

MIC MISSION NEWS

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1996

China 1997 ?

MIC MISSION NEWS

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**WORD
AND LIFE**
WITH
**CHRISTIAN
BEAULIEU**

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COVER PAGE:

**Woo Wing Sum of
Hong Kong**

Photo:
Courtesy of the
Woo family

CENTER PAGES:

**Locals of Beijing,
China**

Photo:
É. Plamondon, M.I.C.

Towards a New Era...



Sr. Évangéline Plamondon and a kite vendor at Tien An Men Square, China

Photo: M.V. Chua, M.I.C.

As a child, you have certainly played staging shadow shows. Hidden behind a screen, in this case a bed sheet taken from the linen closet, we would enjoy forming figures with our fingers and even putting on plays! One vital part was putting the light at the right angle, otherwise our creativity had paltry results and the spectators - our young neighbours - would yell in protest... Shadows! Light! Movement! It was both mysterious and graceful.

This remembrance came to me during my trip to China. China is all movement and dynamic energy. China is mysterious and graceful! For thousands of years it has been combining shadows and light, unmindful of time, flexible and strong like the bamboo stalk. The Middle Empire has known many ruptures, crises, endless wars, but it is credited with a whole spectrum of "firsts", such as paper, printing, the compass, canon powder, etc. And what can we say of porcelain and silk! For years the Chinese have considered their land as the center of the world; today the people of the Middle Empire take a second look, while still wishing to be the strongest and the greatest.

1997 will mark a major turning point in their millennial history. Hong Kong, a British colony since 1842, will become again Chinese territory, as a "special administrative region" of the People's Republic of China. This will demand a daily apportioned menu of

openness, respect, flexibility and cooperation. A major challenge for people who have lived, and still live under two different socio-economic and political systems. If we look at the political history of this country, we may have doubts. If we look at the courage and dynamism of its people, we can have hope. And if we look yet further, at the faith of the Christian men and women of China, hope is enhanced; it becomes commitment and perseverance.

As the new year dawns, we pray the Lord to bless us and especially our Chinese brothers and sisters. From them we learn lessons of wisdom, patience and harmony. We wish them a new era of peace, reconciliation and prosperity as we also wish for ourselves and for the whole world.

On behalf of our Institute, of our Associates and of the lay missionaries working with us, I extend sincere thanks to one and all for your solidarity and generosity for the mission.

May the God of peace bless you always and keep you happy! □

Évangéline Plamondon, M.I.C.

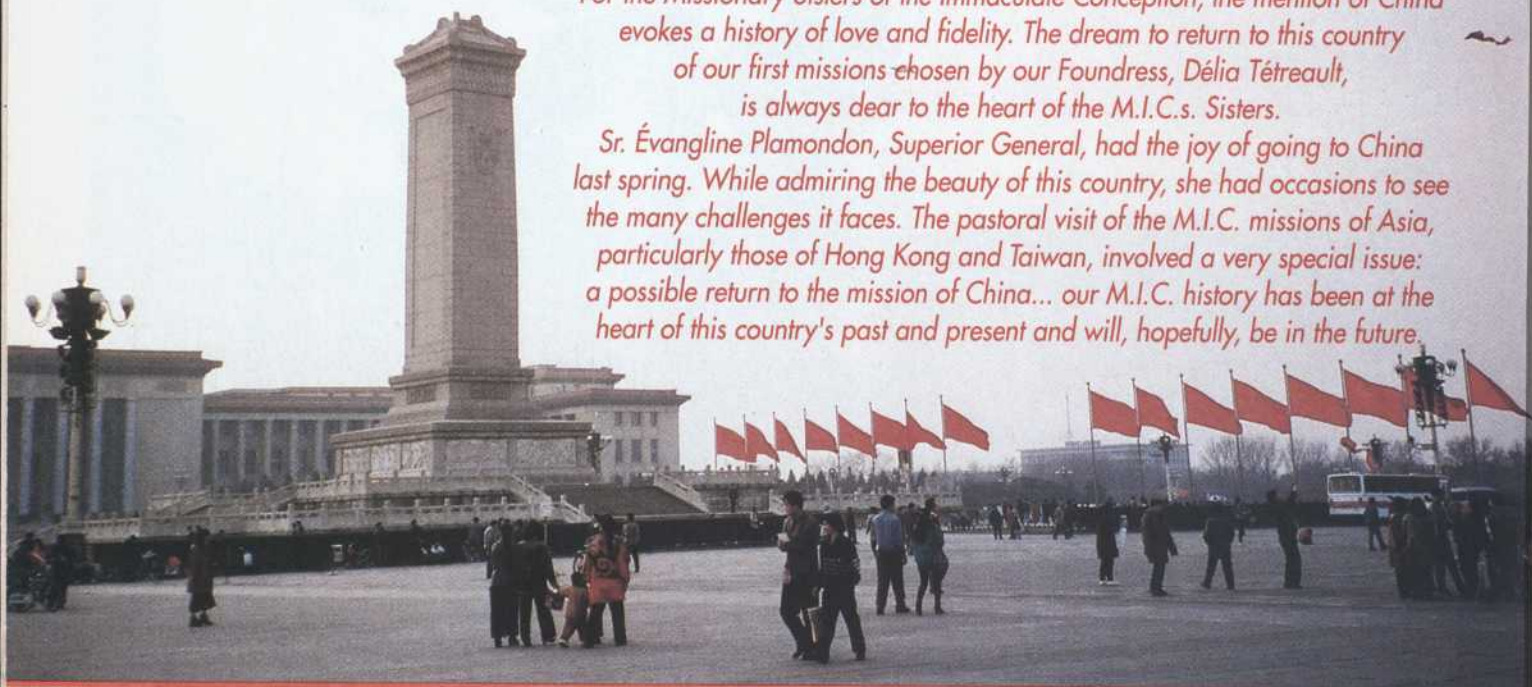
Évangéline Plamondon, M.I.C.
Superior General

At the Heart of Tomorrow's China

BY ÉVANGÉLINE PLAMONDON, M.I.C.

For the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, the mention of China evokes a history of love and fidelity. The dream to return to this country of our first missions chosen by our Foundress, Délia Tétreault, is always dear to the heart of the M.I.C.s. Sisters.

Sr. Évangéline Plamondon, Superior General, had the joy of going to China last spring. While admiring the beauty of this country, she had occasions to see the many challenges it faces. The pastoral visit of the M.I.C. missions of Asia, particularly those of Hong Kong and Taiwan, involved a very special issue: a possible return to the mission of China... our M.I.C. history has been at the heart of this country's past and present and will, hopefully, be in the future.



Photos: É. Plamondon, M.I.C.

TIAN AN MEN SQUARE

March 24, 1996. Tian An Men Square at dusk. Near the obelisk dedicated to the "heroes of the people", the wind blows playfully through a series of flapping red flags. This is where, on the first day of October, 1949, Mao Zedong hoisted the colours of the People's Republic of China for the first time. This is also the place where, in 1989, the cry for freedom of thousands of students was stifled.

I am amazed by the size of this square, the largest in the world. Here, in the quiet of this late Sunday afternoon, one experiences peace, calm and serenity. Tourists wander about astounded by such a vast space. Those familiar with the square play at who can fly the highest kite; these are shaped like fish, butterflies, flowers, etc. Families get together, soldiers march, out-of-towners discover new sights, vendors try to sell us some of these kites, all of this despite surveillance. On the wall of one

of the major buildings, a huge clock counts the days, hours and minutes till the passage of Hong Kong to China. The past, the present and the future somehow fit together in this disproportionate area. Behind us a large photograph of Mao stares at us... The Chinese of today, for their part, greet us shyly with a smile, elusive eyes and in a relaxed manner.

A RAPIDLY GROWING ECONOMY

This remembrance of China remains in my mind as a beautiful page of the story of my trip. Two weeks are quickly spent! Our short promenade on Tian An Men Square was then followed by visits to the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven and the Great Wall. In order to get to these places laden with thousands of years of history, we had to make our way through thousands of bicycles and take many detours to avoid kilometers of road, skyscrapers and industrial plants under construction. All along our journey we saw evidence of the economic boom in China: in



The past, the present and the future intermingle in this immense land.



In China, the people continue to commit themselves to building a future of freedom.



Beijing, Changchun (Manchuria), Shanghai, Nantong and Guangzhou in the South. It is moving at an accelerated pace; we had the impression that there was a race going on. In Shanghai, we were told that one thousand skyscrapers are currently under construction. China is an immense country, an immense work site!

WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

As I remember them, the people with whom we were really able to talk are smiling and courageous people, but also disappointed with the Communist revolution and deeply hurt by the cultural revolution. "They have destroyed the soul of China!" Today, these people are lifting up their heads, getting used to one sort of freedom while dreaming of another, specially for their children, as they keep hoping and striving for something more.

