdess. International organiza-
tions spend large amounts of money
to teach reading and writing to
adults, but they forget to direct pro-
grams to young people, who make
up a large majority of the population
of Bolivia. Wouldn't it be preferable
that women learn how to read and
write at a normal age?



Sr. Rita Ostiguy with children in the workshop

UNEXPECTED EFFECTS

Despite all these deficiencies, here
as elsewhere, we live in a time when
Bolivian peasant women too long for
bread and roses. They are entering
into new avenues. Silent, wise, coura-
geous and perseverant, they are still
living in a sort of winter, when the
earth seems lifeless, and yet is prepar-
ing for the approaching revival of
spring. Yes the shoots of hope are vis-
ible. We are witnesses of this and it is
a joy for us to participate in it. What
a blessing it is to share in the richness
of this world of women!

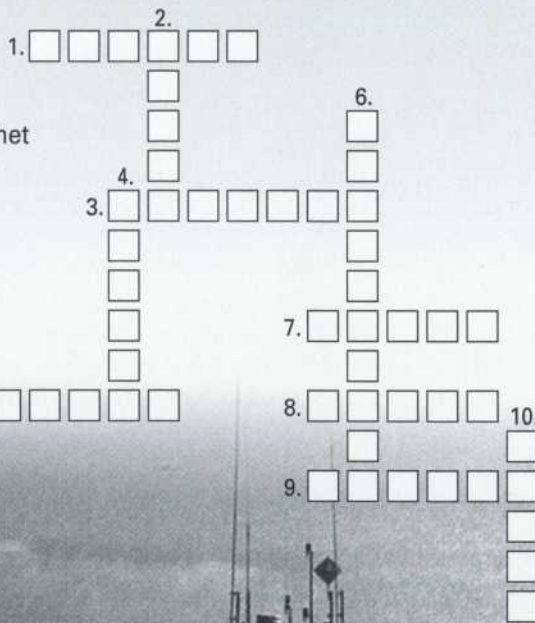
WOMEN OF BOLIVIA YOU ARE THE PRIDE
OF YOUR COUNTRY
NOT ONLY IN TIMES PAST
WHEN YOUR HEROIC COURAGE SAVED THE
COUNTRY,
BUT EQUALLY TODAY
AND ALSO TOMORROW.
CARRY YOUR RESPONSIBILITY
FAITHFULLY.
ALWAYS SPEAK OF HOPE,
GIVE BIRTH TO A DIFFERENT FUTURE. ☐

Elmire Allary, M.I.C.

Photos: E. Allary, M.I.C.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1. Word of God proclaimed by missionaries at home and abroad.
2. Name of a poor man helped by Jessica in Peru.
3. Country where young people will go next May.
4. Host country of the Latin American Missionary Congress.
5. One of the three Latin American countries where M.I.C.'s are present.
6. A city in Bolivia where there is a movement for the promotion of women.
7. Country where the reunion group first knew one another.
8. The third theological virtue, with charity and hope.
9. City where the Prophet Jonas was sent.
10. What is put into the earth to germinate.
 - a) CHILE
 - b) GOSPEL
 - c) BOLIVIA
 - d) PEDRO
 - e) FAITH
 - f) HUANCARANI
 - g) SEEDS
 - h) BRAZIL
 - i) HAITI
 - j) NINIVE



JOY TO YOU
AT THE BEGINNING
OF THE YEAR!
INTERACTION INVITES YOU
TO DO MORE THAN
JUST READ YOUR MAGAZINE;
IT WANTS YOU TO ENJOY,
TO HAVE FUN WITH IT!
QUIZZES OR TESTS,
QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU
REFLECT WITH YOUR
SHARING GROUP
OR WITH YOUR FAMILY...
THE MENU IS VARIED
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!

"MISSION" SHARING

1. During the Latin American Missionary Congress, it was said that the hour had come for the Church in this continent to share its faith with brothers and sisters of the world who do not know Jesus Christ. Bishop Tomko reminded everyone that "faith is reinforced when it is given".
 - Do you know people here who have answered the call to bring the Good News to another country, to go and share the treasure of their heart with joy?
 - In your environment, are there Christians who help their brothers and sisters in need?
 - How can you help with the mission of Jesus here or in other places?
 - For meditation and sharing: "Come, See and Proclaim" (center pages) and "All are Called" (back cover).
2. Do you know the story of Jonas? You may read it in the Bible in the Book of Jonas.

In "Jonas, the Great Adventure at Sea", Christian Beaulieu applies this text to your every day life. Read it again.

 - Have you ever felt a very strong call within you, such as "Get up, I need you". How did you respond? Can you describe your experience... of trust? of fear?
 - A mission, the Mission, what does that mean to you? What great desire do you nourish in your heart? How will you go about making it come true?
 - Out of the faith and eagerness of your heart, say a personal prayer to the Holy Spirit.

