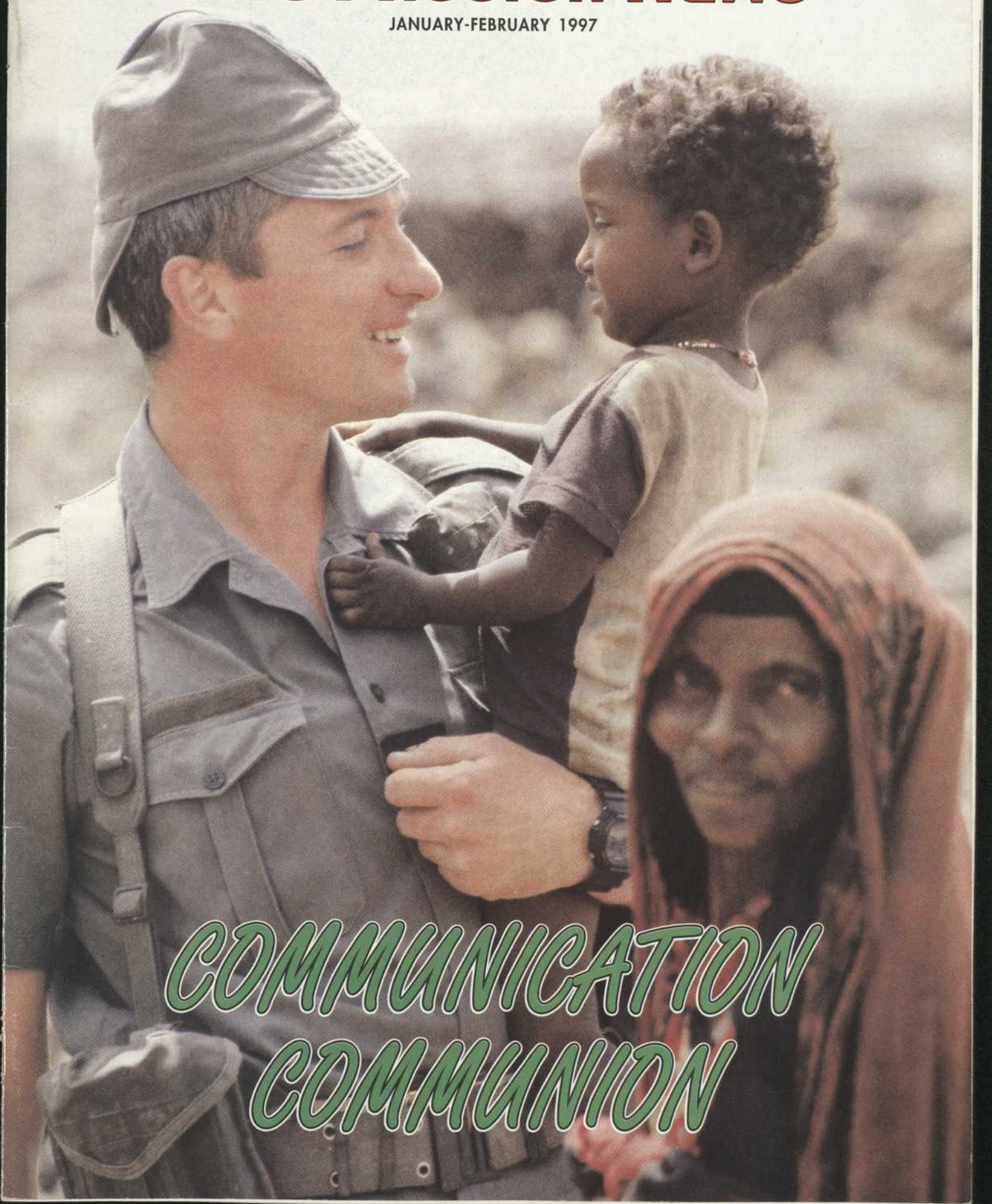


MIC MISSION NEWS

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1997

A photograph of a man in a grey military-style uniform and cap, smiling and holding a young child. The child is looking towards the man. In the background, a woman wearing a red headscarf is visible, looking towards the camera. The scene appears to be outdoors in a dry, hilly area.

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NURTURING HOPE

Harbingers of Hope

Everyday the media fills our minds and thoughts with injustices present in our country and in our world. Among many other issues, we read about poor education, inadequate health care, unjust working conditions and deteriorating family values. International news headlines never fail to bring our attention to peoples at war, along with those taking risks for peace. Yet at times, the feeling of being overwhelmed by one issue can prevent us from responding in any way at all.

The Church's pastoral instruction on social communications, *Aetatis Novae* - "Dawn of a New Era" - continually reminds us that "it is part of the human vocation to live out the ongoing, unlimited communication of God's reconciling love in creative new ways". We are to do this through words of hope and deeds of love, that is, through our very way of life. As communicators, our mission is to bring words of hope to those in need of it. It is through dialogue that we come to deeper understanding and it is in communicating honestly that our hearts are transformed. Opportunities of being messengers of hope abound... the simplest gestures of caring, or expressions of gratitude are precious affirmations of the gifts that lie hidden within and around us, waiting to be discovered!

A deeper understanding of communication as a way toward communion can bring us to discover that more than the expression of ideas and the indication of emotion, communication is the giving of self in love. We will come to appreciate more and more our ability to communicate feelings, thoughts and desires to

another as integral to daily living. And together, we can give thanks to God, our Father, for helping us share with others the manifold gifts we receive from Him each day.