Some say the spiritual values have been stifled, others feel they are emerging anew. A short stay does not allow one to grasp the accuracy of these opinions. We visited a few

historic temples and places where the Emperor used to collect his thoughts, but today...

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH

As for the Catholic Church, it suffered much with the advent of the Communist regime and it still does today, though to a lesser degree. Out of this reality of the suffering Church came the *patriotic association* of the Church of China and the Underground Church. Nowadays we say the Official Church, i.e. the one officially recognized by the Chinese Government, and the Unofficial Church, i.e. not recognized by the Chinese Government because it professes attachment to the Pope and the Vatican. It is a complex situation. Our journey gave us the opportunity to meet bishops, priests, men and women religious and Christian people of both Churches. On both sides the people suffer. There are less tensions now than before, but it would be false to say that there are no more. Even within these Churches there are

misunderstandings, pain, etc. Reconciliation will be a lengthy process during which the kind and patient mercy of God, the Father of all, will have to sustain the good will of His hurting children.

In Siping and Nantong, we had the joy of meeting two superiors general of different congregations that had been formed by our sisters missioned in China before the war. It was a moving reunion. These women who have remained faithful to their faith and to their religious commitment have suffered greatly. Today they are timidly reclaiming their place; the future looks brighter and new recruits are joining them. These sisters are very grateful to us. "We have never forgotten you" said one of them.



The Forbidden City, China

WHAT WILL 1997 BE LIKE?

A year of great historic significance. On June 30, 1997, at midnight, Hong Kong, now a British colony, will become a "special administrative region" of the People's Republic of China. What does the future hold for Hong Kong? Will the people who are used to capitalist and rather democratic standards adjust to the demands of the Government of Beijing? That is the question! There is a promise on the part of China not to make any major changes in Hong Kong for the next fifty years. Will the promise be kept?...

A HISTORY OF FIDELITY

What about us, M.I.C. Sisters? What commitments do we have in such a situation? Back in 1909, our first missionaries went to far-away China for always. The years have been marked by civil struggles, the war

with Japan, the advent of Communism and the cultural revolution. There were also many and deep apostolic joys. In 1953, all M.I.C. Sisters except one, Sister Lucia Ho who was reunited with us in Canada in 1980, were expelled from the country. Has this departure caused us to forget China? No, never.

In 1954, three former missionaries of Manchuria arrived in Kuanshi, Taiwan. And we are still working in Taiwan! In 1957, we opened a kindergarten and primary school in Hong Kong. And we are still working in Hong Kong! In Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines and even in Canada, there are M.I.C. Sisters working among the Chinese people, mostly in education and evangelization.

What about China? Mainland China? It is always of great concern

to us. We keep in touch through visits, short-term or long-term professional commitments, discreet apostolic services, commitments in Canada to *Amitié-Chine* as well as to the Canada-China Program, and finally through numerous contacts, correspondence, prayer... in all faithfulness. Today, a few of our companions return to Manchuria to work, to teach English; others are already doing so in the South. To be present, offering one's days, weaving love, reconciliation and peace - this is always the mission!

Rereading the history of M.I.C. Sisters in China is rereading past and present history of humble women who, in solidarity with a people, commit themselves to build a world of justice and fraternal love. It is a matter of fidelity! A matter of vision! A matter of love! □

Évangéline Plamondon, M.I.C., Superior General (2nd r.), Maria Vie Chua, M.I.C. and Celia Chua, M.I.C., live a profound moment of reunion with Sr. Mary Loh, 82 years, Superior General of the Theresian Sisters (2nd l.) and a young religious (1st l.). This community was initiated by the M.I.C. Sisters.



The Great Wall of China

Desire and Thirst for God

One day, a disciple went to his master and said:

- Master, I want to find God.

The master looked at the young man without saying anything and smiled.

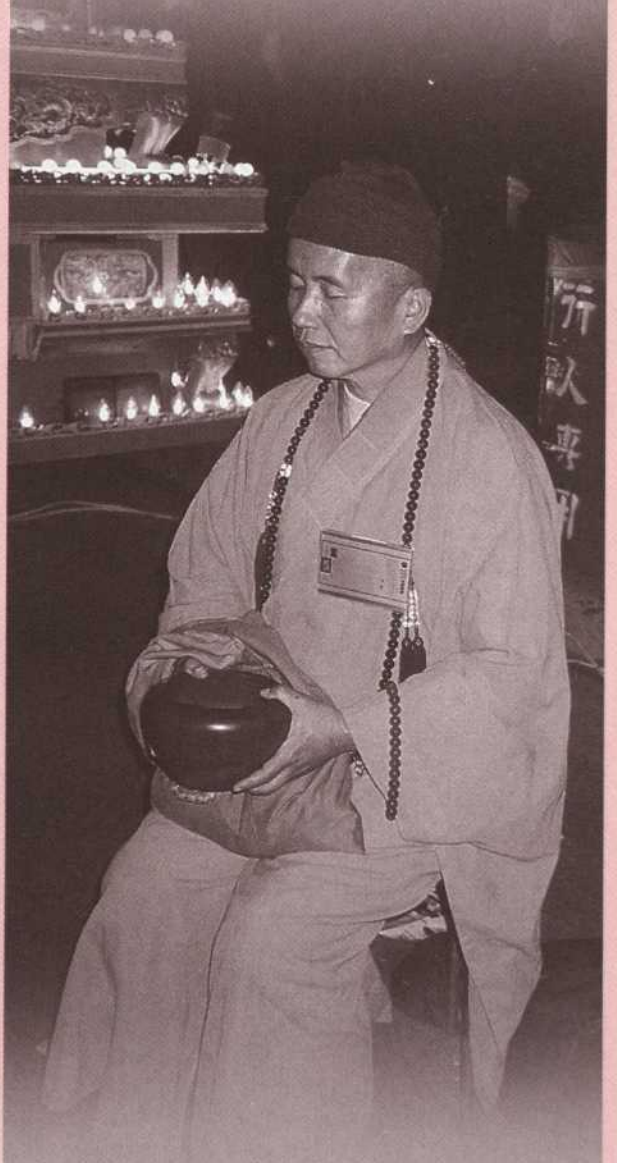
The young man returned every day repeating that he wanted to find the Absolute. But the master knew better than he did concerning this matter.

On a very hot day, the master asked the young man to go with him for a swim in the river. The young man dived in. The master followed him and forcibly kept him under the water. After the young man had struggled a while, the master let him go and asked him what he had craved for the most when he was under the water.

- Air, answered the disciple.

- Do you crave for God in the same way? asked the master. If you desire Him in this way, you will find Him instantly. If you do not have such a desire, such a thirst, no matter how much you struggle with your intellect, your lips and your strength, you will not be able to find your heart's deepest desire. So long as this thirst is not alive in you, you are no better than an atheist. Even then, an atheist is often sincere, while you are not. □

Oriental Tale



A buddist monk at the Feast of Lanterns (Taiwan)

Focus on the Mission in China

BY JACQUELINE VILLEMURE, M.I.C.

A conference organized by the US Catholic China Bureau was held March 15-17, 1996, in Holyoke, Massachusetts, USA with the theme: "The Churches of China and of North America - New Relational Paradigms". A panel of five resource persons from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Canada and the United States opened the debate. Sr. Jacqueline Villemure, panel member from Montreal, summarizes for us her presentation on "The Canadian Perspective of the Mission of the Churches" in China.



THE CANADIAN CHURCH AND CHINA

The Church of Canada can be proud of its contribution to the missionary effort of the Universal Church in China since the beginning of this century. Four Canadian communities particularly draw our attention because of the fact that from the moment the boundaries were reopened in the 70's, these communities, which had been forced to withdraw twenty years earlier, took the initiative and mandated some of their members to resume the mission in China. We are speaking of the Jesuits, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, the Quebec and the Ontario (Scarboro) Foreign Mission Societies.

A dozen or so Canadian communities have sent missionaries to China. Those mentioned above supplied 347 missionaries in the first part of the 20th century. Their eagerness and concern to return to China at the first opportunity are inspired by the same missionary dynamism as in the past. But there is more: each of them had left behind a number of very promising young Christian communities which they had tried to support through the difficult years of the country's re-organization.

Today, the mission in China is carried out in an atmosphere of

political uncertainty and is characterized by discretion and the necessity to limit oneself to individual commitments. The religious communities must adopt an attitude of availability; they must keep well-informed and invest in preparing some of their members, even without the certainty of being allowed entry into China. In the future, a major part of the missionary activity of these communities will have to be based in countries of the Far East.

These communities participate in the *Canada-China Catholic Working Group* established in 1988 under the sponsorship of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. In Quebec, the Jesuits, the Foreign Mission Society and the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception set up the *Amitié-Chine* group in 1981. The success of the mission in the future will rest on the ability to work increasingly within networks and to address wide-ranging and highly publicized issues, such as the promotion of women.



