

MIC MISSION NEWS

MARCH-APRIL 1996



FOLLOW-UP OF THE AFRICAN SYNOD

MIC MISSION NEWS

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DIRECTRESS:

Louise Denis, M.I.C.

EDITOR:

Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

MEMBERS, EDITORIAL TEAM:

Ma. Anthea Raso, M.I.C.

Micheline Marcoux, M.I.C.

Helene Labelle, M.I.C.

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR:

Christian Beaulieu

SECRETARY:

Christine Desrochers

ACCOUNTING:

Päquerette Gauthier, M.I.C.

PROMOTION:

Alice Mills, M.I.C.

M.I.C. and Lay Team

CIRCULATION:

Véronique Bernatchez, M.I.C.

M.I.C. and Lay Team

TRANSLATOR:

Antoinette Kinlough

INFOGRAPHIST:

Christiane Beaulieu

FILM STRIPPING:

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MIC MISSION NEWS

P.O. Box 157

Stn Laval-des-Rapides

Laval, Qc, Canada

H7N 4Z4

TELEPHONE:

(514) 663-6460

FAX:

(514) 663-1522

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Near Lake Malawi
at Sunrise

CENTER PAGES:

Lake Malawi

PAGES 22-23:

A road bordered by
baobab trees,
Madagascar

Photos: S. Dupuis, M.I.C.

SPRINGTIME AND RENEWAL

By the time our readers get this issue of MIC MISSION NEWS, springtime will be just around the corner. How exciting it will be to hail the return of the season when nature wakes up, buds burst open and hope for renewal gets all hearts singing after a long period of dormancy!

Our magazine presents herein countries of Africa where our Sisters are, in relation to the Synod of Bishops for Africa and the islands of the Indian Ocean, which was held last year in Rome. This was a historic event for these young Churches living in a springtime as filled with hope as that which drives us, here, to open our windows as we emerge from the winter. Isn't this what Pope John XXIII invited us to do when he wanted to blow the dust off his Church, as it were, by calling a Council? His successors have continued his work by "cleaning house" once in a while, this time through a Synod. The pages that follow reflect this event lived recently by the Bishops of Africa.

Many dioceses "joined together in the march", as the word synod exactly means. They either lived or are now living this experience of revision, of questioning, of adjustment... a real upheaval of the old habits! Their serious effort to reach the people of our times in their faith concerns, in their responsibilities as Christian men and women in a world that is increasingly secularized - this effort strikes a sensitive chord among young people who wish for the Church to let all its members play an active part and to allow spring to come inside its walls!

What a cool breath of fresh air it is for the countries of Africa to rediscover the richness of their apostolic



roots! In the very first pages of the Gospel we see a family of political refugees fleeing to Egypt, people we know well... Joseph, Mary and Jesus! The scene immediately calls to our minds the exodus which hundreds of thousands of refugees are experiencing today in Africa. The voice of one of our Sisters in service among Rwandan children echoes the suffering of this great flood of people. Perhaps a few young people - and others not so young - will hear through these events a call to put into deep water and to make the desert bloom... wherever they are, wherever the Lord sends them!

This year marks 75 years since the Bishops of Quebec established the Foreign Mission Society, thus fulfilling one of the great dreams of Délia Tétreault. After founding her own Institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, in 1902, she continued in her apostolic zeal to discreetly try to persuade the Bishops to found a Canadian Seminary devoted to the evangelization of peoples. The anecdote of the providential meeting of the Foundress with the first recruit over a cup of coffee is recalled in an article written as a homage to our brothers, the priests of the Foreign Mission Society.

The Bishops of Africa and Madagascar spoke of a Synod of Resurrection, of a Synod of Hope. This is the message you will find in these pages, one of Resurrection and Hope, as we wish everyone that the joy of Easter morning may continue in the reality of every day life! □

Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

FIRST FRUITS OF THE AFRICAN SYNOD



Antananarivo, capital of Madagascar - On top of the hill, the Queen's Castle, a national monument destroyed by fire last fall.

Photo: S. Jean, M.I.C.

IN COLLABORATION

In April 1994 the Synod for Africa and the islands of the Indian Ocean was held in Rome. It had as its theme: *The Church in Africa and its mission of evangelization towards the year 2000*. The Fathers of the Synod described it as a Synod of resurrection and hope. Last September, Pope John Paul II went to Cameroon, South Africa and Kenya to celebrate this event and present his apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (The Church in Africa). One year later, has this Synod produced any fruit? Using documents from their respective Churches, Charline Zafisoa, M.I.C. of Madagascar and Jeannine Forcier, M.I.C. of Malawi and Zambia describe for us the first fruits of this Synod.

Some called it the *African Synod*, others the *Synod of Africa* or else the *Roman Synod for Africa*. The Pope spoke of a *Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Africa*. Many had great expectations and hopes; others remained passive all through the process. Now at last we are beginning to reap the first fruits of this very significant event.

A NEW START FOR EVANGELIZATION

Last October in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, a celebration was held in thanksgiving for the Synod for Africa and Madagascar. Following the official launching of

this Synod, Bishop Jean-Guy Rakotondravahatra, president of the Episcopal Conference of Madagascar (CEM), aptly challenged in his homily the Church of Antananarivo, eldest daughter of the Church of Madagascar, to communicate its flame and enthusiasm to the eighteen dioceses of the Island:

"How are we to witness to the hope that is in us and to communicate it to others - for this is the missionary vocation of every Christian - the very one we celebrate on this World Mission Sunday. (...) The Church of Madagascar is called, as



are all the dioceses of Africa and of the islands of the Indian Ocean, to live in an exceptional manner a marvellous time of grace and joy."

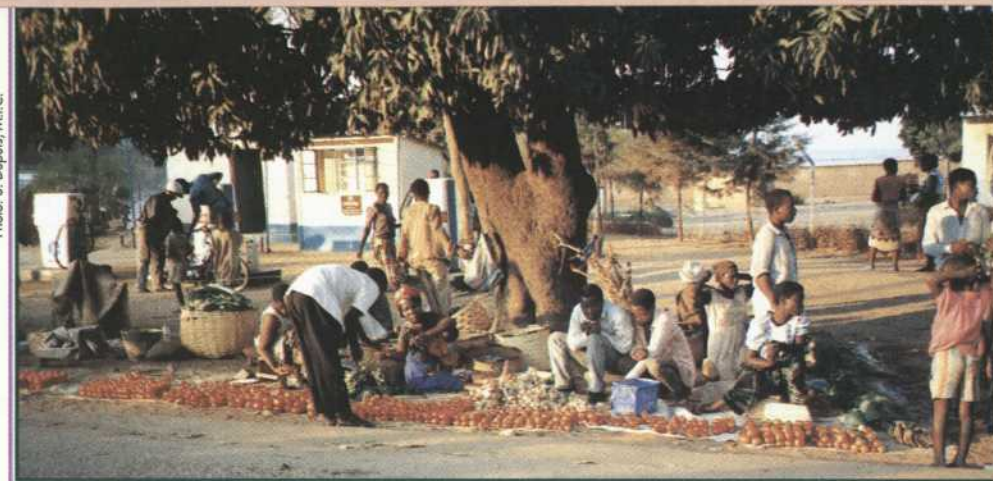
In a conference subsequent to this celebration, Bishop Fulgence Rabeony, secretary general of the CEM, developed the impact of the Synod in Madagascar, stressing the strong points that are likely to raise hope and to give evangelization a new start. Christians are invited to re-examine their own attitudes, to effect an in-depth revision of the way they have been living the Gospel in order to make a new start with the awareness of the challenges of our times. A National Synod in 1998, a Eucharistic Congress and the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 are some of the events being planned for the future.

In a letter to the nation also dated last October, the Bishops once more challenged all Christians to take on their responsibilities in view of the urgency of a national redress at all levels. It is a matter of social justice. There is a need to move from words to action and to fight against the evils which threaten the life of the nation. This letter is an invitation to the people to take charge of the destiny of their country and to unite in service after the example of the Lord.

"How do we, Malagasy Christians, whether laity, religious or priests, in the context which is ours, take seriously our mission as bearers of life and hope?... The involvement of Christians should be a more powerful leaven of society at all levels... it should be the salt of the earth and the light of the world."

TO ERADICATE POVERTY

The Bishops of AMECEA (Association of the Episcopal Conferences of East Africa: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia and Zambia) held their twelfth plenary assembly last August in Mangochi, Malawi. In the light of the Synod for Africa, they reflected on the role of the Church in integral development. They noted that growing poverty in



Malawi - Shopping day in Nkhata Bay - An appeal was made to all to improve the quality of life of African society.

Africa disrupts society and that economic programmes have brought improvement only to a small section of the population. Many young people are becoming bitter and desperate, leading to social evils such as crime and drug abuse. They also stated that democracy calls for economic development and made an appeal to all to join their forces, efforts and talents together to build self-help schemes to alleviate and eradicate poverty. At the end of their assembly, the Bishops presented the people with a message and a plan of action which is to be the guiding light for the commitment of the Church in East Africa in the years to come.

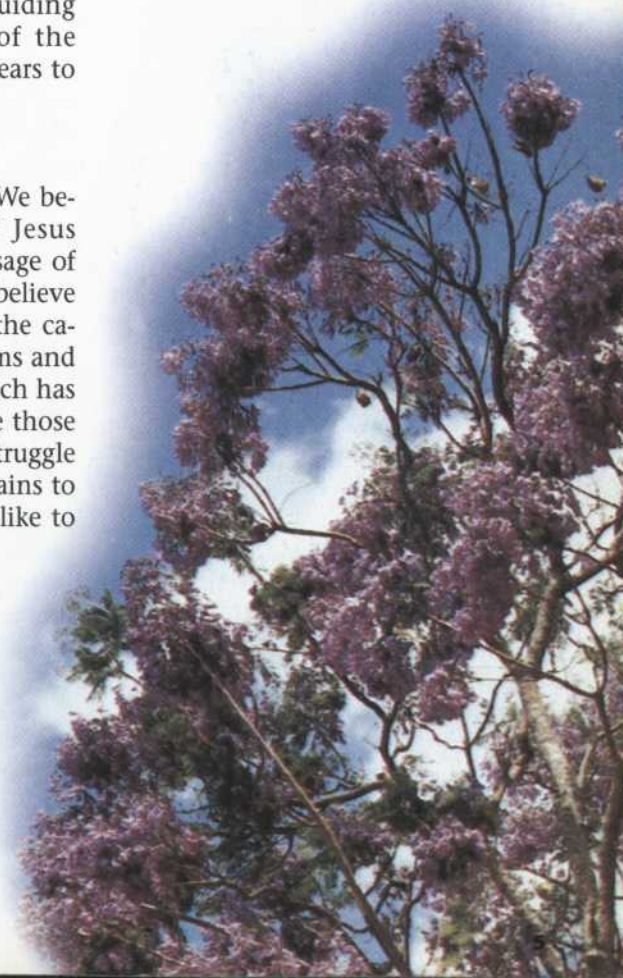
AN APPEAL TO ALL

"We are a people of hope. We believe in the Good News of Jesus Christ who brought us a message of liberation and hope. We also believe that we have the power and the capacity to face our own problems and to seek solutions for them. Much has been achieved... We encourage those who are committed to the struggle against social evils. Much remains to be done. Therefore we would like to appeal:

- *To all of you living in the villages or in the neighbourhoods of our towns:* help one another at the local level, without waiting for higher authority to come with government assistance.
- *To all communities:* to join forces and use your talents to build co-operatives and other self-help schemes to alleviate and eradicate poverty.
- *To all in local government:* to really assist the local communities and not to treat them as objects or ignorant agents.