The task that is there to do is not ours alone. It is a commitment we undertake in the company of dedicated men and women from around the globe. There are people, Churches, organizations, and networks working for positive change in every region of the world. Besides being communicators, these people are committed to certain values - they are in search of a global community that protects and furthers human dignity, one that encourages peace, justice and solidarity.

The Gospel parable of the sower shows valuable insight into the different responses to good news... and ultimately, to the Good News. God freely gives His word, but it is up to us as to how it will grow and yield fruit. The choice to make, the direction to take, are left to us. To nurture the word of God, to discern and interpret correctly the signs of our times, we need to listen and be led by His Spirit. There is an inherent need inside each of us to tell our stories and share our good news. In turn, others have a story to tell. We are surrounded by committed believers who, in their everyday lives are loud and clear messengers of goodness and faith, sowing and nurturing seeds of hope in countless ways... It is a privilege to present some of their stories in this issue. □

Ma. Anthea Raso, M.I.C.

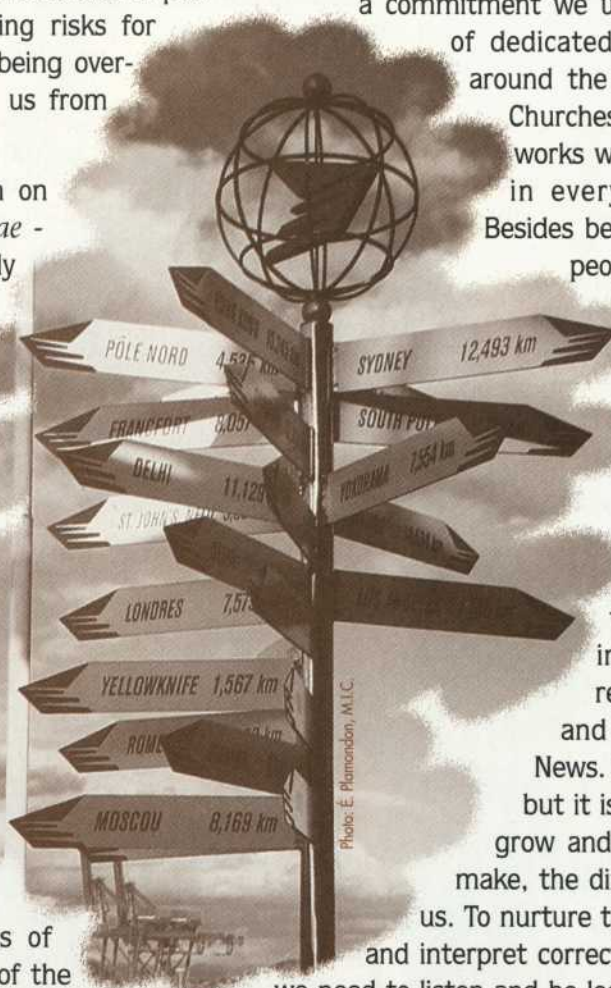


Photo: E. Plamondon, M.I.C.

THE MEDIA: FOR PEACE AND UNITY AMONG PEOPLES

The media are a part of our universe and every day, in the news, we are served live images of the world scene in which violence and peace co-exist side by side. In September 1995, more than 800 professionals of the media from 104 countries gathered in Graz, Austria, for the Congress of the International Catholic Union of the Press; they pondered on the theme: "Ethics of Peace in a World of Violence".

*In his introductory address, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Archbishop of Milan, presented three images taken from the Bible to bring to light the roots of violence and to reflect on the role of the "media for peace and unity among nations", not to forget the challenges which communicators must face. We present here a few excerpts of the third part of his address: The parable of the sower.**

You also know better than I do that an ethic of peace in a world of violence does not depend only on individual good will. We are faced with and conditioned by social and political, even global systems. The remedies are to be sought not only in the good will of individuals, but above all in a joint effort of all communicators of good will. (...) It is not for me to go into the details of this heavy task, but rather to point a source of inspiration for its accomplishment. This source may be found in the parable of the sower who went out to sow the seed, as Jesus tells us in the Gospel: "some seeds fell on the edge of the path, others fell on patches of rock, others among thorns, others in rich soil" (Mt 13:3-8).