Sr. Jacqueline Villemure (l.) and a nurse from the Norman Bethune Military Hospital of Shijiazhuang, China

A PROFILE OF THE MISSION IN CHINA

What is striking about China is the effervescence, the vitality. The youth are numerous and determined, and in every social stratum one can see the will to build a better future. On the other hand, it is a country with such ethnic, linguistic and economic differences that little room is left for generalizations. Thus one must quickly move toward individual solutions if one wishes to have an impact.

The Church in China is divided into two factions: the Official Church, controlled by the Government, and the Unofficial Church.

The speakers at the conference voiced the opinion that the current challenge of the Church in China is, above all else, to counter the rise of materialism. The Church must be concerned with the youth, who are presently athirst for spiritual values and open to the Gospel message. It must also focus its efforts on the formation of the laity, full of good will but ill-prepared, and on the development and experimentation of small faith communities.

The debate on the two Church factions remains very topical. On the one hand, there is no meaningful message or action without reconciliation; on the other hand, if the attention spent on solving this problem weakens the effort of evangelization, it is energy wrongly spent. One participant suggested viewing the situation in light of the Chinese theory of the Yin and the Yang. If the differences between the Yin and the Yang come to a resolution in the Dao, why not visualize the Church as having a dark face and a clear face, reconciled by the prophetic dimension expressed in a common Gospel.

The conference also looked into the role of the Churches of other countries with regard to the Church of China. The evangelization of China, as well as the unification of the two Chinese Churches, must be done by the Chinese of China, who are the ones to know what to do, how to do it and when to do it. What then is the task of the sister Churches, not only the Western Church, but also those of Taiwan and Hong Kong? They are to correct their false perception of China, to promote a positive image of the country and to treat as equals their colleagues, the Chinese seminarians and priests invited to study abroad. Patience is a major requirement: why demand that China attain today the point at which the Western Church took 2000 years to arrive? "If you love China", said one panelist, "love it as it is today." The success of any form of co-operation between the sister Churches and the Church of China finally rests on the ability to think globally and to act locally. Which led one panelist to say that the challenge of the Churches lies in letting "the thousand flowers bloom", encouraging the Church of China to let the laity have their place, to make room for the Bible and for local initiatives and creativity. They are not to copy the Churches of other places in the choices these have made in the past of prioritizing questions of hierarchy, liturgy,



A work session with administrative personnel of health establishments, Hebei Province, China

universality and orthodoxy. Finally, the role of foreign powers and that of foreign Churches is to help China and the Church of China to be partners in development by taking part in their initiatives in this domain.

These few days of reflection made us realize that the paradigm (model) of human rights is inadequate, as is insufficient that of international development, to establish the basis of constructive relations between countries and between Churches. A new paradigm is slowly taking shape in the Church milieu: that of an *exchange of gifts between local sister Churches*, an idea that was developed by Jim Kroeger of the American Maryknoll Missionary Society. The term *local* stresses that every Church is different and autonomous, while the word *sister* invites one to intimacy, respect and equality. The word *Churches* calls to mind a pilgrim people in the process of becoming, and the idea of *gift* introduces that of sharing. Is it not true that each culture only acknowledges and is sensitized to one part of the Gospel, and therefore has something unique to share? Behaving as *sister Churches* will lead to providing for the growth of the Churches and establishing the conditions for a genuine *exchange of gifts*.

We are now better informed concerning the Church in China and the expectations of this growing Church. Our own task therefore is to explore those leads with courage and audacity! □



End of the course on "Methods of Qualitative Research" for managers of enterprises in the Tianjin region, China

The Old Man of the Cross



George Hoh and Sr. Gabrielle Drouin in front of the church with the marble cross

BY GABRIELLE DROUIN, M.I.C.

Along our days, we come to know individuals who first appear to us as very ordinary persons. Gradually, as they share their beautiful personal experiences, the quintessence of their interior journey is revealed. George Hoh, an old friend of Sr. Gabrielle Drouin, missionary in Taiwan, has found words to reveal to her the depth and driving force of his spiritual experience.

In Taipei, a big white marble cross highlights the façade of the Holy Family Church. Each day, from the sidewalk, an old man spent long moments in prayer, his eyes intently fixed on the cross. The people have thus named him *the old man of the cross*.

Born in Northwest China in 1887, in the difficult years of the last Dynasty, George Hoh was orphaned of both father and mother at the age of nine. After living in different families, all of them equally poor, he was placed in a Protestant orphanage where he attended primary school. Being an intelligent and obedient child, he loved school and was sent South to complete high school. At fifteen, he joined the Protestant Church and showed interest in becoming a preacher later on.

China was then living the last years of Imperial rule. The country was changing rapidly and the thought of a new form of government stirred people's minds and pervaded their conversations. This is when

George met Dr. Sun Yat Sen, who was talking to the students about founding and establishing solidly in China a Republic to free its people from the slavery of ignorance and poverty. George was impressed by his words as were all the students befriended by Dr. Sun. He incited them, not to take up arms, but to spread among the people the idea of a Chinese Republic. Following this encounter, Mr. Hoh and his friends cut off the long braid of hair they had been wearing.

After completing his university studies in Shanghai, George Hoh launched in foreign trade. He even went to Honolulu where he settled and somewhat prospered. He married a local Chinese Catholic woman and they had two daughters. He then returned to Shanghai with his family when his daughters were very young, and threw himself headlong in commerce and the hectic worldly life of a Shanghai businessman. He no longer had time for his family or for the religious devotions of his youth. His wife was unable to adjust to life in China, which still grappled with

internal turmoil. She died when the elder daughter was only ten. The outbreak of the Second World War restricted George Hoh's field of activity, but it was only after the war that he was placed under house arrest with several of his colleagues who had had dealings with foreigners. Each of them occupied a small room in a building of Shanghai. No one was allowed to go out of his room without the guard's permission. They were called at any time of day or night for endless interrogation sessions at which they were forced to incriminate themselves or others. Some of them never returned from these sessions, which heightened the anguish of those who were left.

During these hard years of detention, George Hoh who spent his days and nights facing himself and the walls of his room, finally began to reflect on his life. For several weeks, he saw himself as a total failure: not only had he lost all his possessions, but he had neglected his wife and daughters and deprived them of his affection to the point of losing them. He had put

aside his faith and forgotten those who had received him, brought him up and educated him. "Everything was dark. Where could I turn for refuge? Where could I find peace of mind? My only and dreadful prospect was that of being executed. One day, the thought of Jesus the Saviour suddenly overwhelmed me. I fell on my knees, my head bowed into the filth of this room which was never cleaned, and I cried out through my tears: 'Lord, I have sinned against you. In your mercy, forgive the sinner that I am.' I remained in this position for a long time, crying out my distress and praying. Suddenly, it seemed that an enormous weight was lifted from me. I felt personally loved by God despite everything and a feeling of calm which I had never experienced before came over me. A deep inner peace gave me great hope in life, even though at times I thought I was about to be executed. I began meditating on passages of the Bible that came back to my mind - long excerpts recalled spontaneously. I no longer felt emptiness or despair, but a pacifying presence. My days had now become long periods of meditation."

Towards the end of the 60's, now over eighty years of age, Mr. Hoh dared to ask his officers to let him go, as he was too old to be of any use to his country. Finally set free, but penniless and without a family, he left China for Hong Kong first, and then for Taiwan where he found his elder daughter in Taipei.

It was on one of his daily strolls that George Hoh discovered the large white marble cross of the church. When he looked at it from the sidewalk, where he stopped each time, motionless and silent, he seemed transfigured. He came back day after day and no one dared to interrupt him, but he never entered the church. He was to go later after a five-year journey during which I accompanied him for two or three weekly visits. These encounters were filled with many questions and personal reflections... And, our dialogue became really ecumenical.

On one of my visits, he accepted



At 97 years, George Hoh receives the sacrament of Baptism at the Holy Family Church in Taipei.

to talk to me about the cross, a subject which he always avoided. We were sharing about the freedom of God's gifts when he broke into tears. Regaining his composure, he said to me: "Don't laugh at what I am going to tell you now, for I am not lying. When I look at the large cross, I see someone on it, always the same one. It is Jesus, the one on your crosses, but he wears a garb, somewhat like your priests when they celebrate Mass. He is not suffering or sad like the one in the church, but His face is glorious. He looks in the distance, as though there were no horizon. His face is that of a conqueror, but it is gentle and kind. I have no words to describe it." He began to weep again, as though exhausted by the effort to tell his secret. He repeated: "You can be sure that I am not lying to you. This vision fills my days with happiness, but I dare not talk about it to anyone: they would think that I have lost my mind."