Africa and Madagascar - Jacaranda tree in bloom

Photo: S. Leclair, M.I.C.



- *To all professional people:* You who have been given a chance to obtain skills, look upon your knowledge not only as a means to enrich yourselves, but see your profession as a gift to society.
- *To you, our pastoral collaborators:* to live in these times of distress in solidarity with our people. Be near them, ready to listen to their problems and give a word of encouragement and hope. Especially, we must mobilise our Christian communities for development and lead them through the example of our own dedication and hard work
- *To all leaders:* We appeal to all of you who are in positions of decision-making to be true leaders of your people... This position and power is not your property. Do not make money or power the aim of your leadership.
- *To the international community:* Our region needs your help to solve our problems..."

TO STRIVE FOR A CHURCH-AS-FAMILY

In response to the appeal of the Synod, training weekends were held at the beginning of 1995 in Lusaka, Zambia, to provide the laity with a serious formation in view of their evangelization role in the Church. Among the topics addressed at these weekends were the various models of Church, the styles of leadership, the new evangelization and the role of the laity in these Churches.

At the annual assembly of the *National Council of the Laity* held in Zambia in March 1995, the 80 delegates representing the nine Dioceses of the country and a dozen lay movements came to a consensus on the necessity to build up and to strengthen the small faith communities (SCC) of the various Dioceses. They endorsed the new vision of *Church-as-Family* promoted during the African Synod. The pastoral

Photo: M.I.C., Zambia



Zambia - Mr. and Mrs. Yambani Phiri, involved in working with couples and families, attending a session in Rome in 1994.

Kanyanga Mission, Zambia - The villagers of Vilimukulu built this house to welcome the Sisters.



Photo: S. Dupuis, M.I.C.

priority in this country revolves around *small faith communities* in light of the inculturated model of *Church-as-Family* and around the formation of evangelization agents according to this vision.

TO BE CONVERTED TO MINISTRY OF SERVICE

(...) While the pastoral orientation of the Synod is bearing fruit, the challenges it entails for clergy, religious and laity are numerous. *To live a more inculturated and participatory model of Church-as-Family* is a major challenge for all, but it refers to the wisdom of the ancestors expressed by the proverb: "One head cannot carry a roof". If *Church-as-Family* is to become a reality, a communion, then clergy, religious and lay people have to sit down together as a family to discern and plan how to bring the Good News to the people of Africa so oppressed by war, sickness and economic hardship. The image of *family* will have to be purified so that the Father may no longer be the dominator, the mother the subservient one and the children stifled by fear. The family has to be evangelized so that each member may be given his or her rightful place. This will call for reconciliation at all levels and a healing of relationships in consistence with the Church's mission in the world. Authority must be seen as service rather than control.

Fr. Des O'Brien, National Chaplain for Laity in Zambia, summarized the challenge made to the priests as follows:

"We priests have the very serious responsibility today of helping lay people deal with our changing times through appropriate formation and training. This will necessarily involve adopting a much more collaborative role in the Christian community than we traditionally were used to. It will be painful. It demands a dying to self and to our former self-image. We must relinquish our controlling power over communities. Jesus told us that Christians must not *lord it over each other* but become the *servants of all*. There is a beautiful proverb from the people of the East which says: *If you want to be a light, you must endure the burning*. Let us not fail the Church nor the people of Africa. □

Excerpts: Report of the official launching of the post-Synodal era in Madagascar.

Letter of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Madagascar to all the nation's leaders.

Appeal to the nation, CEM 1995

Impact, newsletter of the Catholic Secretariate of Zambia, March / August 1995.

Conference of Bishops of Malawi and Message of the Bishops of AMECEA, August 1995.

*Pray
the Lord
of the
Harvest*

*Lord, you have willed to save men
and have founded the Church
as a communion of brothers and sisters
united in your Love.*

*Continue to walk in our midst
and call those whom you have chosen
to be the voice of your Holy Spirit
and leaven of a more just and fraternal society.*

*Obtain for us from the heavenly Father the spiritual guide,
which our communities need:
true priests of the living God
who, illuminated by your Word,
will be able to speak of you
and teach others to speak with you.
Make your Church grow
by means of a flourishing of consecrated persons,
who will give all things over to you
so that you might save all.*

*May our communities celebrate the Eucharist
in song and praise, as thanksgiving
to your glory and goodness,
and may they know how to walk the paths of the world
to communicate joy and Peace,
precious gifts of your salvation.*

*Look, O Lord, upon the whole human family
and show your mercy to the men and women
who in prayer and righteous living
seek you without yet having encountered you:
show yourself to them as the way which leads to the Father
as the truth which makes us free,
as the life which has no end.*

*Grant to us, Lord, to live in your Church
in a spirit of faithful service and of total gift,
so that our witness
will be credible and bear fruit. Amen! □*

John Paul II

Message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, April 28, 1996

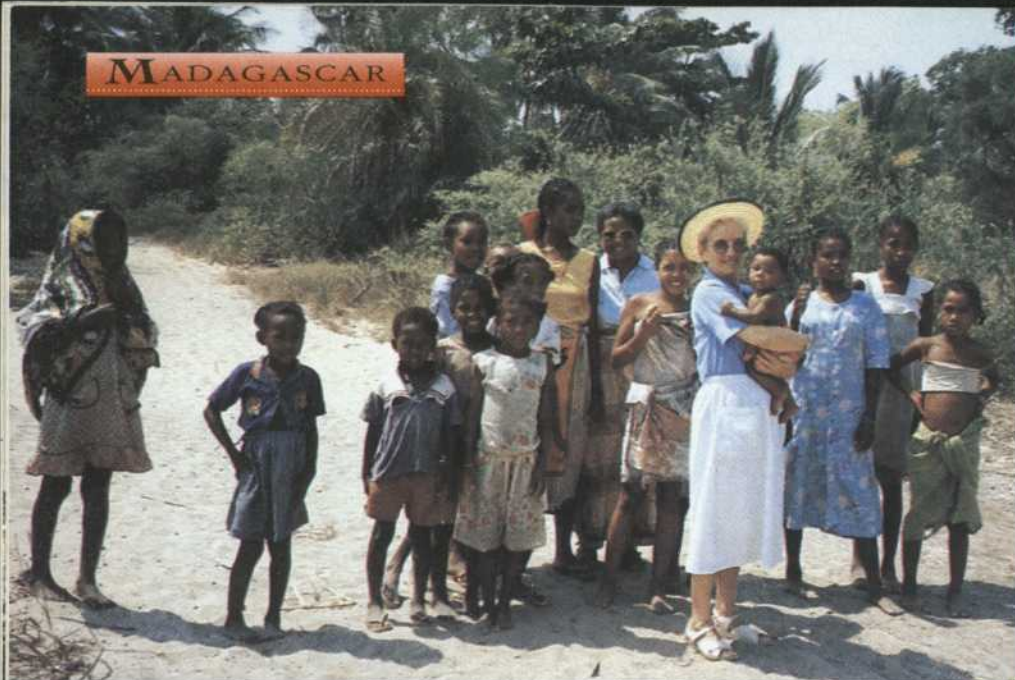


Photo: S. Dupuis, M.I.C.

Immersed Among a People

Sr. Jeanne Desclos, Provincial Superior, (1st row) visiting in the village of Antsakamerohaka (West Coast) where Sr. Francine Ravaorilala (3rd row, center) and the M.I.C. postulants work in a non-Christian milieu.

BY JEANNE DESCLOS, M.I.C.

After being present in Madagascar for more than forty years, what are the activities of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (M.I.C.) today? The socio-economic situation of the large island of Madagascar is ridden by problems and the Malagasy people long for better days. The Church strives to form Christians who are conscious of their responsibility to transform their social environment. Sr. Jeanne Desclos, Provincial Superior in Madagascar, describes the areas of commitment of the M.I.C.'s among a people rich in ancestral values and as part of a Church which is more and more missionary.

In Madagascar, relief and development organizations are numerous. We, the M.I.C.'s, also work for development with several of these groups. But we do so necessarily in keeping with our M.I.C. mission, that is by putting the emphasis on evangelization. In the midst of a people athirst for freedom, truth and communion, we wish to make known Jesus Christ the Liberator and to develop the missionary ideals. There is no lack of work to do! And we are conscious that this evangelization must begin with us personally and in community.

religious values. Our work, which is of many kinds at all levels, allows us to participate actively in this project, a vital one for the future of the country, by training men and women to be conscious of their responsibilities.

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL MINISTRY

Christian education is an important part of our apostolic commitments. We are in charge of three schools (primary and secondary) of more than 1,000 students each. With the cooperation of parents, teachers and students, we are trying to promote the living out and the growth of Gospel values through catechesis, various movements and the witness of the educational team. Several M.I.C.'s are involved in the formation of teachers; together with other congregations we established a Catholic Institute of Pedagogy; there are also Saturday courses, sessions, retreats and group gatherings. Sr. Estelle Fontaine continues to work full time at the Center of ongoing education

Photo: S. Jean, M.I.C.



Education remains a priority for the M.I.C.'s in Madagascar. Mariette Provencher, M.I.C., has been a teacher at the school of Tsaramasay for many years.

The urgent call by our Bishops that Christians make their contribution to the rebuilding of the nation requires a change of mentality, a priority among ethical and



At the Center for adult education in Tsamarasay, Estelle Fontaine, M.I.C., and her team help to train men and women to take on their responsibilities.

for adults: tutoring, formation sessions for educators, library, courses and tutoring in two large seminaries. Sr. Jeannine Lavallée also teaches Christology at the Seminary of Antsirabe.