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

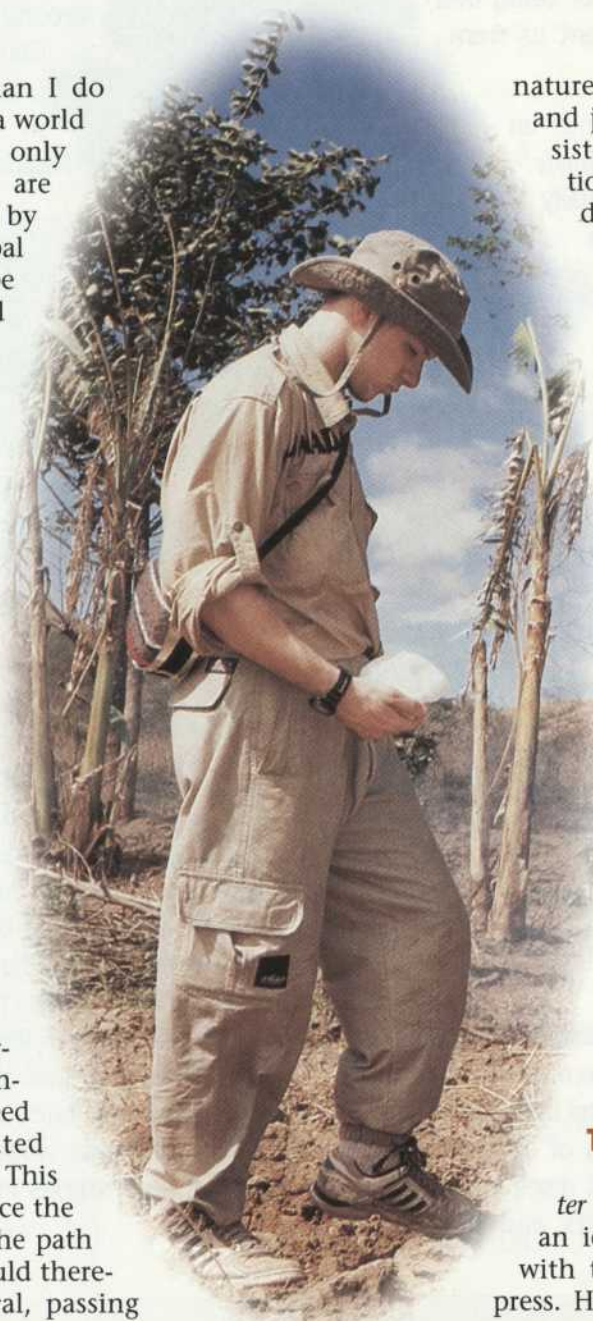
Reading this parable in the context of communication, one could be tempted to interpret the different types of unsuitable soil in which the seed fell in terms of media-related symbols, as well as meanings. This would be one way to denounce the distortions of information. The path along which the seed fell would therefore symbolize the ephemeral, passing

nature of information quickly given and just as quickly forgotten, inconsistent, frivolous, trivial information rapidly submerged by other, different and, at times, even contrary information. No solid purpose is achieved by this type of information.

The rocky ground on which the seed grows at once would be the seeking of an immediate effect, of sensation created at the expense of exact information. The thorns would thus be a metaphoric description of good will that underestimates its own strength and the goal at stake, which is responsible information: news that tangle with "tricky" problems and issues without the necessary preparation or the necessary competence. One could thus examine the symbolic content of other aspects of the parable, but I shall focus on two major metaphors: the character of the sower and the symbol of rich soil.

THE CHARACTER OF THE SOWER

It seems to me that the character of the sower contains, first of all, an icon of the communicator faced with the problem of violence in the press. He wonders what he could do in



causes, to show their roots in the present and in the past. He studies possible remedies and helps men and women of peace and good will not to get discouraged in their efforts.

How then can one sow the good seed of peace? What is the good seed that must be sown? For a Christian, the beatitudes of the Gospel are the good seed. It is not necessary to mention them explicitly. They exist in every day life. The Holy Spirit pours them into daily realities, even in places beset by violence. One only needs to recall a multitude of episodes and manifestations of kindness, forgiveness and solidarity which have developed in the course of conflicts such as those in the former Yugoslavia, or in Africa, in Rwanda and Burundi... If violence is a part of reality, so also are the Gospel beatitudes a part of reality: one must have eyes to see it and a hand and a tongue to describe it.

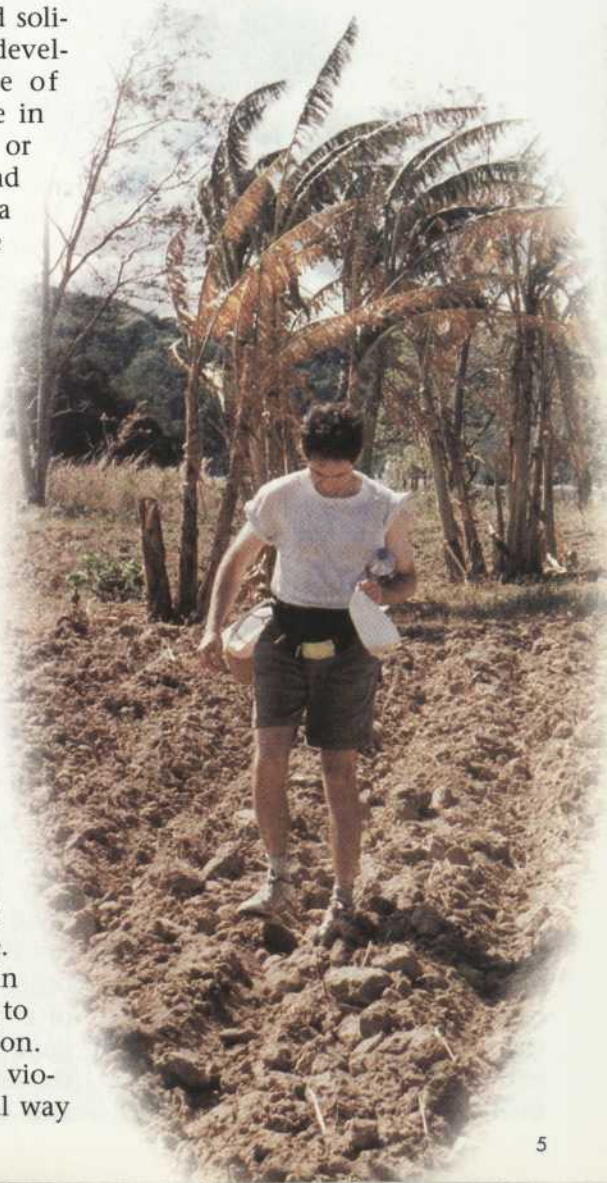
Secondly, the sower spoken of in the Gospel is someone who acts without wanting to check immediately on the results of his action. He knows that he is sowing for the future and that someone will reap the harvest. As Jesus said in the Gospel of Saint John, "one sows, another one reaps... Others worked for it and you have come into the rewards of their trouble" (Jn 4:37). This means for you that you must sow in hope and patience, i.e. oppose the violence exerted in the media without expecting to reap the fruits of your action. Information that deals with violence in a proper and critical way

describing its manifestations inasmuch as necessary to inform the public, but without overstating its significance, trying to point out the causes and the remedies, is bound to prevail on the long run over an intoxicated kind of information which inflates the truth and plays on the excitement and feelings of horror and vengeance.