Shortly after this confidence, George Hoh expressed his desire to be baptized in the Catholic Church. He was 97 years old when he received Baptism in the church of the large marble cross. His happiness was evident. Two years later, when he had become so weak as to be confined to his bed, being fully alert but scarcely able to sleep, Mr. Hoh made this last confidence: "While people are asleep, I pray in their name and I thank the

Lord for all the graces received during the day. I praise the Lord for them: there are still so many who do not know Him. This is the mission God has entrusted to me now, and it makes me happy."

George Hoh died following a bout of the flu a few weeks before he was to celebrate his hundredth birthday, after having thanked over and over again the Catholic friends who surrounded him. The funeral procession that led him to his final rest gathered beneath the large cross which had brightened his twilight years with the presence of his Saviour. □

MISSIONARY INTENTIONS

NOVEMBER 1996

*Jesus, sent by the Father,
we pray for a revival of
missionary awareness
in baptised persons
everywhere.*

DECEMBER 1996

*Lord Jesus,
may the anniversary of
your birth move us to better
appreciate the beauty of the
gift of life and to live it fully!*



Students of Xijiang University, China, with their teacher, Sr. Lucie Gagné (3rd l.).



Photos: M.I.C.

Sr. Lucie participates in a fund raising campaign organized by the university to help students from the rural regions.

Building Bridges of Communion

BY LUCIE GAGNÉ, M.I.C.

For one who is interested in persons, encounters are always important. Sr. Lucie Gagné, English teacher in a university of China, experienced this on a recent trip to visit her M.I.C. companions of Hong Kong. Her love for people allows her to build bridges of communion between the two countries. She relates a conversation with a Chinese taxi driver whose wisdom was proof to her that the Spirit of God dwells in simple and honest hearts.

I experienced a special joy when I was assigned to teach English at Zhaoqing University, China, a few hours away from Hong Kong, and more was yet to come... Lately, on returning to our M.I.C. convent, I boarded a taxi at the China-Hong Kong Ferry Terminal. Along the way, a casual conversation with the driver became a grace-filled moment which I shall long remember.

In spite of my poor Cantonese, I speak to him of my work in China and mention that many of my English students come from poor families. He then shares about his own philosophy of life and experiences. He comes from a poor family in China. He immigrated to Hong Kong at the age of nine. Many problems and difficulties awaited him, but owing to hard work and determination, he was able to improve his life situation and is presently enjoying his work as a taxi driver. Candidly, he discloses that his greatest joy and satisfaction is to help others.

I tell him that I am a Catholic and a religious. He claims that he has no religion. At that very moment flashes into my mind the Word of God that I had meditated upon that very morning before leaving China: "Love your neighbor as yourself". I thus avail of this opportunity to share with him

about the Christian message of love and make him conscious that, in fact, he is living out the great value of neighbourly love. And from one thing to another we end up talking about 1997. I ask him if he is planning to immigrate... what are his feelings about this important issue. And he goes on to explain: "Why should I immigrate? Wherever we go we are bound to encounter difficulties, to suffer, and eventually we are all going back to heaven." These words from a non-believer deeply impress me. He is very down-to-earth, speaking so sincerely about the living out of the paschal mystery in one's daily life. For him what matters is to help others, to make other people happy.

The Spirit of God is very much at work in the heart of this taxi driver. Arriving at my destination, I hand out the money for my fare. The driver refuses to accept it and asks me instead to give this money to a poor student in China. I thank him and promise to do so in his name. I bless and give thanks to the Lord for having given me this opportunity to build a bridge of communion between Hong Kong and China. I am especially grateful to have this experience of perceiving the Spirit of God - the Spirit of the Gospel - so alive in the heart of this supposedly non-Christian. What reasons to give thanks! □

Ave Maria



*Atop its frail stem
Filled with fresh sap
A young
Simple
Newly opened Flower
Smiled
To the midday sun.*

*One fine spring day
On his daily round
An Angel of heaven
Came rustling by
Filled with God's tenderness.*

*He said to her in confidence:
Little Flower
The Mighty One
Has chosen you
To be the Spirit's Bride
Of your fruitful stock
Will come Him
Who will cause the hardest hearts
To burst open
And to bloom
Even among the thistles.*

*Her YES rang out
And all of Paradise
Began singing
In unison
AVE MARIA.*

*The Angel left her
But the Flower remained
And all the Earth
Filled with excitement and joy
Broke into song
AVE MARIA. □*

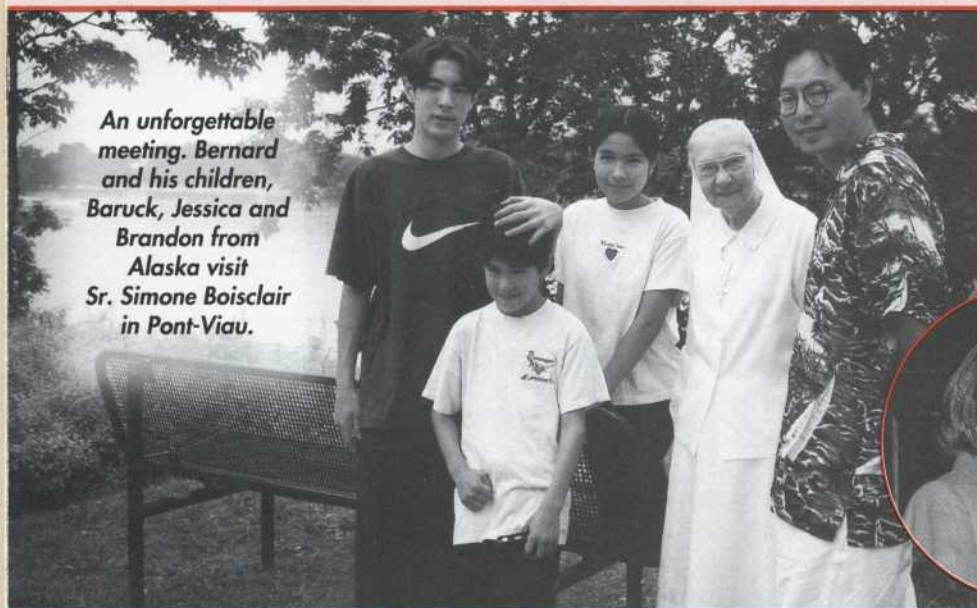
Colette Soucy - China

God Writes Straight on Crooked Lines

BY SIMONE BOISCLAIR, M.I.C.

Life's byways are often unexpected, even puzzling at times. This meandering, as faith tells us, is not the product of mere hazard, but of Providential designs. "Reality sometimes transcends the dream", notes Sr. Simone Boisclair. She tells us the story of Jeannine and her son Bernard.

From Asia to America, a unique adventure!



An unforgettable meeting. Bernard and his children, Baruck, Jessica and Brandon from Alaska visit Sr. Simone Boisclair in Pont-Viau.

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

child. It was thanks to my cousins, a childless couple, that help was afforded in behalf of the baby, thus allowing Jeannine and her husband to improve their living conditions. It is worth noting that my cousins' charity was well rewarded sometime later when a child of their own

came to gladden their home. Bernard lost his father at a very early age. But financial aid received enabled Jeannine to complete her university studies and assume the education of her son, with the occasional help of missionaries who had witnessed her difficulties and courage along the years. After working a few years



Jeannine (Sou Louo Ping) on the occasion of her retirement from the World Bank of Washington in 1993.

You have a visitor from Alaska who claims that you know his mother", announces the receptionist. What a surprise! It is Bernard, the only son of Jeannine, one of my former students in China. He comes to Pont-Viau to bring me messages his mother entrusted to him before her death.

A whole page of my missionary life unfurls in my mind as I see this young man I had known as a child, now married, father of three children. Deeply moved, we speak about his mother and the circumstances of her last months on earth. I then share details about her youth and his own childhood. Bernard's life is a story of love that has evolved from Asia to America, and which is so beautiful that I am urged to note it here so others may also praise the Lord for His wonders!

REMEMBERING JEANNINE...

I have known Sou Louo Ping (Jeannine) as a young girl in Suchow, where I accompanied her journey towards the Catholic faith. Due to the rise of communism, she left the country with Isabelle, a close friend and classmate. Both studied law at Aurore Catholic University of Shanghai. Jeannine never saw her again. Having to provide for herself, going from one country to another to pursue her studies and earn a living, Jeannine kept in contact with me whom she came to consider as a mother. One day, she informed me that she was married and had a child.

Refugees, as many of their compatriots, without family support nor financial resources, the couple faced many difficulties. Jeannine could not even work outside, because she could not afford to ensure the care of her

in Asian embassies, she decided to emigrate to the United States. Here again, she was fortunate to meet missionaries she had known earlier who helped her adjust to American society.

As to Bernard, while continuing his studies in Economics, he worked night shifts in a bank. Upon graduation, he was offered a good position but he felt he was not ready to settle down in this type of work. Like many young people, he lived a period of adventure, travelling through the United States and Canada. This is how, one day, he discovered Alaska. He settled there, married and started a private business.