Like other southern countries, Madagascar is presently experiencing great economic problems. How can we help the people to pull through? As our Bishops said, "we want to promote dignity and solidarity to help those who are poor in hope to become the agents of their own development". Education is the most durable way. We also work in the social ministry, for the advancement of women and in literacy programmes together with different groups in Ambohibary, Ivandry, the Mahereza Social Center and in Tsaramasay. Attention to women and children is a priority.

INITIAL EVANGELIZATION AND MISSIONARY ANIMATION

The Church of Madagascar is opening more and more to the Universal Church and sharing in its turn the gifts of faith that it has received. The awareness it has of its missionary vocation is an evident sign of maturity. The *ad extra* mission is also for Malagasy M.I.C. Sisters. For ten years Sr. Catherine Raveronomenjanahary has been working in Cuba; Sr. Marie-Charline Zafisoa spent three years in that country before being recalled for missionary animation here and Sr. Rosalie Raivomanana now devotes her time in Malawi.

In faithfulness to the charism of Délia Tétreault, we wish to prioritize

the initial evangelization from the earliest stage of religious formation of our members. Thus our postulants with their director, Sr. Francine Ravaoarilala, go and spend ten days each month in the bush in a non-Christian milieu. The people are encouraged by their thirst for God and for prayer to accept cheerfully the inconveniences of yet unstable living conditions. In Morondava and Antsirabe, we are preparing adults for Baptism. In everyone of our stations, we try to reach the non-evangelized. The work of raising missionary awareness is also a special M.I.C. commitment. In addition to making it part of our pastoral activities in the school and in the parish, Sr. Marie-Charline Zafisoa is responsible for the *Enfance Missionnaire* (Holy Childhood) on the national level.

SHARING OUR LIFE AND SPIRITUALITY

To attain these objectives, we see the necessity of adequate formation of the young women wishing to share our common life and our missionary charism. We presently have four novices, 3 postulants and 26 aspirants. We are full of hope! We invest in the professional formation of the young sisters: social assistance, nursing courses, Normal School, psychology, religious studies, catechesis, administration, etc.

We are more and more committed to involving lay people. Quite a few have shown a desire to share in the spirituality of thanksgiving with a Marian and missionary thrust which



Bertine Razanadrasoa, M.I.C., teaches cutting and sewing at the Women's Center in Ambohibary.



Joy is part of the day's agenda! M.I.C. scholastics surround Sr. Françoise de Varennes, M.I.C., who was then in charge of formation in Antsirabe.

is proper to our Institute. Three groups of Associates (ASMIC) came to life in Morondava (1987), in Antsirabe (1990) and in Antananarivo (1991). These ASMIC develop a deeper consciousness of the missionary dimension of their Baptism and commit themselves to work within the Church in areas such as pastoral counselling, visiting and bringing communion to the sick, visiting prisoners, etc., in addition to ensuring a meaningful presence in the work place.

TOGETHER

We are a small group: 36 sisters - 21 Malagasies, 1 Haitian, 14 Canadians. Fortunately we are not alone. We feel very strongly the solidarity and the prayers of our Church of origin and of numerous collaborators: lay people, priests and religious of our local Church. Above all, we count on the grace of God: it is He who acts, first, in the heart of all people!

Attentive to the signs of the times, we make the orientations of the African Synod our own, as it brings us towards the great Jubilee celebration of the year 2000, with "the primary objective to reinforce the faith and the witness of Christians". (The Church in Africa, No. 142). □

TAKING ANOTHER STEP

Photo: S. Dupuis, M.I.C.



Entrance of the novices with their parents - meeting Sr. Yvonne Ayotte (r.)

BY JEANNINE FORCIER, M.I.C.

Knowing how to inculcate the faith among a people is one of the challenges the Church must face. Since the Second Vatican Council, some original ways of doing so have been found through a sustained effort on the part of the young Churches and of the missionaries working in them. One example of this is the M.I.C. formation given to the young African sisters. Last March we presented a story about the celebrations of entrance to the M.I.C. postulancy and novitiate in Malawi and Zambia. This year, Sr. Jeannine presents another phase of these Rites of Passage to the novitiate in which local customs are used as symbols of the religious life. Another step... for Cecilia and Ruth.

Chaka lero chaka... Today is a feastday, let us rejoice and be glad! This joyous refrain was sung by the assembly as they danced their way into the M.I.C. Noviciate chapel in Chipata, Zambia. It was the opening song for the Rite of Entry to the M.I.C. Noviciate for Cecilia Mzumara from Malawi and Ruth Nyalazi from Zambia.

Commenting on the Gospel reading (Mk 3, 13-14) which told the story of the call of the Apostles, Mr. Patrick Nyalazi, father of Ruth, shared his personal reflection with reference to the call of his daughter and her companion. He said that the call to the religious life is a call to an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ in faith. It requires deep love, patience, and generosity. He added that to be a real apostle, one must learn to serve at a cost to oneself.

RITE OF PASSAGE

This was followed by the Rite of Passage proper. Mr. and Mrs. Nyalazi, Mrs. Mzumara and her daughter Christine went to the back of the chapel to get Ruth and Cecilia. Then all walked up the aisle to meet Sr. Yvonne Ayotte, directress of postulants. The parents handed their

daughters over to her and Sr. Yvonne in turn led them to Sr. Yolanda Oducado, directress of novices. The postulants knelt down while Sr. Yolanda placed a *nkhat* (small round cushion) on the head of each one to symbolize the support she is to give everyone along her journey. She then placed an empty basket on top of the *nkhat*. The *citete*, a special basket, is used in the home as a storage container for all kinds of food: flour, rice, beans, dried vegetables. In this Rite of Passage, it symbolized that whatever the novices receive during their two years of novitiate will be stored preciously until the day when they are called to share the contents with all those entrusted to their care. Everyone in the assembly was invited to put something in the basket of each novice as a symbol of life, solidarity, support and assistance for the beginning of the journey. As we proceeded to carry this out, we sang the *Veni Creator Spiritus* in Chitumbuka, the native language of Ruth and Cecilia.

EXHORTATION OF THE MOTHERS

Mrs. Nyalazi and Mrs. Mzumara then admonished their daughters in a way similar to what is done for the initiation of young girls. They reminded them that the vocation to the



Ruth and Cecilia receive the symbolic baskets.

religious life is a gift from God to them, to the parents, to the M.I.C. Institute and to the Church. They advised their daughters to make good use of four tools to assist them on their way: prayer and a special devotion to Mary, Mother of God; trust in Jesus who is Love and who lived, suffered and died for us; obedience and sacrifice; thanksgiving to God at all times, for all is gift.

They recognized that it is a responsibility for the parents to continue praying for their daughters and supporting them in their commitment. They also asked the M.I.C. sisters present to protect, guide and accompany the novices as they strive to



Mrs. Mzumara delivering her exhortation.



The novices: Charity, Cecilia, Victoria and Ruth

come closer to Jesus and to understand the life they are about to embrace. All then rose to dance and sing: *You have agreed to serve the Church, go on with courage!*

BELONGING TO THE M.I.C. FAMILY

In her word of encouragement to Cecilia and Ruth, Sr. Sylvia Dupuis,

Vicar General currently on an official visitation in our Province of Our Lady of Africa, used a Japanese proverb that speaks of "sitting on a stone for three years", a

symbol of the need for perseverance, courage and patience which she wished them wholeheartedly. Immediately afterwards, the two postulants knelt down on their mat for the *Admittance Dialogue*. They answered the questions put to them by Sr. Suzanne Leclair, Provincial Superior, and proceeded to read their

Act of Consecration. They then received their chain and medal of the Immaculate Conception, symbol of their belonging to the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, the white veil, symbol of their entrance into the religious life, and the wooden bedside Cross, symbol of Christ's love for them and of their acceptance of the cross in their lives.

After a warm welcome was extended to the new novices into the community and prayers of thanksgiving were expressed, followed by the singing of a jubilant Magnificat by the whole assembly, all filed out of the chapel singing and dancing to the musical accompaniment provided by an M.I.C. led trio from St. Anne's Homecraft and Leadership Centre. □

NOTES FROM THE NOVICES (EXCERPTS)

On the 1st of October 1995, when I was received as a novice, I was impressed by the Japanese proverb told to us by Sr. Sylvia: "Sitting on a stone for three years"... This means three things: Courage, Perseverance and Trust in God and others, during the entire time of the noviciate and even after. I find this very true indeed and I will need your prayers to really discover and enhance what is God's will for me. I am still journeying with a searching heart. I see this as a dream which is still far from being realised. The future is unpredictable but I live the present moment... full of joy. I believe this would apply to my fellow-novices throughout the globe. We are in need of your support through prayers. Pray for us as we pray for you. God bless and keep you all and may Mary, our Immaculate Mother, and Mother Délia be a fountain of joy and peace wherever we are!

Ruth C. Nyalazi

Missionaries of Love.

Yes, and of Peace and Hope.

Come, Sisters of Délia,

Joy is our song.

Made in Canada, Cuba or Chile,

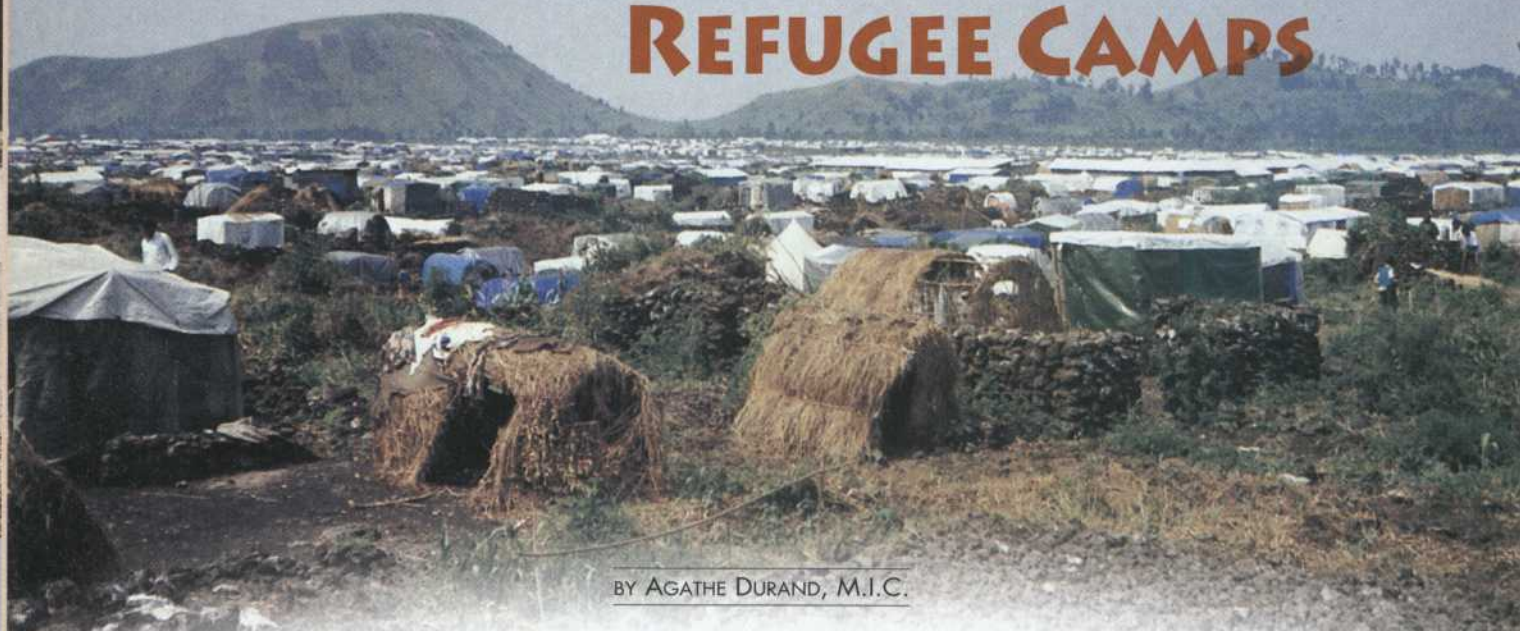
Maybe in Chipata...