Thus any effort not only to represent violence, but also to explain its deep-seated roots, its psychological and historic causes and, by the same token, its remedies may, at first, seem less interesting than the mere description of an act of violence. But on the long run, this effort may help to awaken the minds of readers and listeners wishing to understand and not to

his individual responsibility. What can each of us do to take a fair stand on this complex, disconcerting and tragic problem?

Above all, the sower of the Gospel story is someone who is sure that the seed he sows is good seed. He knows that the good seed of peace is better than any seed of hatred and violence. He is a believer in peace and understanding between individuals and between nations. He is sure of what he is doing, even if his intent is not shared by those with whom he works. He sows with constancy and perseverance the seed of mutual understanding and agreement. He is not afraid to talk about the many manifestations of violence that take place in the world, but he seeks to bring to light their



remain only on the surface of things. This takes time and there are periods - as perhaps is the case in the difficult times we are actually living through - during which all our efforts may appear to be vain. The sower of the parable sows his seed in the hope of getting it back 100 times, 60 times, 30 times over... This is the kind of courage that is needed today and we must help one another to face the difficulties.

Thirdly, the sower who sows the seed knows that the harvest depends not only on what he has sown, but also on all the unforeseen factors of weather and season. He is not totally accountable for the final result of his action. He needs some degree of detachment from the fruits of his work; he needs to be aware that he is part of a whole which is much greater than himself. He must abandon himself to divine Providence, which facilitates for him the sense of humour and calm he needs to work in difficult conditions, without even always enjoying the understanding and support that should be expected from the Christian community itself.

Like any labourer whose work follows a tradition, the sower knows that he is not the first one to beat a path for himself. Others before him have done the same, others have been confronted with the same difficulties. He must learn from the experience of others, work in communion with others. He has a responsibility of his own, which he alone must bear,



Communication at the Service of the Person*

*Lord, at the sight of all those communication media
which are available to the men and women of today's world,
I marvel and give thanks.*

*Blessed are You for the gift of intellect placed in those You created,
who became in turn creators of all this audio-visual technology,
of its use and of its spread among the general public.*

*Computers, records, cassettes, radio, fax,
television, telephone, cinema, press, publication:
thanks to these fantastic instruments,
men and women can talk, tell, express, transmit,
reveal, recount, witness, denounce, exchange, inform,
from one continent to another and across the cosmos.*

Permeate with Your grace every communication.

May it serve the person and not be an idol.

May it be a means and not a power.

*May the baptized find in this new language
of the modern world a new expression of their faith.*

*Whether as consumers or as actors of these media,
may they take care to preserve their beauty and truth.*

Send Your Spirit on these media today.

They are the mirrors of our societies and of our cultures,

and as such, You love them, Lord,

with the chaff and the wheat that they contain.

Make us salt and light in the use of the media

that the face of every human being

may be ennobled, pacified and magnified

when seen through them. □

Marie-Pierre Turquet

** Église d'aujourd'hui, Marseille, February '94, - Adapted text*

but he also participates in a common project the success and the very moral quality of which depend on the effort of all. When I say this, I am not thinking of the other Catholic communicators and of all the other communicators of good will. I am also thinking of the entire Christian community and of the whole community of

men and women who love truth and peace. The alliance must be broadened to all those who care about correct information, about the increase of good relationships between people and nations and about not leaving the operators of information alone with their problems and difficulties. Not only must we make demands on you, we must also give you our help and support.

THE SYMBOL OF THE RICH SOIL

This enables me to clarify one last point, which, to keep using the language of the parable of the sower, is the metaphoric significance of the rich soil. For an ethic of peace in the media, we must count not only on the quality of the communication, but also on the soil that receives the communication, i.e. all of society and, within society, the Church. The rich soil is that which listens attentively and with a critical mind, alert to the language of the media and able, if need be, to decode and interpret it. (...) As long as our societies are not trained in a spirit of sound interpretation, there will always be distrust and misunderstandings and the media and journalists will be expected to give what they cannot give.