In June 1993, Jeannine retired from the World Bank in Washington. She had planned trips to visit relatives and friends. What could have been

her reactions when medical examinations revealed that she was afflicted with generalized cancer? At first, she hoped to be cured but little by little she realized that God was asking her the sacrifice of her life! Sustained by prayer, the grace of God and her living faith, she finally accepted lovingly the will of God. At the beginning of September 1993, unable to stay alone in her Maryland home any longer, she accepted in all serenity that her son bring her to Alaska where she lived her last weeks with him and his family.

I accompanied Jeannine along her spiritual journey through regular correspondence and telephone calls since she remained lucid to the end. Then came a time when this comfort became impossible because, she said, "they give me morphine to ease the pain." It is the only time she ever alluded to suffering. She was grateful for the care and spiritual assistance which never lacked. Conscious that her encounter with God would come soon, she sent me touching adieux recorded on a cassette.



Bernard meets his "foster parents", Francois and Pauline Boisclair of Trois-Rivières.

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

many ways, these are unforgettable, stirring moments, unusual moments in a lifetime when reality seems to exceed one's expectations. How Jeannine must rejoice for these truly providential and happy reunions!

BERNARD AND HIS ADOPTIVE PARENTS

It is this lovely story of his mother's life that Bernard and I shared during our meeting at Pont-Viau. As I recalled the episode of the assistance received from my Canadian cousins when he was a baby, an idea suddenly came to my mind. How about inviting them to come and meet Bernard? A telephone call is made and a few hours later, a couple from Trois-Rivières stand in front of their "little Chinese" of bygone days, now a model businessman, whose contribution to American society was recognized by an award received at the White House from the hands of the President of the United States. And what a surprise to hear their "adopted Chinese son" from Alaska express himself in French, learnt long ago in a French school in Laos! In

Last June 1996, Bernard kept his promise to return to Pont-Viau to introduce his children to me: Baruch, Jessica and Brandon, aged 14, 12 and 10 respectively. This meeting gave me the joys of a "great grandmother" for I recognized Jeannine's spirit alive in them. For the children, these were moments of increased admiration and affection for their beloved departed.

On my part, when I reflect on the mystery of this life - a life that I helped to protect and that goes on through Jeannine's son and grandchildren - it comes to my mind that God writes straight on crooked lines, for that was the life of Jeannine, my spiritual daughter. And perhaps very much mine also. How can we explain otherwise the unexpected bends along the itinerary of a young Canadian M.I.C. Sister who left for China in 1936? ☐

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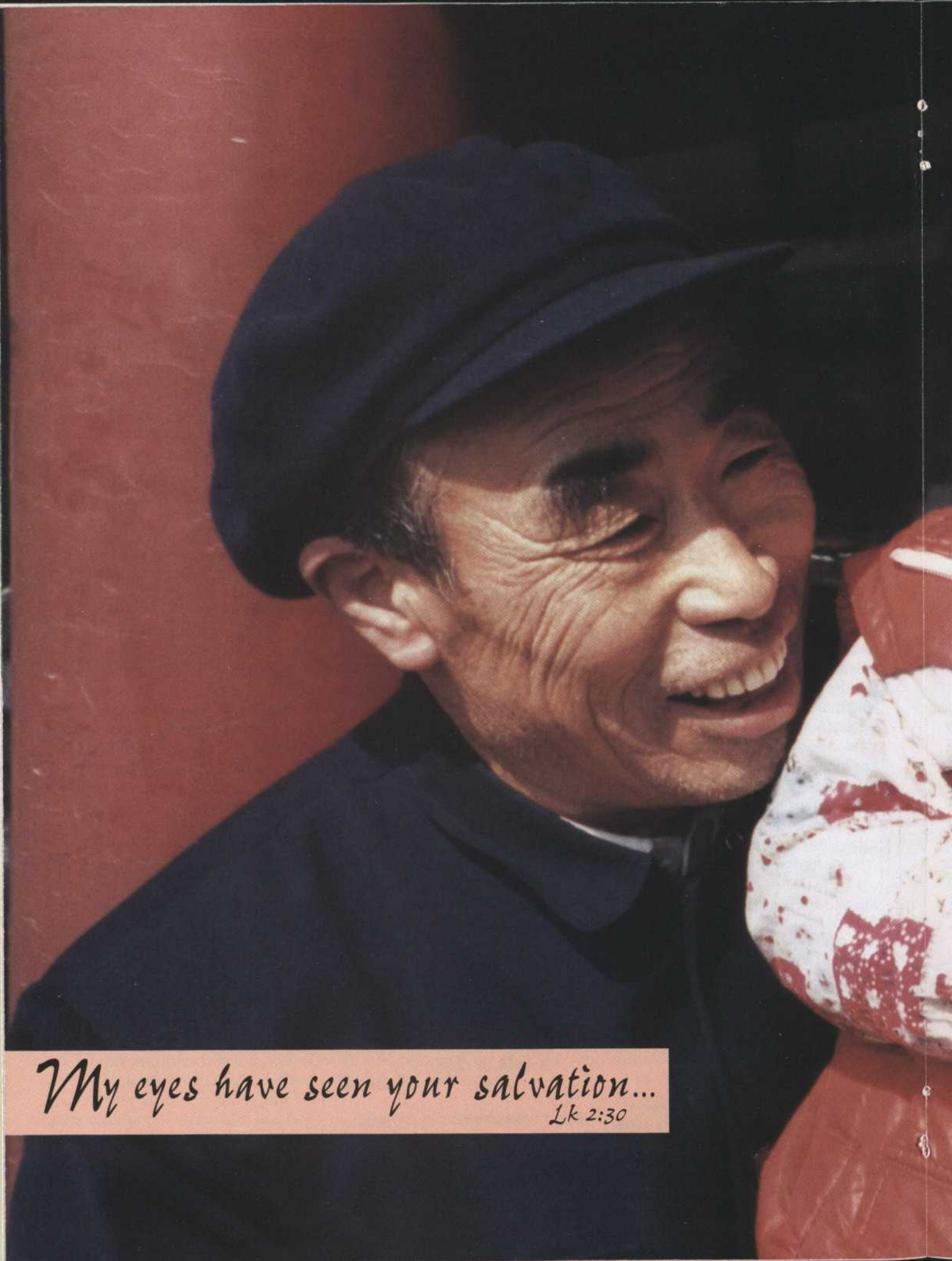
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♥ HEARTFELT THANKS ♥



My eyes have seen your salvation...

Lk 2:30



THE UNDAUNTED

BY CHRISTIAN BEAULIEU



Life puts us through severe tests. Though there are some easy, simple routes along the way where one runs smoothly straight ahead, there are also narrow passes, detours and even dead-ends to surmount. Something valuable is then offered to us, affirms Christian Beaulieu. He invites us to look at the life of the Apostle Paul... and we are challenged to learn how to transform our difficulties into sources of hope and of self-transcendence.

There was indeed no lack of annoyance and conflict in the life of the Apostle Paul. Time and again, he banged his head against all sorts of walls. He had to struggle with heaps of problems, being thus immersed in the waters of the great abyss!

His life story is like a mirror in which everyone can recognize his own image. Which one of us has not often felt, that he or she was limited in ability and quite ill-prepared? Is there anyone who has never encountered any difficulty in communication due to differences of mentality or culture? Who has not heard couples, parents and young people complain: "We are divided into two distinct worlds, as though we did not live on the same planet..." Who among us has not experienced tensions and conflicts apparently unsolvable? Who has not dreamt of seeing these dead-end roads open up and lead somewhere?

WHAT ABOUT THE OBSTACLES TO LOVE?

Of course, as soon as Love and the Word set out to get somewhere, how many obstacles arise to block their way. Resistance shows its face on all sides in unthinkable aspects! Most of all, the resistance to change!

The Apostle Paul learned all this in real life and at his own expense. As the saying goes: Practice makes perfect. Theory stems from practice. And the resistance he encountered in the heat of action caused a resurgence of his personal problems of fear, frailty and deficiency in communication... He must have often wondered whether he would not be stopped in his course by such innumerable obstacles...

Did he allow himself to be discouraged and depressed for all that? Far from it! He used every trial as a source of incredible rebound. He had indeed learned so much even from his mistakes! This is how, in Athens one day, speaking before a distinguished audience, Paul attempted to hide his weakness behind the strength of his arguments. He tried to hide the Cross behind the Resurrection. And he failed. He then discovered that the strength of the Resurrection and of any rebound is revealed, in fact, through the Cross and through one's weaknesses.

HEART

Thus, it was through his failures that the Apostle Paul learned everything at the school of life. He learned to adjust, to get back on his feet, to bounce back again and again and to keep trying out new ways of doing things. And this is how he succeeded in transforming conflicts into sources of spirituality.