We are all over the globe,

Happy Sisters of Délia. □

Cecilia Mzumara

IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS



BY AGATHE DURAND, M.I.C.

Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire... who can forget the human tragedy of this area of the world? In the wake of the genocide of 1994 when thousands of brothers and sisters of Rwanda killed one another, exile is still the daily bread of thousands of refugees in Burundi and Zaire. Sr. Agathe Durand, along with four companions of other communities, has been devoting herself to these refugees since last July in camps located in Bukavu, Zaire. She contributes in a project aimed at rebuilding people which is connected with the Institut de Formation humaine intégrale de Montréal and the Jesuit Refugee Services. This group of well trained people works with local social workers to assist Rwandan children victimized by traumatic experiences. We received a letter in December addressed to all of us, which we share with you with a deep sense of solidarity.

Greetings!

After being in Zaire for three months, I would like to share my experience, my vision, something of my daily routine and to let you know how important your solidarity is to me. As you may already know, the place where I serve is in the vicinity of the great Lake Kivu, in the eastern part of Zaire, near the border of Rwanda. I live in the picturesque city of Bukavu spread out like a hand in the Kivu, a stretch of peninsulas and hills. This means that the least distance you must travel involves going around curves and up and down hills, with a glimpse of the magnificent lake at every turn.

My work in the camps aims at "rebuilding people". Our goal is to implement an educational project or the re-education of children and young people through the intermediary of men and women educators, people giving the children guidance and support and others to provide mediation with the families. My involvement is with adults because I do not yet speak *kinyarwanda*, which is

their language, while they are at ease in French. The camps, whether big or small, are under the supervision of the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (HCR). The internal organization is the responsibility of various NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) such as CARITAS, CARE and others. These organizations call on local or outside aid for the health sector, services to children and other social services. This is how the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) accepted the responsibility of education in the CARITAS camps of Bukavu: continuity and pedagogical quality, infrastructure, financial maintenance, social assistance, religious leadership among children and adults and this aspect of rebuilding people.

Our professional team was put together by the *Institut de Formation humaine intégrale de Montréal* (IFHIM) where all five of us received our training. (...) We live in a rental house in this city, which is the closest to the camps. I work in the camps three weeks out of four from Monday



Sr. Agathe Durand (r.) and Sr. Cécile Fortier, M.A., are greeted on their arrival in Bujumbura, Burundi, by Brother Robert Gonneville, F.I.C., general director of Terres Sans Frontières

morning to Friday evening. We leave in the morning at about 7:15 and return at 6:00 in the evening, when all goes well. At first I got my initiation at the INERA camp (54,000 refugees) where two companions had preceded me. Since September, I have worked in three smaller camps (8,000 - 10,000 refugees). The camps that we accepted to work in are all along the same route. The five of us leave together and we drop Véronique off at the orphaned children's camp (ENA) four kilometers from the main road and I go with Sonia to Murhala Mudaka or Adi Kivu, some distance from INERA, where Jacqueline and Éliane stop. In the rainy season, it takes us 1 1/2 to 2 hours, morning and night. If Tarmac roads once existed here, the rain has washed them out; our Nissan 4 X 4 is tested to the limit while we are made to perform improvised gymnastics.

Life varies somewhat from one camp to the next. We deal with the conditions as they are. Our tent is

Young Rwandan refugees in Bukavu, Zaire



sometimes next to one or two classes in activity. To say that I have gotten used to the intrusion that occurs due to the plastic dividing walls... would be premature! These days I am working with Sonia. We get the participants to come for around three days at a time, mornings and afternoons; we divide them into groups of twenty. We take care of them first, as human beings, beginning with their current life situation and their experiences. Rebuilding all aspects of life while living the events of the "refugee" situation strikes a sensitive chord with them and also requires a strong commitment. To pursue goals that are consistent with one's chosen purpose

in life, to size up different situations, to knowingly choose or renounce certain things in order to make free and responsible decisions, to persevere despite numerous difficulties, to learn, never to stop learning from one's experiences, to deal with the challenges and the unprecedented events of the times, to look to the future with an open mind toward every person as a human being... these are all exercises which life affords and which we take time to get these people to reread, ponder and clarify. Such a coming to awareness helps to bring out the individual in each person and his or her uniqueness in relation to others. This is not easy for people who have had to live for fifteen months five or eight

Sr. Marie-Marcelle Desmarais, C.N.D., general director of the IFHIM, Sr. Éliane Aufrey, R.S.C.J. and Sr. Jacqueline Martin, S.M.N.D.A. meet the director of a refugee camp.



illusory promises. Every night the joy and affirmation of this mission are accompanied by specific names, faces and facts which cause me to give thanks. Yes, I am living experiences which I never would have thought... I see with my own eyes the harrowing misfortunes of our great century. I also perceive a whole network of creative solidarity among the refugees themselves and among the volunteers, a powerhouse of love that generates new life and new hope.

Even out of situations of great human distress, the God of Life makes something new. I have learned to decode the signs of new life as I go along, in the way Beatrice, François,

Anne and Michel meet the challenges they face. I see these signs more and more in the hundreds of children I am close to each day, who run to accompany me to the tent, like a living cluster; it hurts me to see them included in this muddy bog of such a complex stretch of history. By combining all available resources to offer them, even in these camps, an educational framework open to new perspectives, I am confident that life will still prevail and that human beings will be restored their dignity and their capacity for unlimited love.

Well, that is some of my news. I didn't say anything about Zaire... I am just beginning to get acquainted with it. That will be for another time. I know you are in solidarity with me; in one way or another your love builds something together with mine... Best regards and deep affection! □

Agathe, M.I.C.

Bukavu, October 29, 1995



Photo: H. Turcotte, M.I.C.

Seminary of the Foreign Mission Society in Pont-Viau, Laval.

HOMAGE TO THE FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY

BY ÉVANGÉLINE PLAMONDON, M.I.C., SUPERIOR GENERAL

1996 marks the 75th anniversary of the Foreign Mission Society founded in Quebec in 1921. Nothing happens by chance in the great vision of Divine Providence... not even offering a cup of coffee one morning to a very tired priest. In her search for the will of God, Délia Tétreault (Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit), our Foundress, was, in the foundation of this Society, a witness and an instrument of the unusual ways of the God of surprises. Sr. Évangéline Plamondon, Superior General of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, presents our brothers, neighbours and friends, the P.M.E. Fathers, with this homage of gratitude and affection.

OVER A CUP OF COFFEE

It was already late in the morning. Was the sun shining? History doesn't say. A young priest walked wearily down the hill from the Côte-des-Neiges Cemetery; he was hungry. Suddenly he saw a statue of the Blessed Virgin in front of a house. "This is surely a convent, he said. I'll go in and ask for a cup of coffee." He walked a little faster, knocked on the door, was greeted kindly and served a cup of coffee. This was in Outremont in 1920 and the convent was that of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

Sr. Marie du Saint-Esprit, Foundress of this Institute, finally had a confir-

mation of her apostolic dream. There he was, right in front of her, this future missionary... she had been waiting for him. From the memory of her heart came these words of Archbishop Bruchési with whom she used to share some of her secrets: "If you want a Canadian Seminary, find me some priests!" Once again Providence had come through. Didn't this young priest confide to her that he had long felt the call to the mission in foreign lands? History doesn't say either if the coffee was good or if the conversation lasted long enough for a second cup... In any case, Fr. Louis-A. Lapierre became the first recruit for the *Foreign Mission Society of Quebec*. A few years later he would leave for Manchuria where he became the

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



Symbolic painting : M. Bilodeau, M.I.C.

first Apostolic Vicar of Szepinghai.

It is noted in the archives that the two apostles met several times in the summer of 1920 to finalize the great plan. With the support of Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit, Fr. Lapierre went to offer himself to Archbishop Bruchési for the Work of the Seminary. In 1921, the Bishops of Quebec officially founded the Foreign Mission Society of this country. A great missionary venture had begun... started by a fraternal sharing over a cup of coffee.

The years have gone by. The approach used in missionary activity has changed, but the P.M.E. Fathers and the M.I.C. Sisters still work together in the fields of mission. The option to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to those who do not know it remains the deep dynamism of their commitment in several countries. In their home Church, especially in Quebec, the effort to raise missionary awareness, the printed word and the formation of lay missionaries always find them working side by side.

Yes indeed! the M.I.C.'s are happy to share the work of the apostolate with their P.M.E. brothers. They experienced together the sufferings of war and of the revolution in China, in the Philippines and in Cuba; sufferings, yes, but also some great joys. Fraternal bonds were created and the apostolic activities continue being carried out in a joint effort in some difficult mission posts in the Philippines, Peru, Cuba and Hong Kong. Two cups of coffee are served by one and the other. In Pont-Viau, the Seminary being nearby has made it possible for the M.I.C.'s to benefit for the past 70 years from the spiritual services of their P.M.E. brothers and, on occasions, to call on their competence in various areas.