**Enjoy reading your magazine
and have a good sharing!**

MYSTERY PICTURE

Very large
cetaceous
mammal.
What am I?

Answer on page 31



NEWSBRIEFS...

Photo: Nicolas D.



The chaplain teachers and former students of the Cap-Haitien Normal School, meet at the Mother House in Outremont.

CANADA - HAÏTI

A JOYFUL REUNION

Last August, a dream came true for a group of former students of the Cap-Haitien Normal School: a reunion with their M.I.C. teachers in Montreal. The organizers were: Mrs Josette Mathieu, Mrs Cécile Fabien and Mrs Zulma Louis. Mrs Mathieu and Sr. Jeanne Guinois wrote an account of this joyful event.

On August 19, 1995, a special sunshine from Haïti brightened the Mother House of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Around twenty former graduates of the "École Normale du Cap-Haïtien" and some of their M.I.C. teachers had come together! The project was brought from time to time when missionaries would come home on furloughs. Former students now living in Canada and the United States had organized a network, a sign of the deep bonding created in the course of their four years of study at the École Normale. And here we were today! Five came from New York, another happened to be visiting in Montreal. To help identify each one - not an easy task after 35 or 40 years - teachers and former students wore a tag with their old names *.

After exuberant greetings, we assembled in the chapel for the Eucharist presided by Fr Jean-Claude Legault, C.S.C., former chaplain of the École Normale. In his homily, he recalled a few memories of the life of the "normaliennes" and at the Memento, he named the deceased sisters and pupils. Following the celebration, we went to the festive hall where each one contributed memories and anecdotes. After this, each in turn told how she made out since then. Most of them continued their studies at various levels. Several of them have started a home and family and they were proud to tell us about their children and grand-children. They were



The plaque offered to the M.I.C. Sisters who taught at the Normal School.

Photo: T. Lortie, M.I.C.

unanimous in saying that they had found in the formation they received the principles to guide them in their career and in the upbringing of their children.

On the way to the dining room, we gathered in the garden for a picture. A hearty meal of Haitian food was catered in, adding to the delight of the reunion. The feast culminated in the presentation of a bouquet of 22 roses to Sr. Blandine Massé to symbolize the twenty-two M.I.C. Sisters who have worked at the École Normale from 1952 to 1964. A commemorative plaque was also presented as a token of gratitude. What a wonderful day! □

* The following directors and teachers participated in the reunion: Srs. Cécile Pilon, Marie-Thérèse Laperrière, Jeanne d'Arc Nolin, Marguerite Cloutier, Gemma De Grandpré, Françoise Massicotte, Denise Beaudouin, Blandine Massé and Jeanne Guinois. Sr. Léa Nelson was also present as a former pupil of Mrs. Josette Mathieu.

CANADA

40TH ANNIVERSARY IN OTTAWA

Last October 8, the Chinese Catholic Community of Ottawa celebrated the 40th anniversary of its foundation with a thanksgiving mass at Our Lady of the Assumption Church at Vanier, attended by several hundred people. Archbishop Marcel Gervais graciously accepted to preside over this festive Sunday Eucharist. In his homily, he recalled the steps marking the history of the Chinese



40th Anniversary in Ottawa: Fr Bosco Wong, Sr. Nina Ennis and Chinese friends.

Catholic Community in this city, to whom the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate-Conception have been associated since 1955.

That year, the Sisters had asked permission from the diocesan authorities to visit Chinese families in Ottawa. Permission being granted, they rented a small house on Bronson St. On October 11, three Sisters and Miss Alice Wong, a lay companion from Canton, started their work among the Chinese. This day is considered as the birth-date of the Chinese Catholic Community. In 1960, to cope with the continuous development, the Sisters bought a larger property at 30 Goulburn St. where various services became available to Chinese university students from overseas and for the religious and social celebrations of Chinese Catholics. In 1984, the ordination of a Chinese priest from the community, Rev. Bosco Wong, marked the beginning of modern times. When he returned from studies in Rome in 1991, he was put in charge of the Chinese parish and the Center was transferred to Our Lady of the Assumption Church.

The list of Sisters who were assigned to the Chinese Center in Ottawa is quite long. Several of them have gone to their reward or were not able to attend the 40th anniversary celebrations. But Sr. Nina Ennis, who was Directress for twenty years was there, as well as Sr. Marie-Reine Trudeau who stayed almost as long. Sr. Maria Vie Chua, Assistant General, Sr. Cecilia Hong, in charge of pastoral care at the University of Ottawa for many years, and Sr. Huguette Turcotte who also lived there, joined the happy parishioners. It was during the banquet that guests and well-wishers expressed their gratitude to all those who contributed to the founding and development of the Ottawa Chinese Center, and especially to the M.I.C. Sisters.