TRANSFORMING CONFLICT INTO A SOURCE OF SPIRITUALITY...

What about us? How do we manage to effect the same transformation? Do we succeed in setting aside a quiet space for ourselves to restore our energy so as not to stray from our course? And, despite all our hectic activities and the difficulties encountered, to keep an open and operative channel of communication with the inexhaustible source within? To practice skin diving...?

So often I have noticed this in people whose life has been stripped to the core: those afflicted by cancer, AIDS or a handicap... Yes, I have seen them change conflict into a well-spring from which they drew as never before the waters of unsuspected depths! I have observed their ability to bounce back and to transform the problem into a source of hope and excellence.

Through these obstacles, many old habits and attitudes were broken up, allowing new ones to emerge. From being chained, these people have become free as they had never been before! Their suffering is not the groaning of a dying person, but the cry of a newborn infant. This is how they came to drink from the source that appeared to be dried up! This is the way to develop an art of living in times of trouble!

Something similar happens frequently in our lives and in nature. Do you know when the chrysanthemums bloom in autumn? At the time when the maple leaves begin to fall. The chrysanthemums are soon covered up, hidden to those unaware of their existence. Yet, they are really there! But one must remove the leaves covering them in order to see them. Like a poorly wrapped present that must be opened!

If we could see the innate depth of persons and events, we would be dazzled by the splendor of the divine life which is at work in their heart and flesh. And all would exclaim in wonderment: "How marvelous ! Miraculous... !" □

He Fascinated Me

BY THERESA CHANG, M.I.C. AND ZENAIDE CORREIA, M.I.C.

The call to religious life takes on many forms. The Lord calls whomever He wishes, wherever He wishes. Theresa Chang, a Taiwanese, was fascinated by Christ and by His gratuitous love. Zenaide Correia, of Portuguese origin emigrated to Canada, also heard the call to religious missionary life. The Lord invited each one differently to share His plan of salvation in the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

"He Fascinated Me" was the theme chosen by the Diocese of Taipei for the World Vocation Day. This title speaks to me because Christ actually fascinated me. As I advance in religious life, I discover with awe how the Lord has incited me to follow Him. It was a call to enter into His life, He who, since my birth, carried me tenderly without letting me down nor withdrawing for a single moment His paternal protection.

The first time I experienced the powerful fascination of the Lord dates back to the time of my novitiate, when our group sang together *Fishers of Men*. Deep in my heart I suddenly felt to what extent the Lord loved me and attracted me. I felt a force urging me to launch out after Him, I who knew neither how to swim nor how to proclaim His message. I wanted to leave my boat in order to go out to others. Christ would be my pilot. He who had been walking with me step by step, would teach me how to live, how to remain at peace in Him and how to walk in His presence with joy. During my immediate preparation for perpetual vows, I was deeply challenged for the second time by the words of Saint Paul: *Whether I live, whether I die, all I want is that Christ be glorified in me*. These words were so appropriate to the vocation He had called me!

On the very day of my perpetual vows, a violent typhoon hit Taiwan, destroying property and uprooting trees by the sheer power of the wind. What a contrast with my own sentiments at this moment! I felt very happy and serene. Rich with the blessing of my elder sisters and of the members of my family, I walked to the



Sr. Theresa Chang desires to share her love of God and of the Church through the vocation promotion ministry.

Photo: M.I.C., Taiwan



Sr. Theresa (2nd r., 2nd l.), and classmates at a summer session, University of New Brunswick

Photo: M.I.C.

altar of the Lord for the final offering of my whole life. I was aware of the greatness of the grace the Lord was giving me. This grace which is so real and so deep cannot be put into words. Now, when someone mentions my profession, my companions always remind me of the weather on that day and tease me about this climatic phenomenon which, it seems, had some kind of symbolic meaning: is there not a challenge, a risk involved in offering one's entire life? Undoubtedly so. But the efforts I have made to go through inevitable difficulties were not without the presence and support of the Lord's love which has nourished my life. This is why I can reread my life as I would watch the flow of a clear brook encountering unexpected things on its course. I can remain standing in spite of the winds and tides and continue to choose the Lord. I can thus go forward with hope in life.

Last year, while in Canada for a session on formation, I discovered another aspect of my religious life: internationality in my Congregation! I met so many M.I.C. Sisters of various nationalities, cultures and languages forming one great family. As a young Chinese sister, I

intensely enjoyed the welcome, acceptance, affection and respect of my companions. What a love I felt! I found in this love my deep rootedness. Even though I had never been to Canada before, I felt like a child coming home. I was like a pampered child allowed to draw from the family treasure. The Lord gave me once again the desire to share in His life and to bring it to all the nations of the world. I have received a great deal from this gratuitous call of the Lord: "Come, follow me". I want to spend the rest of my life praising God and thanking Him for all His blessings. □ *

Theresa Chang, M.I.C.

I said YES

On June 2nd, 1996, I made my perpetual vows in my parish in Vancouver. I said *YES to the Lord forever* in the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. That day, for me, was the culmination of a stage of my life and the deepening of a relationship woven in the course of day-to-day living.

Born in the Azores Islands, Portugal, I emigrated to Canada with my parents and sister at the age of ten. For 13 years, as an adolescent, a university student and a parish worker, I allowed myself to be touched by the difficulties and challenges of my surroundings. This experience made me reflect on the meaning of life and increase my commitments to various organizations. The challenges of society and of the Christian community in my parish, the Word of God and an interior thirst and desire led me to a deep search for God and His will on me within His plan of love.

Photo: M.I.C., Vancouver



Photo: M.-P. Charbonneau, M.I.C.



Celebrating her perpetual profession in Vancouver - Sr. Zenaide Correia (2nd, r.) with her mother, Mrs. Deolinda Correia (l.), Bishop Adam Exner, O.M.I., and Denise Bourgeois, M.I.C., Provincial Superior.

Sr. Zenaide looks forward to returning to Cuba, after her Theology studies in Quebec.

In the course of this at times ambiguous search, I met the M.I.C. Sisters and other religious communities. Amidst all my questions, doubts, joys and discoveries, my desire grew deeper... Finally, I listened to and accepted the Lord's call to the consecrated and missionary life. During my formation years, in Ottawa, Montreal, Cuba... I learned how to love tenderly and humbly in the gratuitousness and mercy of the Lord. Little by little, the definitive YES to God as an M.I.C. emerged in me. A great peace and joy settled in me when I received the affirmative response of the Institute.

Recently, my faith experience was strengthened by the month I spent with my family and friends in Vancouver. These people welcomed me home again, supported me in my choice of life and shared with me their own joyful or sorrowful journey. The Lord gave me back to my people and we celebrated His call and my response. In this place where I first heard the invitation to the consecrated life, my perpetual YES resonated as a response of the Church. I am grateful for so many gestures of good will received and I give thanks for the love of the Lord who manifested Himself tangibly through people, events and situations. I am happy to live as a follower of His with so many other M.I.C. disciples in an Institute called to be, in the world and in the Church, *Marian, missionary in thanksgiving.* □

Zenaide Correia, M.I.C.

* Translated from Chinese by Gabrielle Drouin, M.I.C.



Gisèle Picard, M.I.C.
From St-Roch-des-Aulnaies,
Diocese of Ste-Anne-de-la-Pocatière.
Left for Chile in May 1996
after working in Bolivia and Peru.



Rita Guay, M.I.C.
From Montreal,
Archdiocese of Montreal.
Returned to Zambia
in May 1996.



Yvette Hervieux, M.I.C.
From Lanoraie,
Diocese of Joliette.
Returned to Zambia
in May 1996.



Laurence Tourigny, M.I.C.
From Ste-Eulalie,
Diocese of Nicolet.
Returned to Haiti
in May 1996.

MISSIONARIES OF THE GOSPEL



Yolande Laroche, M.I.C.
From Lotbinière,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Zambia
in July 1996.



Suzanne Morneau, M.I.C.
From Ste-Perpétue,
Diocese of Ste-Anne-de-la-Pocatière.
Returned to Japan
in August 1996.



Monique Cloutier, M.I.C.
From Ottawa,
Archdiocese of Ottawa.
Returned to Japan
in September 1996.



Simonne Perreault, M.I.C.
From Lachevrotière,
Diocese of Trois-Rivières.
Returned to Cuba
in September 1996.



Louise Bussi res, M.I.C.
From Montreal,
Archdiocese of Montreal.
Returned to Hong Kong
in May 1996.



Carmen Castonguay, M.I.C.
From Edmunston, N.B.,
Diocese of Edmunston.
Returned to the Philippines
in June 1996.



Laurette Gauvin, M.I.C.
From Ste-Catherine,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Zambia
in July 1996.



Germaine P russe, M.I.C.
From Deschaillons,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Malawi
in July 1996.

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

In 20:21



Th r se Par , M.I.C.
From St-Denis-sur-Richelieu,
Diocese of St-Hyacinthe.
Returned to Haiti
in September 1996.