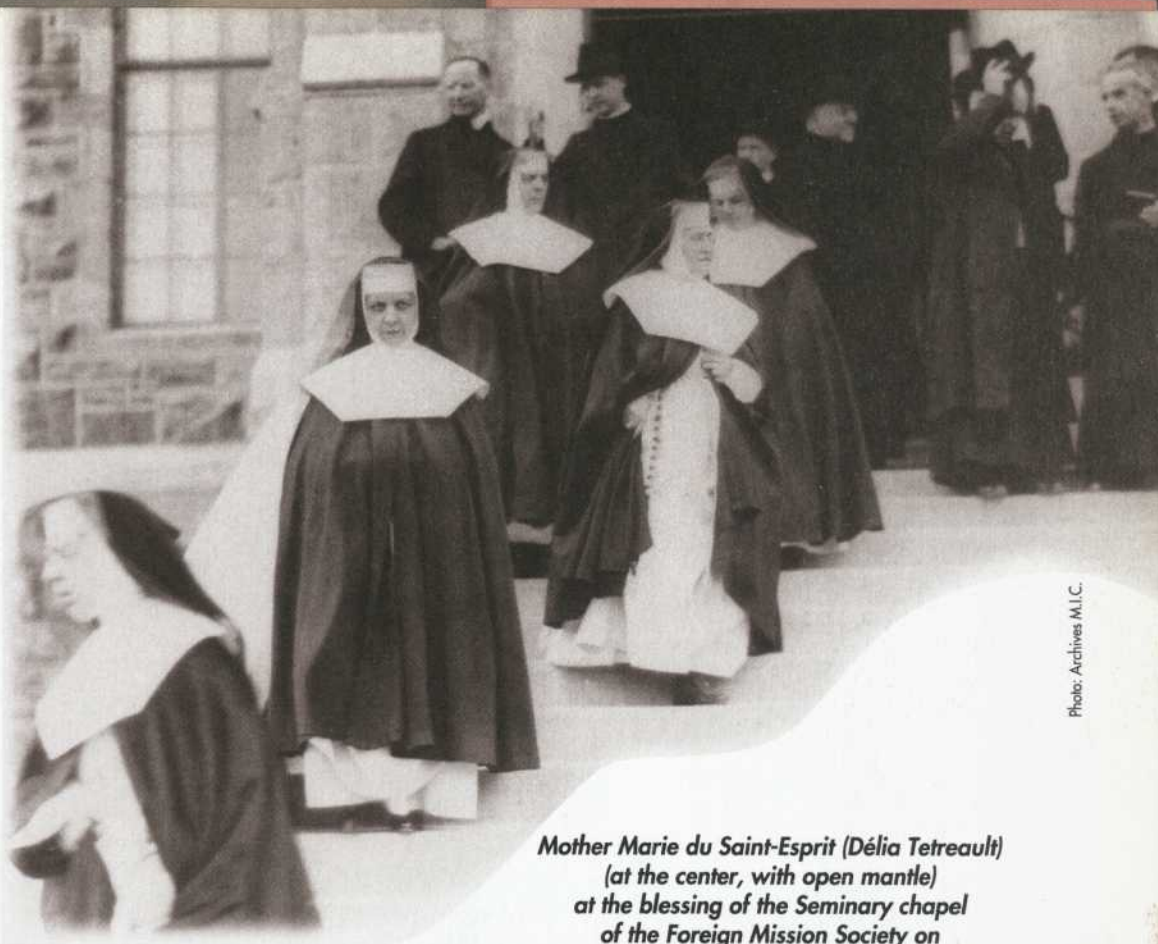


Photo: Archives M.I.C.

Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit (Délia Tetreault)
(at the center, with open mantle)
at the blessing of the Seminary chapel
of the Foreign Mission Society on
September 26, 1929.

IN GRATITUDE TO ALL THE P.M.E.'s

On this 75th anniversary of your foundation, the M.I.C.'s congratulate you wholeheartedly on your hard and fine apostolic work. We recognize in you the features of true missionaries. You are men of faith and prayer in whom can be seen the constant challenge of the mission of Jesus to those who are the farthest away and your evangelical audacity is a stimulus for us. Your simplicity, fraternity and sense of humour are valuable assets which we appreciate and... what else shall we say: there is much more!

In the name of my sisters and in my own, please accept a million thanks for who you are and for all that you have shared with us and still share today! Thank you for your untiring apostolic work in all parts of the world.

We read in the notes of Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit: *Let us bring together young men with the flame of zeal, let us form them into saints and we shall have good missionaries.* For the past, the present and the future of "good missionaries", let us give thanks and celebrate. □

1996 MISSIONARY INTENTIONS **MARCH**

**BY YOUR SPIRIT, RISEN LORD, MAY THE MINDS AND HEARTS
OF NON-CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANS ALIKE BE OPEN FOR DIALOGUE
AND THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.**

APRIL

**GOD THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, GRANT THAT THE
EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE MAY AWAKEN NUMEROUS
MISSIONARY VOCATIONS.**

“PUT OUT INTO DEEP WATERS”



WATER AND CAST YOUR NETS”
(Lk 5, 4)



The Friendship of Father Benoît

BY PAULINE LONGTIN, M.I.C.



Benoît Lacroix, O.P., and his sister Cécile, M.I.C., at the occasion of an intimate celebration and his reception of the book: *Dits et gestes de Benoît Lacroix, prophète de l'amour et de l'esprit*.

Fr. Benoît Lacroix, O.P., historian, writer, poet, professor and spiritual director, is to many a familiar name. To our community, he is a brother and a friend. Last fall, to mark both his 80th birthday and the 54th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, his family and friends put together a collection of photographs, anecdotes and texts - some published, others not - to present them to him in book form under the title: *Dits et gestes de Benoît Lacroix, prophète de l'amour et de l'esprit*. In the name of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Sr. Pauline Longtin, vice-postulator of the Cause of Délia Tétreault, contributed to this homage of admiration and gratitude. We present a generous excerpt of her testimony.*

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Without being indiscreet, I dare to think that, since 1937, the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception has had a special place among the many friends of Father Lacroix, for that was the year when his younger sister Cécile left the beautiful county of Bellechasse to enter the Noviciate of Pont-Viau. Over the years he has followed with unfailing interest the evolution of this missionary foundation, which dates back to 1902. He has become the big brother, the faithful friend often invited to present his ever timely message at solemn celebrations, jubilees, retreats, chapters, especially the last General Chapter of 1994 when, to his great delight, he found himself among an international group of delegates from 15 countries and 10 different nationalities. (...)

It is already something to know a community, but Father Benoît went further: he wanted to go all the way to the Foundress to grasp her inspiration. He studied her, scrutinized her and was

struck with admiration for DÉLIA TÉTREAUULT, named in religious life Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit. What I will try to do here is to quote from some of his messages over the past twelve years.

AN ADMIRER OF MOTHER DÉLIA

He began as follows the *Preface* which he wrote in 1983 to introduce the booklet *Délia Tétreault and the Virgin Mary*: "When speaking of Mary, Délia found just the right words. The simplest ones are the most beautiful anyway"... He then admired the way in which she approached God, spoke to Him and was nourished by Him... God was everywhere in her life! Near the end he wrote: "The pages which follow present thanksgiving and gratitude as the fundamental option lived by Délia Tétreault." Now he was conquered and over the years has never ceased to bring back into focus the inspiration which he discovered in the Foundress, a simple but sure doctrine which led one of his confreres to write: "Her spiritual and missionary vision is

so accurate that she should be beatified without further formalities" (B. Bélanger, O.P., 10-03-93).

On Mission Sunday, October 19, 1986, he celebrated the Eucharist with a few hundred M.I.C.'s of the Immaculate Conception Province in Montreal. The homily he delivered on that day has remained in everyone's memory. Here are a few excerpts:

Being a historian by trade, and in addition a great admirer of all that has been achieved in various places by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, I cannot and I will not forget that you are a congregation from Quebec founded by a native Quebecer, the first of this type in French-speaking America. The first impulse of your Congregation was to think of the mission in terms of outside the country.

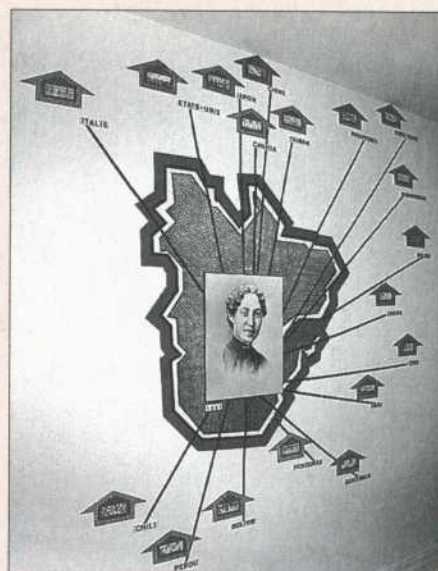
Then, sharing with the assembly the concern "to absorb the past and consider the future from the twofold viewpoint of mission in foreign lands and mission in Quebec, Canada, North America", the celebrant commented on the eight Beatitudes of Saint Matthew as they apply to missionaries: "Blessed are these women who are poor... blessed are they who are gentle...

blessed are they who mourn...", etc. He concluded with these words:

In conclusion, we realize that this whole manner of speaking is possible because one day, a certain Lady Délia Tétreault became a worshiper of the Trinity and a missionary in heart and spirit to the whole world... As we repeat in the Eucharist the words of the total offering of Christ, we cannot forget the marvelous mystery which remains at the center of the life and work of Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit: the glorification of the Trinity, the taste of the wheat with ears that became symbolic of baptized children.

These final words alluded to the dream known as prophetic which Délia had as a child and in which she saw an immense wheat field ready for the harvest, with ears that changed into children's heads. She had then understood these children to be non-Christian.

Faithful to the friendship he had nourished for her, Father Benoît introduced *Délia Tétreault, Femme de chez nous* (A Woman from Our Midst) to the readers of the M.I.C.'s missionary magazine *Le Précurseur* (July-August 1985):



The M.I.C. Community founded by Délia Tétreault, a native of Quebec, has spread to the four corners of the earth.

From Dream to Reality... Délia loved to read adventure stories and novels as well as annals (Holy Childhood and Propagation of the Faith). God has many strings on which to play to raise vocations, especially that of young Délia, who longed to go to other places and was able to move from dream to reality, from imagination to efficiency. She lived out in her flesh and bones the stories she read, she got going and got others going. This is what the *incarnated vocation call* means. I am sure that those stories stimulated her.

Our writer allowed his pen to follow the momentum:

Another element which in my view relates to her reading of adventure stories as well as to her missionary perception is that this humble Quebecer from Marieville wanted to go everywhere, to take over the universe. I was very impressed by this for I have some knowledge of the history of the Church in Quebec. In those days, religious life was mostly inward-looking. The women of Quebec who never went anywhere else remained withdrawn and timid. When sent abroad, they suddenly became foundresses and pioneers. This



Writings on Délia Tétreault and various messages of the Foundress in different languages - Material available at the Office of the Cause of Délia Tétreault in Pont-Viau.