PHILIPPINES

CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Sr. Elizabeth Relacion, M.I.C. and Rev. Pierre Samson, P.M.E., both from the Malita Tagakaulo Mission, were members of the Philippines delegation to the Conference on "Evangelization Among Indigenous People of Asia" held in Thailand from September 3rd to 8th, 1995. Organized by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), the event was attended by 45 delegates - bishops, priests, religious and lay people - belonging to indigenous groups or working with indigenous people in Asia. Through workshops and discussions, they shared their experiences, problems and aspirations concerning the culture, traditional religions, Christian worship, social marginalization and aspects of evangelization for the future.

Involved in the Tagakaulo apostolate for many years, Sr. Elizabeth writes: "I was struck by the similarity of the problems experienced by indigenous people all over Asia. While the situations of the countries differ, the social marginalization of indigenous people is a prevailing issue everywhere. However, the concern and interest shown by the Church to dialogue with the traditional religions and the evident dedication and commitment of religious, missionary and lay communities to respond to the needs of indigenous people are signs of hope. We are faced with the challenge of a "new" evangelization and I am aware of my responsibility as I go out to the indigenous people to whom I am sent. Do I control, determine or design programs for them or do I help to create an approach that will help them to be self-reliant and empower them to determine their own future?" □



Elizabeth Relacion, M.I.C. (left) and Pierre Samson, P.M.E. (right) at the Conference on Indigenous Cultures in Thailand, September 1995.

In the Glory of the Risen Lord

Photo: M.-H. Roy, m.i.c.



**Sister Marie-Thérèse Sansfaçon
(Saint-Tharcisius)**

Having retired in Pont-Viau - at the Délia-Tétreault Pavilion and then at the infirmary, Sr. Marie-Thérèse, 86, was always deeply happy. She left repeating in jest: "I'll get in heaven without any fuss" (*sans façon*). And on May 19, 1995 she surrendered her life peacefully to the Lord.

Born in Charlesbourg on September 8, 1907, the youngest of a family of seven, Marie-Thérèse was surrounded with warm affection by her loved ones. Her deeply Christian milieu favoured the development of her religious and missionary vocation. She joined the M.I.C. in 1930 and quickly she made her mark by her unfailing dedication. She accomplished various community tasks: cooking, refectorian, sewing, serving the retreatants in our houses of Outremont, Québec, Trois-Rivières, Rimouski, Granby and Marlborough in U.S.A. In this last place, she excelled in maintaining a sewing workshop for the missions and gave free expression to her creativity. Her working career culminated at the Chinese Center in Ottawa: this was her mission land. Always active, in Quebec where she celebrated her 80th birthday, she still made good use of her literary talents. She loved to express herself in poems of her own.

Overjoyed, she wrote in 1992: "May every hour that remains of my life be an uninterrupted hymn of thanksgiving". Now, in an eternal Magnificat with Mary, Sr. Marie-Thérèse continues forever her life of Thanksgiving. □



**Sister Berthe Crevier
(Marie-Emmanuel)**

Born in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue on January 9, 1904, Sr. Berthe joined our Institute at the age of 24. She was 28 when she left for Manchuria, where she made her final commitment. Working in health services and being in authority in a few of our houses, she experienced along with her sisters, the difficulties of the war, invasions, imprisonment, and left China in 1950. She was then assigned to Hong Kong as regional superior for eight years, then to the Philippines in various capacities. Having returned to Canada for good in 1972, she devoted herself to apostolic services among the Chinese until 1982. She then lived at the Seniorate of Pont-Viau.

Sr. Berthe is remembered as a very welcoming woman. Her easy going manner and her spirit of discernment greatly helped her in all her tasks. Gifted with a cheerful disposition, a creative mind and a great sense of humour, she would give her companions occasions to tease and laughed along with them. However, she never tolerated words that could sadden or hurt anyone. Even after her retirement, she remained in good spirits and still saw the bright side in everything. For her, "all things were a blessing", as she liked to repeat after Saint Thérèse of the Child-Jesus. Her confidence in Providence was great and her favorite prayer was the Our Father, "the most beautiful and delectable of all prayers", she said. On June 7, 1995, at the age of 91, she very simply surrendered her full and laborious life to her loving Father. □

Jeanne Guinois, M.I.C.