It is therefore essential for the public to be trained to understand the different languages of the media, of newspapers, printed literature, cinema and television. The Christian community, which has responsibilities and also possibilities in the area of education, could

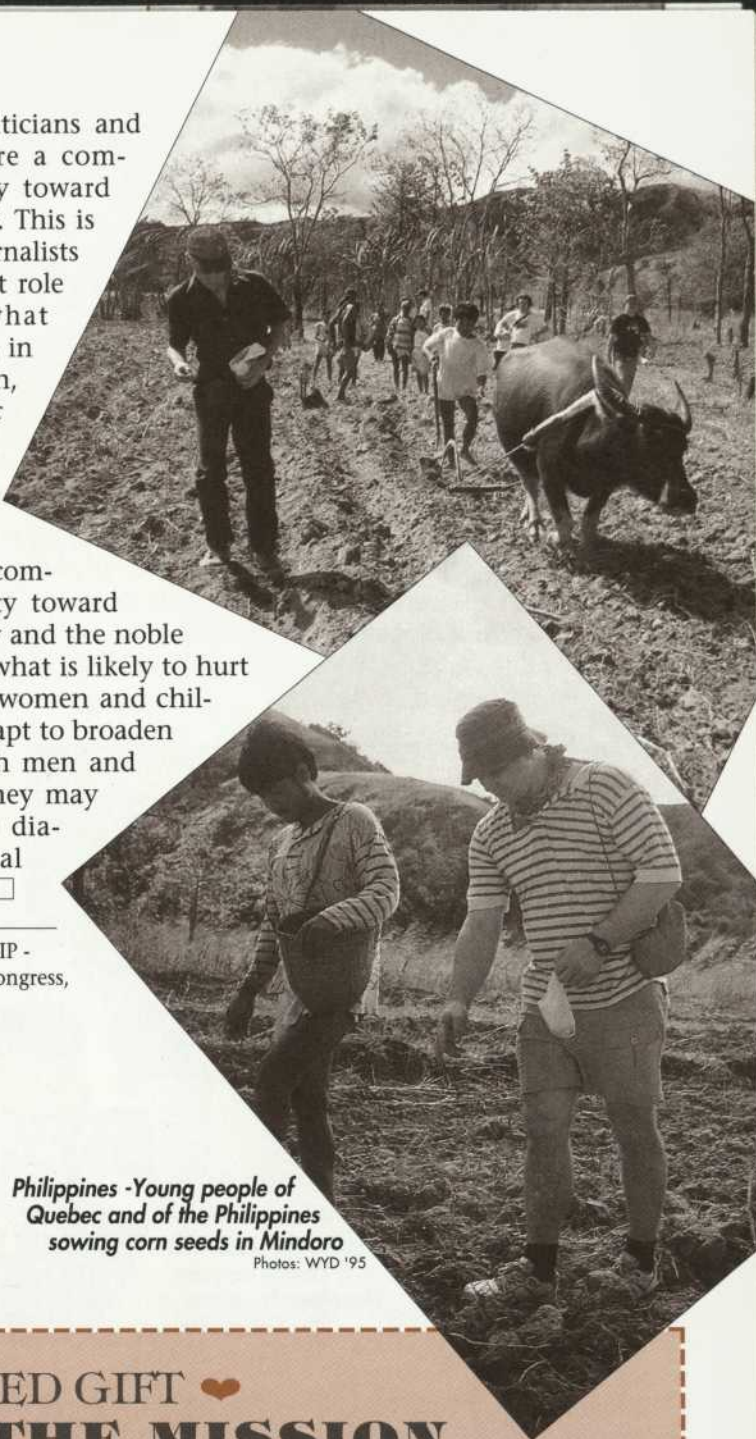
do a great deal to this effect in places where it has the use of important educational means. Training in peace-making is done through proper formation of public opinion and of a critical mind. This is the reason why I insist greatly in my diocese on the knowledge and love of the Bible: not only for the sake of listening to the Word of God, but likewise as a primary school of critical text reading, as an aid to develop an interpretation that fosters mutual understanding.(...)

However, an ethic of peace in the media must not only be an ethic of rules. It must also be an ethic of responsibility.(...) There are grave dangers for true freedom, which is not only the freedom to tell everything and to put anything on the front page, but also the freedom to be conscious of the effects of one's power to mobilize emotions, with sometimes unforeseen results, at least for those who are not warned about the power of the media to unleash both hatred and violence.(...)

In this sense, journalists, public communicators, have a mission and a responsibility which are akin to those of parents, teachers,

philosophers, politicians and priests: they share a common responsibility toward the human family. This is where women journalists have an important role to play. With what Pope John Paul II, in his letter to women, termed the *specific genius of women*, they can help to clarify and bring to the fore the sense of its common responsibility toward the human family and the noble consciousness of what is likely to hurt the sensitivity of women and children and what is apt to broaden the hearts of both men and women so that they may become open to dialogue and mutual understanding. ☐

*Authorized source: UCIP - Acts of the 17th UCIP Congress, Fribourg, Switzerland



Philippines - Young people of Quebec and of the Philippines sowing corn seeds in Mindoro

Photos: WYD '95

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♥ HEARTFELT THANKS ♥

The Media and the Proclamation of the Word

BY MICHELLE MARCOUX, M.I.C.

Reflecting on the media, on their role and the means they offer for the proclamation of the Word are realities which Christians should consider today, and question themselves about, so as to come up with pertinent initiatives. The Office of Social Communications of Montreal held its second National Colloquium in June, 1996 on the theme: "Christian Creators of Communication". Several M.I.C. Sisters involved in various types of communication media participated in this Colloquium. The questions asked by Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte in his opening address are very much in line with your questions and ours... Likewise, following the intervention of a panelist, a question challenges us: Are we bearers of a meaningful message?



Sr. Marie-Paule Charbonneau and Sr. Monique Bigras of the M.I.C. Video Team

Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte, Honorary President, at the Colloquium on Communication.