At the tomb of Mother Délia in Pont-Viau, Sr. Pauline Longtin (last row, l.) and M.I.C.'s of various nationalities in formation in Longueuil - The Cause for the beatification of our Foundress is under way in Rome.

passage from the particular to the universal is what impresses me the most. "We are becoming daughters of the Church for the service of the universal mission" wrote Délia Tétreault as she prepared the first departure of her Sisters for China in 1909.

He ended this basic article with a point which has remained close to his heart:

A third aspect of the very modern, very post-Conciliar, very liturgical and very prophetic spirituality of Délia Tétreault is *thanksgiving*. Believe me, she took everything!... I am personally filled with gratitude for Délia Tétreault...

A few years later, in 1990, he expressed all these feelings once again in a letter of thanks for the file I had sent him on *The life and activity of Délia Tétreault*:

Now that I know more about Délia Tétreault, what strikes me is her prophetic character. Historically speaking, it is amazing how, in her own way, she predicted the international scope of missionary action. What is even

more surprising is that she devoted herself to Thanksgiving and to the Holy Spirit several decades before these became such popular themes in the western world that they are significantly reflected in the Eucharist: one needs only to look at pastoral activity as it is done today. A theological spirituality together with this desire to give thanks through so many difficulties. (...) I take this opportunity to congratulate you as well as your M.I.C. companions on your efforts to promote the Cause, such a deserving cause with a vision that is so relevant for today.

COMPETENCE IN THE SERVICE OF A CAUSE

Father Benoît's admiration never failed. In 1992, the 350th anniversary of the foundation of Montreal, as I wanted to emphasize the impact on our city of the missionary ideals of Délia Tétreault since the beginning of the century, I went to see him to ask if he would write a booklet on *Délia Tétreault and Missionary Montreal*. You should have seen his reaction... "A booklet!... This is not enough for a woman of this calibre!... What you need is a whole day, a colloquium with

selected speakers and guests who can appreciate the topic, etc." This indeed is how the Colloquium of 1992 originated. On that day, the brilliant and original speaker that he is presented a new facet of Délia Tétreault: *A Trinitarian Spirituality with Cosmic Components* (*Le Précurseur* and *MIC Mission News*, July-August 1993).

At the request of the Sociology department of the Laval University in Quebec, our good friend accepted in 1993 to write for the scientific review *Recherches Sociographiques* a critique of the book published by Fr. Yves Raguin, S.J.: *Au-delà de son rêve, Délia Tétreault*. The author had presented his work as a spiritual history:

What is there to say, asked our analyst, except that we have here a biography with an angle, one that seeks to detect the motivations and the pivotal points of someone's life, the life of Délia Tétreault?... This book is no pious improvisation. In fact, Délia Tétreault appears therein, with textual proofs and the support of an oral tradition, as a remarkable woman through her interior life as well as through her generosity toward others, which in no way prevented her from being determined to the extent of standing up quite firmly to some prominent male figures...

This is how our dear Father Benoît has scrutinized Délia Tétreault and recognized her as an endearing personality, beloved by us all. Over the past decade, he has done much to make her known and to endear her to various types of public. We wish to thank him for this and to express the hope that he will relive with joy and "thanksgiving" the multiple episodes recalled in this book, which is a compendium of happy memories. □

* Editor's subtitles

Spreading the Fragrance of the Lord...

BY YOLAINE LAVOIE, M.I.C.



The joy of being cared for is very helpful! Sr. Yolaine Lavoie, director of the Mahereza Center in Tsamarasay, visits the dispensary.

A SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE

When we go to another country, we always enrich ourselves. I learned in Madagascar, my adopted country, how good it is to believe in and to live the freedom of the children of God. From the figurative language of these people, I understood that prayer is a natural thing for a Christian. It is quite normal to live with God always and to walk with Him in our daily life.

The Malagasy people translated the word God by ANDRIAMANITRA, which means "the lord, the perfumed prince". Like perfume, God permeates the whole cosmos. Nothing escapes His odour. When I breathe, I breathe God. He is the breath of my life. When I pray and I know God, I know that He is Love, Peace and Harmony. I welcome Him, I open my whole being to His presence. Little by little, I let myself be permeated by His fragrance, which is Love. I know that He gives me the grace to be also love, peace and harmony for the people around me.

IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE

Being a Christian means spreading the fragrance of God... Being missionaries means spreading this scent around us. Isn't this the whole symbolic meaning of the perfumed oil

Many languages, particularly the Oriental ones, are full of imagery. The essential characteristic of the Malagasy language is the symbolic quality of the words. Sr. Yolaine Lavoie masters this language very well and with her usual sense of humour, she drew upon this reality to present her missionary witness as part of her mission awareness work in Canada last year. She has returned to work in Madagascar a few months ago.

that was placed on our forehead at our Baptism? "This mark is like a seal, a family trait. It will never be erased in the eyes of God."

Today we are gathered in God's house to celebrate the Eucharist. We breathe God deeply into our lungs. It is normal that when we leave here we spread the fragrance of the Lord. "It is by this sign that you will be known as my disciples." Our fathers, our mothers, our friends spread the fragrance of the Lord. All those who volunteer their time and give their talents in the service of others spread the fragrance of the Lord. All the elderly and the sick who offer their suffering for their grandchildren, for the missionaries, for vocations... they too spread the fragrance of the Lord!

May God grant us to be part of those people of whom it is said: "There's something special about those people, we don't know exactly what, but you can smell the fragrance." During this Eucharist, when we come to draw from the well of Him who is the reflection of God's heart, let us praise God for His marvels of Love in each one of us. Let us be witnesses of the living God, of Jesus Christ, of His Love, of His presence and of His Resurrection! □

Do you have the courage of a mountain climber, of a scuba diver or of an adventurer of new frontiers to be discovered abroad...? Everyone knows the fascination exerted on the mountain climber by high peaks, on the scuba diver by the immensity of the sea, on the cross-border traveler by foreign lands and on the lover by the boundless ocean of the heart...

Which one of us hasn't heard as they did the challenging call: "Set out! Dive into deep waters! Go out on roads where you have never been before! And make the desert bloom!" This is what Philip was asked to do: "The angel of the Lord spoke to him saying: 'Be ready to set out at noon along the road that goes from Jerusalem down to Gaza, the desert road'" * These words are to be taken seriously. Take care, however! Let's not attempt to realize on our strength alone a dream of such extreme magnitude. Trying to outdo ourselves in this way could be a disaster. Much harm could result for us, discouraging any future attempt.

ALAS! WE DON'T WANT TO BE SCARED!

"Go up and meet that chariot", Philip heard the spirit say." These very simple words say a lot about us. It's enough to be scared. Just thinking about it gives us the creeps and puts us in a cold sweat! We shudder at the very thought of having to climb into the stranger's chariot; where is he going to take us?

What a terrible impression it is to feel everything shaking on its foundations, the ground on which we stand slipping away leaving us in a sort of vacuum. Imagine losing control, losing your grip and being swept away by life - who knows where? - into depths never experienced until now... How resourceful one would become in such a situation to spare oneself the terrible sensation of trembling? Who wouldn't be

tempted to hang on desperately to his securities, to his past and to the *status quo*? How many tricks we resort to not to change anything in our habits. Some will tend to reminisce nostalgically about the so-called "good old days..." that have gone by.

The temptation is so great to meet only "people who are on our side", to read only "the press of our own ideas". There is also the temptation for shivery communities to turn into themselves and cuddle up to keep warm against the cool drafts blowing from outside... This attitude, however, is anything but Christian. What we are asked to do is to go and meet the Unknown One who comes to us in the heat of life and action. What purifying experiences this is bound to bring on...! How could anyone not feel dizzy?

ALL THE WAY TO HOT AND SUNNY AFRICA...

The river where the Ethiopian was baptized began to overflow... and the heart of the new believer started pounding. The river went on its course all the way to his homeland, Sudan, as it is called today. And there, back among his people, he often talked about how he had been changed and what he had learned. He tried through his natural network of relationships, at work and among his friends, to do something to transform situations which shouldn't go on as they were. This is how the Good News reached all the way to hot and sunny Africa.

How did it happen? Quite naturally. "It happened like this... We were carried! We couldn't help it. We were urged on. We never thought we would go so far, but we couldn't help it." This is the kind of answer this pioneer must have given those who asked how his piece of the African desert has come to bloom.



With Bishop Gustave Prévost, P.M.E. (2nd row, 3rd l.), some young friends, Sr. Ida Brochu, M.I.C. (last row, l.) and Christian Beaulieu (1st row, 2nd r.), author.

Thus one springtime of cool wind blown by the Spirit made unexpected buds bloom in what we know today as Sudan. In one generation, the Ethiopian's homeland became Christian and it went on blooming for ten centuries! Not such bad results after all! This is how deserts are made to bloom. Why then would our seeds of faith and hope and our daring actions done out of uninhibited love not have similar long-term effects? Ah! if we only got down to it!...

It's a good thing Philip didn't keep with him this new convert who was made for wide spaces. "After they had come up out of the water, again Philip was taken away by the Spirit of the Lord and the eunuch never saw him again, but went on his way rejoicing."... What a lesson for each one of us, parents, educators, pastors and young people! Let not our structures and our insecurities keep the Lord from opening wide His hands to fill with the best of His gifts, through our presence and welcoming attitudes, the "third world" areas and the "foreign lands" that exist in our midst.

Let the Church allow the Churches of Africa and of other parts of the world to go to their own cultural heritage and let it welcome the gifts they have to offer. Let those in charge of Christian communities not try to fit into their pastoral plans the various movements raised by the Spirit; let them instead go and meet them where they are and welcome their discoveries, even at the cost of changing their own plans! Let parents allow young people to live their lives, which are not left to chance for they are in the hands of God.

LIFE: AN ONGOING BAPTISM

"Youth's best apostles are the young people themselves."

Must they still, like Philip, go down into the water? "He ordered the chariot to stop, then Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water and Philip baptized him."

Yes, indeed, for no deep change can happen except at the cost of plunging into the waters through which life takes us. It is only after going through repeated rounds of dusting, scrubbing, scouring, shuffling, washing and drying of all kinds that we will come out of it and become real people. Isn't our life an ongoing Baptism? We are therefore called to take the plunge that we may become better people.

Immerse yourselves fully in the situations life has in store for you! Take up the challenge that is put before you without trying to escape the scary parts. Whatever failures or fears you may encounter, never consider anything final to the point of refusing to move any more. Let the wind of trust make you forge ahead and plunge into the waters! Those are non-believers who protect themselves and keep themselves secure. Those are believers who expose themselves to life and, finally, give themselves over to it. □

* It would be a good idea to read this story of the encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian in the Acts of the Apostles 8, 26-40.