Estelle Fontaine, M.I.C.
From Valcourt,
Diocese of Sherbrooke.
Returned to Madagascar
in September 1996.

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**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SOLIDARITY**

The year 1996
marked the 75th anniversary
of the Quebec Foreign Mission Society
(Société des Missions-Étrangères).

The Missionary Sisters
of the Immaculate Conception
celebrated this event last June
in a fraternal feast held at
the M.I.C. house of Pont Viau.

Sr. Veronique Bernatchez offers
this symbolic poem to all the members
of the Foreign Mission Society
for their generous YES to the Mission.

I Send You...

The Bow said to the Arrow: *I send you.*
And the arrow went off from the bow.
It brutally hit the bird
The bird died.
The arrow never returned.

The Canon said to the Bullet: *I send you.*
The bullet went off from the canon.
A soldier was hit.
He died.
The bullet never returned.

The Weapon said to the Atom: *I send you.*
The atom fell from the plane.
Cities were hit.
Thousands of people died. The pilot wept.
The atom never returned.

The Sun said to the Ray: *I send you.*
Without leaving the sun, the ray touched the ice.
The ice became a light mist.
The ray was never detached from the sun.

The Sun said to the Ray: *I send you.*
And out of the hardened soil came the sprout,
Preparing the fragrant rose for the morrow.

The Sun said to the Ray: *I send you.*
Golden ears of wheat came forth as joyful offering
To the hand of the harvester.

The Sun said to the Ray: *I send you.*
And all the Beauties of autumn
Were added to the flavours of the fruits.

Then the Lord said to me: *I send you.*

*I send you, not like the blind force
That spares neither bird, nor soldier, nor people.
I send you like the ray which never leaves the sun,
And keeps returning to it whenever it launches forth
Because in the sun is its origin and abode.
I send you. And it is I who abide in you
And act in you if you abide in me.
And because it is I acting through you,
All things become Beautiful and Good
When touched by this ray.*

*Should this ray not be accepted,
Should it meet but coldness, contempt, oblivion, hatred,
You shall remain a Ray of Joy and Peace
Because you are One with me, your Sun.
The name of your Sun is Love
You enlighten, warm and delight, those you touch
You love as I do and with me...*

Do you accept to love like this?

*O my beloved Sun,
What a grace is the love you are offering me!
To stay with you always and everywhere!*

In adoration and thanksgiving, I say to you:

*Send me, that I may tell everyone
Who my Sun is! □*

Véronique Bernatchez, M.I.C.

In the Glory of the Risen Lord

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

Sister Marguerite-Marie Dumas (Marie-Judith)

Born September 29, 1904, in St-Côme, Beauce county, Marguerite entered the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception on August 8, 1926, where she was to live for 70 years. Assigned to different M.I.C. houses in Quebec, she helped to maintain good health by preparing substantial meals. To this demanding but important service were knotted and interlaced numerous threads weaving her relationship with God and others, making of her a woman according to God's heart, a missionary, a sister attentive to the well-being of her companions. Her interpersonal relationships were permeated with kindness; her good



humor gladdened hearts and contributed to maintain the family spirit.

At the age of 82, as she was crossing the street on her way to Mass, she was hit by a car - an accident from which she could never completely recover. Handicapped, she had to enter the infirmary of Pont-Viau. She generously accepted her condition and took advantage of it to read and pray more. Her desire was to spend her last days thanking the Lord for all His blessings. On April 26, 1996, having reached her 92nd birthday, she gratefully entrusted her life in the hands of God. □

Sister Marie-Fabiola Mailly (Marie-Fabiola)

Marie-Fabiola was born in Montreal on December 4, 1907. She spent her childhood and youth in her father's native parish, St-Pierre-les-Becquets, near the St. Lawrence River. Her father was the lighthouse keeper in this town where he had settled as a contractor. Her mother, a woman of faith, began the Catholic upbringing of the eleven children very early. She instilled in Fabiola a filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin. At 24 years, Fabiola fulfilled her cherished dream of consecrating herself to the Lord in a religious community dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

The talents of Marie-Fabiola were diverse, allowing her to assume generously various community and apostolic



services in some of our houses in Canada. In turn receptionist, sacristan, collaborator at the art studio, or promoter of our review *LE PRÉCURSEUR*, she always found ways of exercising her missionary zeal for the benefit of all those she met.

Soft-spoken, kind, gentle and always grateful, Marie-Fabiola drew her spiritual energy from her love for the Eucharist and her deep devotion to Mary. During her four-year stay at the Infirmary of Pont-Viau, she prayed much, offering her life with love. She died at the age of 88, on May 10, 1996, after 65 years as an M.I.C. A long day of work in the Vineyard of the Lord that Marie-Fabiola had lived in thanksgiving, confident of being welcomed by Him. □

Sister Jeanne Thiboutot (Bernadette-Soubirous)

Jeanne was born in St-André-de-Kamouraska on June 25, 1905, and grew up in a family of twelve children. Suffering came her way from early youth: a poor health condition, grief of her father's death when she was only 11 years old. After completing her initial studies, she taught in St-André for one year. At 20, she took a nursing course at St-Michel-Archange Hospital in Quebec City and devoted herself in this capacity for six years. She then took a year's rest while providing care to the sick on a private basis.



Though Jeanne had long been thinking about religious life, it was only at 33 that she entered the M.I.C. Postulate in Pont-Viau. After her profession, she was

assigned to Nominique as a nurse in care of the sick sisters. In 1946, she left for the Philippines with the pioneers of our mission in Mati. Here, as in Intramuros later on, she efficiently extended the benefit of her nursing competence, her many talents and great missionary zeal.

On her return to Quebec in 1970, she was assigned for some time to the health care of her companions. Ever serene and joyful, kind and attentive to all her sisters, Sr. Jeanne lived, with Mary, a life of prayer and union with Jesus. In Verchères, on May 3, 1996, she was struck by coronary thrombosis. She died in Pont-Viau on May 14, 1996 at the age of 90 years. □

Jeanne Guinois, M.I.C.

Memorial Donation

To you, parents and friends of a dear departed...

Do you wish to express your sympathy in collaboration with a missionary work?

Through a memorial donation to our magazine, the MIC MISSION NEWS, you recommend your dear departed to the daily prayers of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and to a share in two masses offered each week in one of our houses around the world.

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The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception



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NEWS FROM OUR SISTERS...

HERE AND ELSEWHERE

BOLIVIA

PERSONALITY OF THE WEEK IN BOLIVIA

A year ago, a prominent man passed away in Bolivia. He was a businessman and a politician, but above all, a man of faith and integrity who loved the humble and the poor. Sr. Suzanne Labelle introduces to us this witness for our world today.

From November 27 to December 3, 1995, all the newspapers of the country spoke about Max Fernandez. They still do and will continue for a long time. This exceptional Bolivian citizen will be remembered by the poor and the little people as well as by those in high places and his name will live in the history of his country. If the news media such as *Presencia* of La Paz, *Los Tiempos* of Cochabamba or *El Deber* of Santa Cruz had known of the practice of Montreal's daily *La Presse*, they would undoubtedly have presented Max Fernandez as the personality of the week.

Max Fernandez, in the people's hearts...

Sr. Susanne Labelle and some students at the Institute of Rural Education (IER), Bolivia



Photo: Courtesy of the Bolivian Press



Photo: M.I.C., Bolivia

Max Fernandez died tragically in a plane crash on November 27, 1995. His plane had just taken off the ground at the Uncia airstrip, a location far away from the great urban centers, when a gust of wind at 4,000 meters altitude prevented the twin-engine plane from rising above the neighbouring mountains. The news of the accident and of the death of Max Fernandez was immediately transmitted on all TV channels and radio stations and the President of Bolivia declared two days of national mourning. Why such a general outpouring of emotion? Who was Max Fernandez?

Coming from a very modest family, Max Fernandez was born 52 years ago in Quillacolla, a then unimportant town of Bolivia. He was obliged to look for a job before he had a chance to finish high school. Intelligent and hard-working, he achieved extraordinary success in business in a relatively short time and became the third richest man in the country. He had taken to politics and founded a party of which he was the national leader. What is even more remarkable, he employed both his wealth and his energy to alleviate the misery of the poor and to contribute to the economic progress of his country.

When he died, the entire nation went into mourning. Thousands of witnesses among people he had helped gathered in an impressive chorus. A few days only after his funeral, municipal elections were held throughout the country. A result that could not have been predicted a short time before: a young man 33 years old, Johnny Fernandez, the eldest son of Max Fernandez, was elected mayor of Santa Cruz, a large and densely populated city. This is an unequivocal homage of gratitude rendered to Max Fernandez - the people of Santa Cruz gave their full confidence to his eldest son.