Photo: B. Vézina

The experts, technicians and creators of communication media work relentlessly. They are conscious of taking part in the creation, if not of a new world, at least of a new way to inhabit the world. They create something new. The Internet, on which it is already easy to branch, is but one more step - a giant one at that - in the development of the communication media, without which we would find it very hard to live in this day and age. It is useless to resent the mass media. No use to decry them. They are here to stay and they will continue to infiltrate every sphere of our daily existence. Day and night!

Let us ask some questions. This is not only legitimate, it is necessary. Will the modern communication media develop in a wild fashion, or shall we keep them under control? Are we going to be their slaves or their masters? Shall we use them to grow and become more human? or shall we allow ourselves to be enslaved by them? These are questions that must not be dismissed lightly... I am convinced that the mass media cannot be made to serve our human growth and the cause of the Gospel unless we see to it that they do. We are among those wishing to do something about this; we are among those wishing to become more and more "Christian creators of communication".

You know it, the media are tools. They have the power to build or to destroy. They can be made to produce good seed or bad seed. All depends on how we use them. In order to use them properly, we need to know them well. For they have their own requirements and laws. They involve knowledge and skills which we cannot afford to do without. We shall never possess too much expertise in the use of the media. We shall always gain by knowing more about them in order to make better use of them. The world

To explore and analyze in depth the relation between faith and the media from the angle of creation" - this is what the Office of Social Communications invited all those interested in such a reflection to do. From the outset, Archbishop Jean-Claude Turcotte of Montreal, honorary president of the Colloquium, really met our concerns by his simplicity and his questions.

CARDINAL JEAN-CLAUDE TURCOTTE SPEAKS...

"Everyone knows that modern means of communication are developing at a dizzying speed. Ordinary people like myself have a hard time keeping up with progress in this area. And I am told that we have barely seen anything yet of what we shall soon be made to see. What we are promised for tomorrow is not science fiction, it is reality in the making.



*At the 1996 Congress of L' Association canadienne des périodiques catholiques, Sr. Micheline Marcoux (l.) receives from Anne-Marie Gagné, S.C.Q., ACPC president, a certificate of recognition for the magazine, **LE PRÉCURSEUR**, on its 75th anniversary in 1995.*

of the media is a "harsh" world. It makes and breaks people in no time. One day it raises an individual to the top of the world; the next day it brings him down to the pit...

During this Colloquium you will hear about creators and creation. You will hear about new technology, new communication networks and new skills to be acquired. These subjects deserve all the interest you will devote to them. As you address them, I think it will be helpful for you to have in mind a few basic questions: Create for what? Communicate for what? To build what sort of world? what sort of humanity? How and on what conditions can the media be used for the proclamation of the Gospel? This last question is a complex one, difficult to answer.

First of all, the Gospel and the media do not exist in complete harmony. The media seeks to seduce; the Gospel requires being proclaimed by witnesses who disappear before a message and a Person to be received in faith. How can one have an input in the media without giving into flattery and without distorting the Gospel? (...)"

Excerpts, Opening Address at the Colloquium on Communication

ON BEING BEARERS OF MEANING

To summarize this entire national Colloquium on communication, the Social Communications Office printed a message: "Looking for Bearers of Meaning". This message

echoes the phrase used by panelist Louis Lesage, a producer of Radio Canada, who said in his presentation: "We live in a world deeply permeated and conditioned by the media, in which there are many creators of communication, but which lack bearers of meaning."

To be bearers of meaning... is this not the major concern of any Christian called to work in the media? And even more so when, among these Christians, are people whose specific mission is the proclamation of the Gospel. What sort of God are we proclaiming? What type of spirituality are we transmitting to our world today? What Gospel values are being proposed, respectful of people, but with the audacity of disciples of Jesus of Nazareth? What message of hope is being conveyed to the youth? What kind of commitment is being called for by media programmes presented in the name of the Gospel? What language should be used to convey the Good News in a way that is meaningful in today's culture? To be bearers of meaning... surely a major concern, but what tremendous challenges it raises!

The Church is at the heart of the world. It tries to be creative in its own way so as to touch the hearts of people in their noblest aspirations and in their thirst for spiritual values, without neglecting the human and social values in which it is embodied. As a missionary Institute, we have for many years been using communication media for evangelization and missionary promotion. A constant effort has always been made in this regard. Our involvement in audio-visuals, video productions, radio and the missionary press, in Canada and in other countries, has enabled us, not only to express the faith, but to present living witnesses in the service of the Gospel... witnesses who, hopefully, are bearers of meaning!



At the M.I.C. Missionary Press secretariat, Sr. Cécile Martel explains the evolution of our mission magazines to young M.I.C.s on a visit to Pont-Viau.

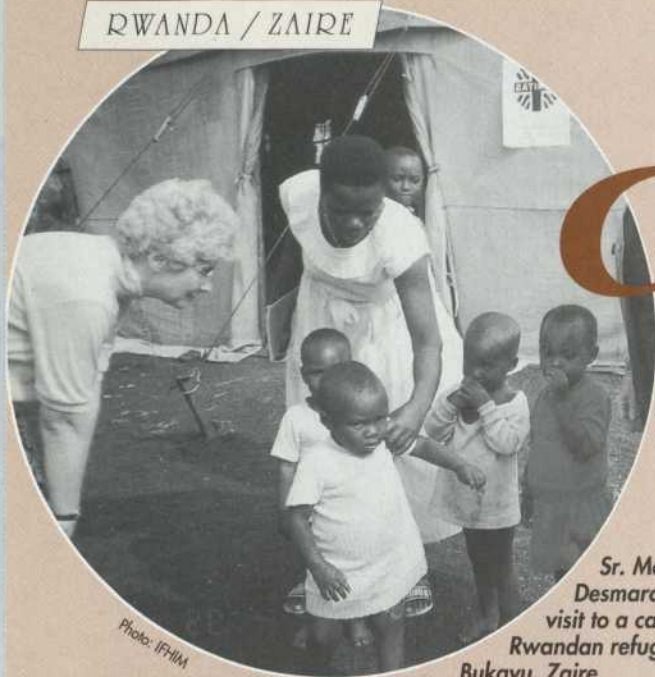


Photo: IFHIM

Sr. Marie-Marcelle Desmarais (I.) on a visit to a camp for Rwandan refugees in Bukavu, Zaire.