THE DESERT BLOOM

CHRISTIAN BEAULIEU

After taking us to the country of Jonas and sharing with us, last month, the great adventure on the high seas, our friend Christian introduces us this time to Philip, another one of God's adventurers. Attentive to the Spirit, this man set out and on his way he came across an Ethiopian to whom he explained the Word of God... With Christian, this missionary story of old comes alive, coloured by the challenges and dreams of our life today. It is an invitation, a call to hope wild enough to make the desert bloom.

ALL FOR A DOLLAR

Photo: M.I.C., Canada

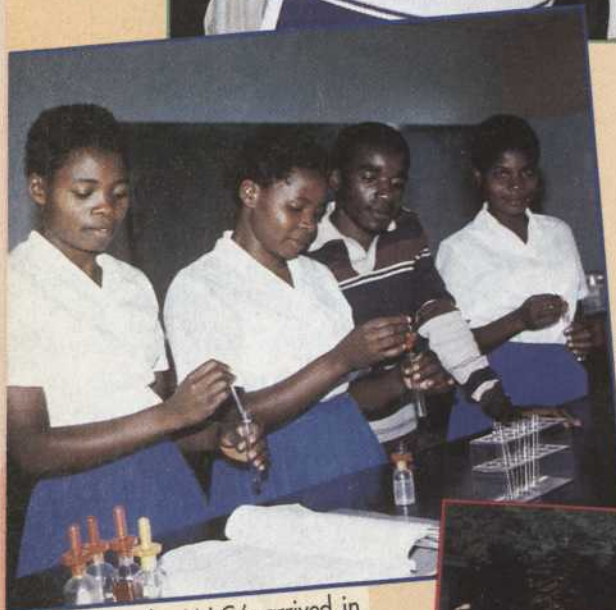


BY SYLVIA DUPUIS, M.I.C.

Don't worry, this is not an advertisement for a well known bargain store! Who doesn't remember sacrificing a few pennies, or even a dollar, for the foreign missions as a child? The memory of this good deed performed many years ago came back to Sr. Sylvia Dupuis... in a trip she took recently in Africa and Madagascar as Assistant General responsible for this geographic sector. Her dollar added to thousands of others went a long way and yielded fruit a hundredfold. She was amazed at everything she saw. Now she tells us about her experience, with photographs to back it up. All this for a dollar she once gave with such generosity!

What a joy it was for Sr. Sylvia Dupuis, General Assistant, (I.) to go to Africa with Sr. Jeannine Forcier! It would be a short visit, but the wonders she was about to discover! A dream come true...

Photo: R. Bigras, M.I.C.



When the M.I.C.'s arrived in 1948, education was the sole privilege of boys. Since then, thanks to the establishment of schools such as Marymount in Mzuzu, Malawi, girls can acquire an education and have access to responsible jobs at all levels.



The advancement of women is a priority at St. Anne's Centre for Home Economics and Leadership Training in Chipata, Zambia, directed by Leonila Stewart, M.I.C. (I.)

Planning my first visit to Malawi and Zambia brought back to my mind a memory that dates back to 1957. In the local newspaper I read that Sr. Jeannine Forcier of my home town was leaving for Africa and her parents were having an open house for all those who wanted to see Sister before her departure. I was interested in meeting her and giving her a little offering for the missions. I had baby sat the previous evening and earned all of \$1.00! Sr. Jeannine must have received larger amounts, but she took time to write me a thank you note and send me some information concerning the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. This touched me very much.



After starting several dispensaries, there are still M.I.C. Sisters devoting themselves to mothers and their children at the Health Centre of Kanyanga, Zambia.



Photos: S. Dupuis, M.I.C. and M.I.C., Africa

In 1960 I decided to enter the congregation. In 1971 I was assigned to Japan and remained there until 1988, when I was elected to the General Council and once again in 1994. In the fall of 1995, how happy I was to go to Africa with none other than Sr. Jeannine herself! During this visit I saw with my own eyes what this donation along with many others have permitted our Sisters to accomplish in Malawi and Zambia. Helping people improve their way of life through education, health care and pastoral care are the areas in which the Sisters devote themselves. I was greatly impressed with their ministry. How much has been done since the Sisters came to provide education for girls! Much could be said about every sector of activity, especially their achievements on behalf of women. What a chance and what a grace it was for me to visit these warm and hospitable people!

Parish ministry is reaching out more and more to new areas. The M.I.C. Sisters respond to new needs.

Srs. Lyse Brunet (2nd row, l.) and Jacinta Henry, M.I.C. (2nd row, 5th l.) work in Nkhata Bay, Malawi.



To support education and pastoral activity, the book store of the Diocese of Chipata, Zambia, offers a variety of teaching material. Léontine Lang, M.I.C., director (l.), Teresa and Emeldah Katongo, M.I.C., natives of Zambia.



Nearly 50 years of M.I.C. presence in Malawi and Zambia have yielded their fruit. What marvelous work has been accomplished here by the missionaries and by the lay people who share in their responsibilities!

"There's no doubt about it, Jeannine, my dollar has gone a long way!" □

In the Glory of the Risen Lord

Photo: M.-H. Roy, M.I.C.

Sister Émilienne Cantin (Marie-Ruth)

Émilienne was born and grew up in the Parish of St-Malo of Quebec. At the age of 12, after hearing a talk given by an M.I.C. at the convent of St-Malo, she became an ardent apostle of the Holy Childhood and wished to become a missionary. She realized her "ideal" on the 1st of March, 1930, by entering the postulate in Pont-Viau.

After 15 years of community services and apostolic work at the Mother House, in Quebec and in Granby, she arrived full of joy in Haiti. Port-Salut, Les Cayes, Chantal and Cap-Haitien would come to know this ardent missionary and appreciated teacher, always concerned about preparing the children for the future and about helping the poorest ones in a special way. For these



she would not hesitate to cross mountains on the back of a mule to bring them academic and religious instruction. Always and everywhere she wanted Mary to be loved. Wherever she could, she would take on the Legion of Mary. After her return to Quebec and then in retirement in St-Jean, she continued to render many services. Her relationships with everyone were permeated with an evangelical spirit.

Fascinated by Christ, she always tried to "follow Him, by living in the manner of Mary". In thanksgiving and complete self-surrender, fully conscious till the very last moment, Sr. Émilienne quietly passed away in Pont-Viau on July 4th, 1995, at the age of 86, after 65 years in the religious life. □

Sister Isabelle Michaud (Marie-Antoinette)

At 79 years of age and after 60 years in the religious life, Sr. Isabelle died quietly at our infirmary of Pont-Viau on July 20, 1995.

Sr. Isabelle was born in Rimouski, the youngest of seven children. Following in the footsteps of her sister Antoinette, M.I.C., and of her brother Maurice, P.M.E., she chose the missionary life and entered our postulate on August 8, 1935. Her skills and devotion were greatly appreciated; she applied them to the care of the sick, foot care, sewing and various other internal services, first at the Montreal Chinese Hospital, then in Quebec, but mostly at the Mother House and in Pont-Viau.



Bent over and suffering from arthritis throughout her body, her life became one long period of suffering. She devoted her whole being to this, the will of God for her. Cheerful and pleasant to her companions, her joie de vivre was contagious. Suddenly, she became paralyzed and gradually lost her eyesight. Her unconditional "yes" taken to the heights also became thanksgiving of Mary, for she always felt surrounded by the tenderness of God. This is why she was able to write along with her testament: "The Lord had done everything for me; His Love lasts forever" and "With a simple and joyful heart I have given everything". □

Sister Marie-Paule Laroque (Marie-Paule)

Born in Montreal, Marie-Paule lived her growing up years happily in a family of five. She joined the Institute on the 1st of March 1929. After her profession, she was assigned the task of teaching, first in Rimouski, then at the Mother House, at the Jardin Jésus-Enfant where she was the first director. For many years in the Philippines and during a short stay in Hong Kong, she was noted for her competence in education, her devotion, her exquisite manner and her achievements. Not very out-going by nature, it seems that she best expressed the richness of her heart in the tones of humility.



She returned to Canada in 1971 already in ill health. She died at the infirmary of Pont-Viau on August the 2nd, 1995, at the age of 87 after 60 years of religious life.

Sr. Marie-Paule left us the open book of her life which expresses in a language accessible to all the love of Christ for the humble and the meek, an ardent zeal for the reign of God, a remarkable gentleness and thoughtfulness coloured with gratitude and charm in her interpersonal relations - a mirror of her union to Mary and of her intimacy with Christ. Now close to her holy Mother, she can let her joyful thanks ascend to her God forever. □

Sister Alice Gagné (Sainte-Ida)

Born on the 19th of May, 1907, in East-Broughton, Beauce, Sr. Alice lived a very simple existence, but one that was filled with the joy of serving, devoting herself and making others happy.

At 19 she entered the M.I.C. As a young sister, she knew our Foundress who, she said, "loved me" and she benefited all her life by her examples and advice. For more than fifty years, she worked mostly in kitchen services in our houses of Rimouski, Joliette, Granby, Trois-Rivières, Marlborough (U.S.A.) and in those of Haiti: Chantal, Port-Salut, Camp-Perrin and Les Cayes. In Haiti she also taught young women domestic skills and



performed various tasks in the service of parishes. In her own words, she was "very happy in mission land".

When she returned to Canada in 1977, she greatly appreciated a year of religious studies and then remained active for a few years in Outremont and Pont-Viau. As her strength declined with age, she took advantage of every moment to pray more. Having lost the use of speech, she maintained her kindly smile thus expressing her gratitude, her interior peace and her abandonment to the Lord. Drawn to the One she had loved so much, she died in Pont-Viau on August 9th, 1995. □

Sister Rhéa Allard (Élisabeth-de-la-Trinité)

On August the 5th, 1995, at the age of 89, having lived 69 years in the religious life, Sr. Rhéa Allard died at the Centre Hospitalier Régional de Lanaudière in Joliette.

Born in Ste-Élisabeth on August 21st, 1906, she lived her childhood years in happiness, though having to take on some responsibility as the eldest of the family. The desire for the missionary life was awakened in her when she was eight or nine. After the end of her school years, she taught for a while and then joined the M.I.C. in 1926.

Her long missionary life began at the Mother House. For 35 years she devoted herself to many different services: at the procure, with the magazine LE PRÉCURSEUR, of which she was director and editor, in



photography, audio-visual production - she produced a film for the 50th anniversary of the Institute. Appointed local superior in St-Jean and then in Ottawa, and in 1970, Provincial Superior in Quebec, she did everything in her power to make her sisters happy. In 1977, she went to live in Joliette where she continued being very active in genealogical research and in various artistic works.