Another interesting fact worth mentioning... A short time before his death, Max Fernandez was the guest on a television talk show. To a question asked, he gave the following reason for his great generosity. "I had made," he said, "a promise to Our Lord and the Virgin of Urcupiña (patroness of a national shrine of Quillacolla, his native city): to help, as best as I could, all the needy of my country". All agree that he had admirably kept his promise. □

Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

CANADA

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception celebrated this year the 75th anniversary of their arrival in Vancouver and the 50th anniversary of Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, founded to care for Chinese immigrants. Last April, Vancouver marked these events and highlighted their work and dedication (see MIC MISSION NEWS July-August 1996). The jubilee festivities took note of the remarkable contribution of our Sister Teresa Fung.

60 YEARS IN CANADA

In 1936, at an epoch when Chinese women were not admitted to Canada, Teresa Fung arrives in Vancouver. She is welcomed as a participant in a project for her compatriots: to collaborate as catechist and interpreter with the M.I.C. Sisters at the St. Joseph Oriental Home. Wholeheartedly, she also gives her time and energy to raise funds for the construction of the hospital in 1946. On February 2, 1949, she enters the novitiate of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Pont-Viau, Quebec. After her profession in 1951, she returns to Vancouver.

Recalling her memorable years in Vancouver, she mentions in a recent letter: "The goodness of the M.I.C. Sisters inspired my vocation and awoke in me the desire to become one of them. I remember the Sisters who treated patients at the clinic: they were so kind! Everyone loved them! I am now retired at our convent in Pont-Viau. The 6th of April, 1996 marks the 60th year of my arrival in Vancouver. These years were filled with joys and pains as well as countless graces... May the anniversaries that are celebrated in 1996 be marked with gratitude. God's blessings on the Chinese Community of Vancouver and on all those who contribute to the beautiful mission of Mount Saint Joseph Hospital... don't they surpass all what we hoped for?" □

Programme 75-50, Vancouver, April 1996



Sr. Teresa Fung celebrates 60 years of missionary life in Canada.

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

A YOUNG VOLUNTEER

It is with a fiery spirit and the generosity of her youth that Annie, from the Joliette Diocese, has accepted to help the M.I.C. Missionary Press as a collaborator for our mission magazine (French edition), LE PRÉCURSEUR.

She decided to do her share for the mission in her area.

Hello!

It is now four years since I became a volunteer of the magazine LE PRÉCURSEUR. It all began when my neighbour, Mrs. Hénault, asked me if I would attend to the magazine in her place, which meant going from door to door to solicit subscriptions. I said yes and ever since, I have been in charge of this work in my parish of Ile Dupas, near Berthierville.



Annie, an enthusiastic and dynamic collaborator

Photo: Courtesy of the Cayer Family

At first I felt shy to go to people's homes. I was afraid to disturb them, but it turned out to be a marvelous and enriching experience. People are friendly and they receive me with a smile. They seem happy to see me coming and encourage me to continue. They find that it is a good and beautiful thing for a young woman of 20 to do. It is a pleasure to talk with them. Giving a little love costs nothing and the joy one feels is so great that I cannot describe it. I encourage everyone who can to become a volunteer and help to promote this mission magazine. You will be the one enriched by it! □

Annie Cayer

Errata: MIC MISSION NEWS July-August 1996, p.10 - Associates in Action - Reads: Mr. Roger Caron, ASMIC president, Laval group - Diocesan colloquium of the Associates. Our apologies.

INTERACTION

1996 draws to a close. Have you enjoyed the InterAction page? How did the questions of "Missio" Sharing help your personal and group reflections? Have you helped some young people in the group?

Let us know your experiences, your appreciation or your suggestions.*

With you we give thanks for this year which allowed us to create new bonds with our brothers and sisters here and elsewhere.

**Joy and Peace of Christmas
throughout the New Year!**

* Write to:
Inter Action - MIC MISSION NEWS
P.O. Box 157, Stn Laval-des-Rapides
Laval, Qc Canada
H7N 4Z4

CODED MESSAGE

世界和平

Would you like to know what is written in Chinese?
Decode the following message. Each number is a letter of our alphabet- (ex. 1 = a, 5 = e).

16 5 1 3 5 20 15 20 8 5 23 8 15 12 5 23 15 18 12 41
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

MYSTERY PHOTO

How do we call the children of Taiwan?



Christmas in Taiwan

Answers on page 31
Good luck!

«MISSIO» SHARING

- Our focus on Asia, started in the previous issue, continues. 1997 is a very important year, when Hong Kong returns to mainland China.
 - Locate Hong Kong, Taiwan and China on a map. Collect current articles about these countries.
 - Are there any Asian people where you live? From which countries are they? What do you know about their customs?
 - Is there a Welcome Committee for new arrivals in your parish? Do you have suggestions to welcome them better and help them to integrate in their new milieu?
 - What can you and your group do to *build bridges of communion* between the people here and elsewhere?
- The Lord continues to call young people to leave everything and follow Him. Read the testimonies of Sisters Theresa and Zenaide, pp. 20-21. If the Lord whispers to you in the silence of your heart or through the events: *"Come and follow me. I need you to love and reach out to your brothers and sisters, here, and to the ends of the world. I am making you my witness, my prophet."* What will be your answer?
- You have read the Oriental Tale on page 7. Here are a few texts in your Bible to read slowly and reflect on. These will help you develop your thirst and love for God. With your group, share the Word of God that enlightened you most: Jn 6:35; Jn 7:37-38; Jn 4:10; Ws 6:11-17; Ws 15:1-2; 1 S 3:1-21; Ps 42 (41); Ps 63 (62); Ps 119 (118).
- Have you ever participated in an obstacle race? Have you found some useful tricks to go around obstacles and not be stopped by them? You will then understand what Christian Beaulieu says, speaking about the Apostle Paul in *The Undaunted Heart*, pp. 18-19.
Read some episodes in the life of Paul or one of his Letters. Discover the means he used to overcome the difficulties he encountered: Acts 17; 2 Co 4:5. What impressed you in these readings? What helped you to improve your life? Share your discoveries with your groupmates.
- Reread Sr. Veronique's poem on pp. 24-25. Here also, try to discover what helps you to go ahead and accomplish your mission. Write a prayer, thanking the Lord for being the Sun who enlightens, warms and gladdens you on the road of life. □

IF YOU WISH TO CONTACT US,
HERE ARE A FEW ADDRESSES:

CANADA:

THE GENERALATE
AND MISSION PROCURE
121, Maplewood Avenue
Outremont, Qc Canada
H2V 2M2 (514) 274-5691

MISSIONARY ANIMATION CENTER
314, St. Catherine Road
Outremont, Qc Canada
H2V 2B4 (514) 495-1551

OFFICE OF THE DÉLIA TÊTREAU CAUSE
100, Place Juge-Desnoyers
Pont-Viau, Laval, Qc Canada
H7G 1A4 (514) 663-6460

AFRICA:

PROVINCIAL HOUSE
P.O. Box 47, Mzimba
Malawi, Central Africa

CUBA:

Calle 146, No 904 - Entre 9 y 11
Mariano 16, Ciudad de la Habana
Cuba, 12100

HAITI:

MAISON PROVINCIALE (DELMAS)
C.P. 1085, Port-au-Prince
Haïti, Les Antilles

HONG KONG:

PROVINCIAL HOUSE
Good Hope Convent
381, Jat's Incline
Kowloon, Hong Kong

JAPAN:

PROVINCIAL HOUSE
8-13-16 Fukazawa, Setagaya Ku
Tokyo 158, Japan

MADAGASCAR:

MAISON PROVINCIALE
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Antananarivo, Madagascar 101

PHILIPPINES:

PROVINCIAL HOUSE
P.O. Box 468, 1502 Greenhills
Metro Manila, Philippines

SOUTH AMERICA:

CASA PROVINCIAL
Francisco de Orellana 338
Lima 5
Perú, América del Sur

TAIWAN:

PROVINCIAL HOUSE
30, Lane 148,
Fu Hsing South Road, Section 2
Taipei 106, Taiwan, R.O.C.

InterAction: Answer of page 30
Coded Message: Peace to the whole world!
Mystery Photo: Taiwanese

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Photo: M.I.C., Hong Kong

TO ALL OUR READERS,
A CHRISTMAS OF PEACE, LOVE AND JOY!

THE M.I.C. MISSIONARY PRESS TEAM

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Taipei, Taiwan - Children under the rain

Photo: M.-de-L. Lwo, M.I.C.

A Future of Peace for Children

Peace is the new name of development and of the social order. Peace is a gift of God, but it depends on us to welcome this gift so as to build a world of peace. We will be capable of this if we have the simplicity of heart of a child... Before being a moral exigency, this becoming small is a dimension of the mystery of the Incarnation.

Let us give children a future of peace!

John Paul II

World Day of Peace, January 1, 1996 - Adapted text

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

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