BY MARIE-MARCELLE DESMARAIS, C.N.D.

During the 1994 massacre in Rwanda, the media showed us live pictures of atrocity. Since then, there have been continual news updates of the tensions that exist in Zaire. Among various forms of humanitarian aid brought to Rwanda and in the refugee camps, the Institut de formation humaine intégrale de Montréal (IFHIM), started a new program to help in the "reconstruction of people", especially traumatized children.

This sort of news is rarely reported...

Marie-Marcelle Desmarais, C.N.D., Director General of IFHIM, met Godeberta Umpfuyisoni, S.A, a committed contributor of services in Rwanda. In her sharing, Sr. Godeberta, traced the process she followed to help children under her care recover gradually... one by one. Hopefully, a seed is germinating in Rwandan soil.

Children have been crushed.

Will anyone ever know how badly this unspeakable tragedy has bruised the hearts of thousands of Rwandan children?

Little ones... voiceless... without protection... uprooted.

Children. Forced to see and hear and live through atrocities that one dares not even describe.

Will they ever again be able to smile and to play like children?

Who will venture to rebuild security and trust within them?

Will they be able, one day, to allow themselves to be loved?

Will they be capable of opening their hearts?

There is a seed in Rwandan soil.

From this soil washed in blood,

Life can still rise up!

Marie-Marcelle Desmarais, C.N.D.

A seed... in Rwandan Soil

WHO IS GODEBERTA?

Godeberta Umpfuyisoni, an Auxiliatrice Sister and a native of Rwanda, lived through the tragic events of April-June 1994 among and with her own people. After finding herself in a camp with refugees, she later returned to Rwanda and accepted to direct an orphanage with 250 children. Thanks to her, the children came alive again. Her openness and her deep capacity for mutual sharing were at the heart of the "reconstruction exercises" in which the children were brought to engage.

Her training at the IFHIM is of great help to her. She has integrated it... She draws from it. She carries within herself the theoretical model, one that has been discovered and conceptualized by Dr. Jeannine Guindon, and the technique of building and rebuilding the human psyche. Godeberta has developed a great ability and skill in reaching people at their own level and bringing them to see the progress they have made. She knows how to call forth the human vital energies of children and of women whom she enables to become providers of care and education for the littlest ones.

During a stay in Canada, Godeberta had the opportunity

to share her experience and the way she lived it. She gave examples to illustrate her lived experience. A journey where we, too, meet Anastasia and Etienne - two children among many others - and follow them as they start to recover from their trauma and gradually become alive again...

FACTS REPORTED BY GODEBERTA

The case of Anastasia

- *Anastasia is 4 years old. "We thought she was mute." Godeberta recounts how she saw this child begin to talk and how she helped her to communicate little by little.*

"On Christmas day, I gave her a doll. I often observed her with her doll. She was often alone. She did not talk, nor did she go and play with the other children. I would communicate with her through gestures. Sometimes I would take her in my arms. When she received the doll, I saw that she was pleased. The next day, I saw her in a corner. From a distance, I noticed her lips moving. This puzzled me. When I tried to come near, she stopped talking. I figured I would continue observing her. When I came back the following day, she was moving around and talking. As soon as I came near, she stopped. So I went around through another room and stood behind her, listening to what she told her doll: (...) *"My Papa was strong. But they scared him. He fell down, he got*

all dirty and he didn't get up again. When my Papa fell, my Mama also went running. They scared her too and she fell."

She told all this to her doll. Then I figured Anastasia could talk. I tried to show her interest. I picked her up slowly and placed her on my back with her doll. I sensed that her doll had become her confidante. I walked in front of the orphanage carrying her on my back. As I was walking, at one point she began to talk. I asked her: *"Did you tell me something?"* When I asked this question, she stopped talking. I realized that she was not yet talking to me but to her doll. I continued doing this until she came - from the doll to me. I asked the person in charge of her to be the only one looking after her, to feed her on time and always at the same time, not to move her from her bed, to be really careful about regularity in her care. To let her know and prepare her when going away so that she would not experience again a drastic break like the one she underwent with her mother.