Sr. Rhéa left us the memory of a loving and generous woman whose life of total dedication was permeated with our spirituality of thanksgiving, the resurgence of which she facilitated, around 1964, by her research work, her efforts and her writings. □

Jeanne Guinois, M.I.C. and Cécile Legault, M.I.C.

NEWSBRIEFS...

ITALY - CANADA

A SAINT AMONG THE OBLATES



The Founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Bishop Eugène de Mazenod, was canonized in Rome on December 3rd, 1995. This recognition by the Church of the work of one of the greatest apostles of the last century overjoyed the Oblate family, which has 5000 members throughout the world. Canada for its part has benefited by the presence of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate since 1841. The first six missionaries to leave France were sent to Montreal by the Founder himself, the beginning of thousands of others who followed them in the work of evangelization in 60 countries of the 5 continents.

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception work with the Oblates in Bolivia and Haiti. They have benefited greatly from Oblate institutions almost everywhere. In the Great North, in Ottawa, in Quebec... family ties, fraternal bonds unite them. It is therefore with admiration, joy and gratitude that they offer their sincere congratulations to the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on the occasion of the canonization of their Founder. A new saint offered to our world, to our young people in search of true witnesses! □

MALAWI

THE FIRST AFRICAN BISHOP IN MZUZU

Fr. Joseph Muzalca Zuza, 40 years of age, was named Bishop of Mzuzu, Malawi, on May 6th of last year. He replaced Monsignor John Roche who had been Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese since the departure of Bishop Jean-Louis Jobidon, M. Afr. (White Fathers). This event was the occasion for religious and popular celebrations at which Christians gave free rein to their joy of welcoming a Pastor from their own country, an evident sign of the maturity of a Church that received the faith from the missionaries.

As no church could contain the crowd, the Stadium of Mzuzu was rented and filled with 20,000 people during a ceremony that lasted four and a half hours and was broadcast throughout the country by the *Malawian Broadcasting Corporation*. Seven bishops, 128 priests, nearly 200 sisters, the seminarians and the lay people were all assembled to greet the President of Malawi, Mr. Bakili Muluzi, and his retinue, whose arrival was announced by the sound of trumpets. Bishop Joseph Leanza, Papal Pro-Nuncio in Malawi and Zambia, was the main celebrant. The parents of the new Bishop were present. The exuberant joy of the crowd was manifested throughout the ceremony by liturgical dance, song, shouting and applause. At the end of the celebration, there was a presentation of gifts: baskets of food, furniture, rugs, liturgical vestments, live sheep, money, etc. The President gave the Bishop a VCR. Bishop Zuza thanked everyone warmly, promised the people his complete devotion and asked for their prayers.

When four M.I.C. Sisters arrived in North Nyassaland (Malawi today) in 1948, this Diocese was an Apostolic Prefecture under a Canadian missionary, Bishop Marcel St-Denis, M. Afr. One of these pioneers, Sr. Bérengère Cadieux, was present at the ceremony for Bishop Zuza. She was the privileged witness of 47 years

Photo: M.I.C., Malawi



Sr. Bérengère Cadieux, one of the M.I.C. pioneers in Malawi, congratulates the new Bishop Joseph Zuza.



In Pont-Viau, Bishop Zuza (center), Fr. Richard Dandenault, M. Afr., Provincial Superior (2nd row, 4th l.) and a confrère visit the M.I.C.'s of Africa currently in Canada.

Photo: H. Turcotte, M.I.C.

of apostolic work to help in the growth of a young Church whose vitality is full of hope and is now bearing abundant fruit. With her M.I.C. companions of Malawi and Zambia, Sr. Bérengère sings a vibrant Magnificat of thanksgiving! □

THE HOUR OF GRACE

Catherine, a young woman 25 years of age, had been sick for almost a year when I met her. The mother of three young children, she was very weak, hardly able to walk. Her two older children managed somehow or other with their grandfather, but the baby, a little girl about 15 months old, suffered from severe malnutrition and she died two weeks later.

I was able to visit Catherine several times. In spite of her weakened state, she enjoyed praying with us. One day, feeling undoubtedly that the Lord was beckoning to her, she asked for Baptism and received it the next day. The event was celebrated modestly in her father's presence; her niece and a few children from the neighbourhood were also present. When we arrived, Catherine was lying outside in the shade next to the house. I was accompanied by Sr. Sylvia Dupuis, our Vicar General on a visit to Malawi, and by Mr. C.D. Banda, our cook.

JÉCQ

CANADA

THE J.É.C. IS STILL ALIVE AND WELL!

Last October, more than 200 *jecistes* (members of the *Jeunesse Étudiante Catholique* - Young Catholic Students), former members and present ones, got together at Collège Maisonneuve in Montreal to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the J.É.C. Under the theme *60 years old and still called 'Young'*, the event enabled those attending to rediscover a movement which many thought was defunct.

After the emotions of meeting again and the exchange of memories, the day involved participants in different activities, especially in workshops on the school environment, young people and education, role of the J.É.C. in the present educational system ... Recent J.É.C. productions, such as the statement for the Estates General on education, enabled us to realize the evolution and continuity of a movement which is still alive in the student milieu. In their show, the young people presented a portrait of the J.É.C. in 1995 which appealed to the *jecistes* of previous generations, for today's J.É.C. has remained close to its origins. A *jeciste* of the 40's gave a fine compliment when he said: "I thought the J.É.C. was dead. I came to celebrate the J.É.C. of 50 years ago, but I celebrated the J.É.C. of the future..." It was altogether a very splendid celebration which, by honouring history, gives wings to our taking hold of the present and of the future! □

Pierre Ménard
Jeunesse Étudiante Catholique

Photo: S. Dupuis, M.I.C.



At Catherine's bedside for her baptism - Sr. Colette Leclerc and Mr. Banda

Catherine lucidly said her act of faith in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Mr. Banda poured the Baptismal water according to the commandment of Jesus Himself: "Go forth, teach all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". God alone knows what happened in the heart of Catherine. She prayed the *Our Father* with us; her voice was strong and her words clearly pronounced. Catherine departed the next day to meet the Father in the place where there are no more tears or suffering. What a grace it was for us to have been witnesses to her Baptism! □

Colette Leclerc, M.I.C.

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♥ HEARTFELT THANKS ♥

INTERACTION

MYSTERY WORD

A 5 letter word -
Shortly after his birth,
Jesus lived there
for a while.

Name of a country
of Africa:

ALGERIA
ANGOLA
BENIN
BOTSWANA
BURKINA
BURUNDI
GABON
GAMBIA
GUINEA
LESOTHO
LIBYA
MALAWI
MALI
NAMIBIA
NIGERIA
RUANDA
SOMALIA
SUDAN
TANZANIA
TOGO
TUNISIA
UGANDA
ZAIRE
ZAMBIA
ZIMBABWE

QUESTION

INERA camp
in Bukavu where
Sr. Agathe Durand
works.
Name the country.

HELLO!

INTERACTION APPEALS TO YOUR
CURIOSITY AND TO YOUR INQUISITIVE
MIND AT SCHOOL, AT HOME, ALONE
OR WITH OTHERS... THERE IS NO AGE
LIMIT! THE ACTIVITIES PROPOSED HERE
WILL HELP YOU TO GET MORE OUT
OF YOUR READING OF THE
MAGAZINE. "MISSIO" SHARING
GETS YOU THINKING, ALONG WITH
OTHERS, TO HELP MAKE YOUR
INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHURCH MORE
MEANINGFUL.

A	N	I	K	R	U	B	E	N	I	N	U
N	Z	A	M	B	A	E	N	I	U	G	U
G	I	B	O	T	S	W	A	N	A	T	A
O	M	A	I	R	E	G	I	N	A	U	N
L	B	I	G	A	M	B	I	A	I	N	D
A	A	D	A	I	B	I	M	A	N	I	A
I	B	N	E	T	O	G	O	M	A	S	I
W	W	U	G	A	B	O	N	A	Z	I	L
A	E	R	I	A	Z	G	Y	L	N	A	A
L	P	U	A	L	G	E	R	I	A	T	M
A	Y	B	I	L	L	E	S	O	T	H	O
M	R	U	A	N	D	A	N	A	D	U	S

Answers on page 31



Photo: M.-M. Desmarais, IFHIM

"MISSIO" SHARING

1. Africa and Madagascar - Using an Atlas, a map of the world or a map of Africa, find the locations of the countries named in the Mystery Word puzzle. Complete the list of all the countries of Africa. Find the islands of the Indian Ocean that are separated from Africa by the gulf of Mozambique: Madagascar...
 - Open a file for each one - countries and capital cities - Organize a quiz in your class or among your friends.
 - Cut out articles about Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire in newspapers and magazines. Put them up on the wall or bulletin board of your pastoral center.
 - Pray for peace and reconciliation between these people who are of the same family of nations.
2. In 1994, the countries of Africa and Madagascar were involved in the African Synod. Perhaps your diocese has had a synod or is having one right now. As you read about what our brothers and sisters of those countries are planning to do, can you think of ways in which you can help make your parish, your diocese more alive?...
 - Name something specific that could be done during Lent to promote justice where you live, or in response to the needs of other countries.
3. In the article *Word and Life*, Christian Beaulieu invites you this time to *make a desert bloom*. To better understand this text (pp. 22-23), read in your Bible the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 8, verses 26 to 40: *The servant of the queen of Ethiopia wanted to understand what he was reading in the Bible. Philip explained the Word to him. The Ethiopian was converted and asked to be baptized...*

Christian is like Philip. To help you to understand the Word, he helps you to grasp the meaning of this Bible text for your every day life. Read it again with your friends. Depending on what your life is like, what is it that speaks to you the most? that challenges you the most?

 - Recite once again the prayer for vocations (p. 7). The Lord is still calling today on generous hearts like Philip's to proclaim the Good News with joy. Why not you? ☐

INTERACTION CONTEST

ANSWER OF NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1995: APOSTLES
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INTERACTION: ANSWER OF PAGE 30
MYSTERY WORD: EGYPT
PHOTO: ZAIRE



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Prayer to Mary, Mother of the Church

O Mary, Mother of the Church, thanks to you, on the day of the Annunciation, at the dawn of the new era, the whole human race with its cultures rejoiced in recognizing itself ready for the Gospel. On the eve of a new Pentecost for the Church in Africa, Madagascar and the adjacent Islands, the People of God with its Pastors turns to you and with you fervently prays:

May the outpouring of the Holy Spirit make of the cultures of Africa places of communion in diversity, fashioning the peoples of this great Continent into generous sons and daughters of the Church which is the Family of the Father, the Brotherhood of the Son, the Image of the Trinity...

John Paul II, Cameroon 1995

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