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INTERACTION: ANSWER OF PAGE 27:

CROSSWORD PUZZLE: 1H, 2C, 3J, 4B, 5G, 6F, 7D, 8A, 9E, 10I

MYSTERY PICTURE: HUMPBAC WHALE



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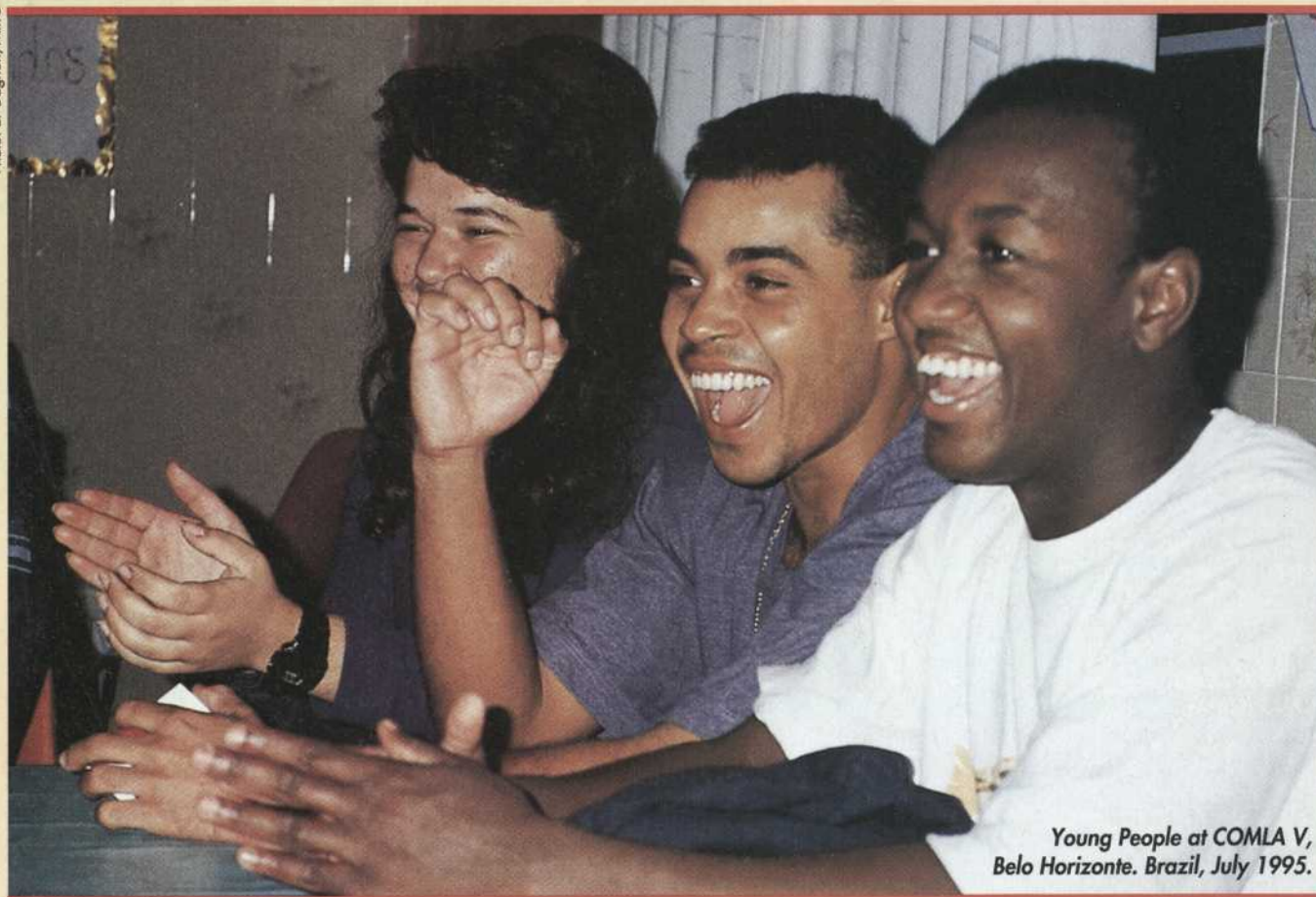
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Photo: E. Gagnon, M.I.C.



Young People at COMLA V,
Belo Horizonte. Brazil, July 1995.

*Continent of hope in the past, the time has come for Latin America to be the
"Continent of Missionary Hope"*

Come, See and Proclaim!

*Lord Jesus, Good Shepherd and our Brother,
You came to live among us
to be a way of life and hope for all (...)
Renew in all Christians
of the "Continent of Missionary Hope"
the availability to follow You and to meet You
in the diversity of cultures,
in response to your call: Come, See and Proclaim!*

*Send the gifts of your Spirit
on our ecclesial communities
that numerous missionary vocations may bud forth.
Strengthen the faith of those who are sent
to proclaim the Gospel to all nations.
So that people of all races and tongues,
united in Jesus Christ
may become one in your praise. Amen.*

Excerpt from the Prayer for the Fifth Latin American Missionary Congress

**DOES THE LIFE OF A RELIGIOUS OR LAY MISSIONARY INTEREST YOU?
DO YOU WISH TO DISCERN THE LORD'S CALL WITHIN YOU?
CONTACT THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.**