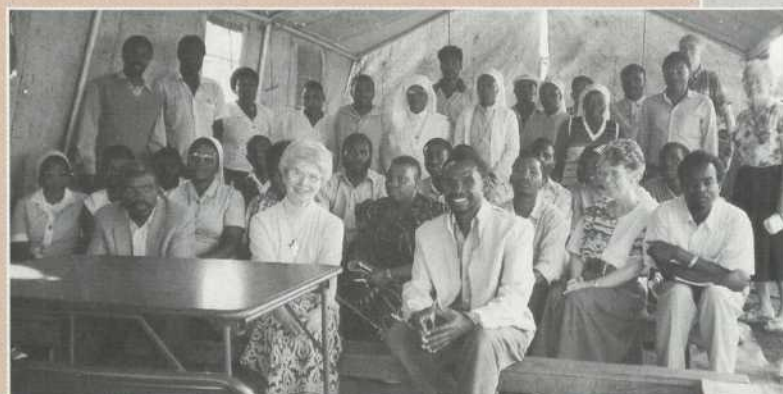
One day, Anastasia was able to walk beside me. When I saw that she responded to me, I understood

that she no longer needed to cling to my back in order for the contact with my body to facilitate communication. Now she talked to me while standing on the floor, next to me. I continued to walk with her by my side. I took her away from places with a lot of people and gradually, I saw her uttering her first words to others, as a child learning how to talk. Now Anastasia is at the orphanage with the other children. She plays. But we take care not to upset her, especially at night. In the daytime she plays with the others. At night, it is important for her to find her own bed and the one who sleeps beside her. (...)"

The case of Etienne

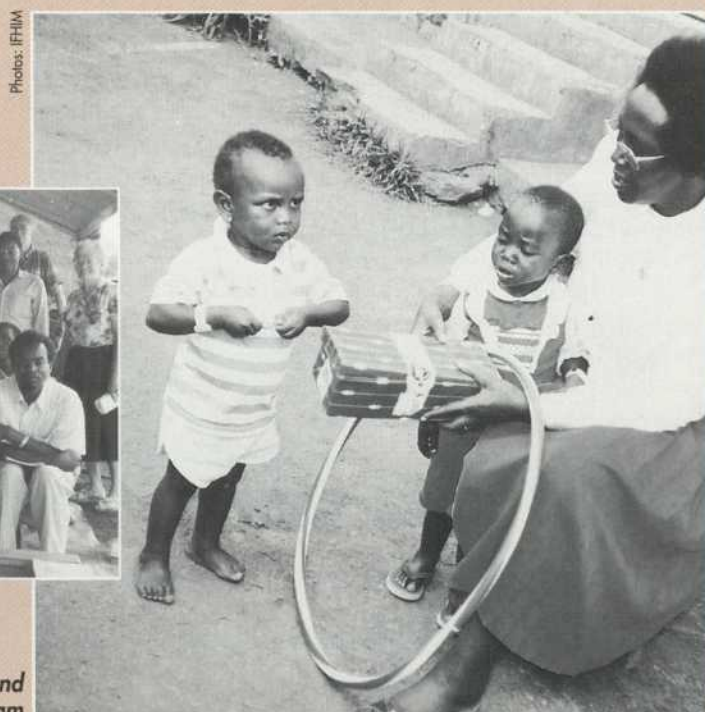
- *Etienne is 12 years old. One day, Godeberta found the children all around him. He had taken off all his clothes. He was beside himself, in a different world. The children were screaming.*

"I saw this twelve-year-old child lose his self-esteem in front of the others. There he was, filthy. I saw the directress with a stick in her hand and I said to myself: *She does not know what to do in a situation like this.* Then there were the laughter and the screams of the



Zaire - Sr. Marie-Marcelle meets teachers at camp Buhimba.

Rwanda - Sr. Godeberta Umpfuyisoni and children in the re-education program



Photos: IFHM

other children. I walked up to him slowly without saying anything. When Etienne saw me, he hung on to me and said: "Tell me if you are my mother? Are you my mother?..."

I stretched my hand toward him. Because I was not saying anything and I was walking slowly, everyone became silent. And I said to Etienne: "Would you like to come and wash up?" He stopped yelling, gave me his hand and followed me. So I went. The directress also came. She and I bathed Etienne. From time to time he would yell and say: "Tell me if you are my mother." At one point I said to him: "I am not your mother but I love you just as much." And I continued. At first I felt him very tense. Even walking had been difficult for him. He dragged his feet as he held on to me. Later, while bathing him, I sensed that he was beginning to loosen up. When I had finished, I said to him: "Would you like to come out for a walk?" I wanted him to relax. I also wanted to take him out of that environment where all the others stared at him. I thought of his dignity and how embarrassed a twelve-year-old boy must be at having been seen in the state in which he was. As we went out, I walked for him and I also needed to relax, for I was upset by what I had seen on my arrival. Walking along with Etienne required some energy. We walked and walked. At first he kept saying: "Tell me if you are my mother, tell me if you are my mother."

Then he relaxed more and more and held on to me. It was like watching relaxation come over his body. From being all uptight, his tension lessened to the point where we held



Photo: Y. Guillaud - Saumur

Zaire - A Rwandan teacher, her two children and their friends in a refugee tent

each other by the arm and we walked. Then we came to a place where he started yelling: "Don't bring me there. I saw some horrible things there." I had not realized that he was from this area. So I asked: "Do you want us to turn back?" To this question he answered: "No, they are not there." But I noticed that something was happening. He had come face to face with what had happened then and this was no longer the time in April when he had seen these people who killed. Then we kept on walking. We walked for an hour during which he cried or repeated: "Tell me if you are my mother." At a given moment he said: "I saw men." I wondered if I should ask him "Do you want to talk about it?" I decided:

if he says a second time: "I saw men", I will ask him to tell me about it. At first, when I asked, he started crying. Finally he began to tell me about it. "They killed my father", he said, and he cried again. Then: "They killed my sister." I said: "They killed your sister?" Then he yelled, saying: (...) "They killed my sister. I wanted to save her. I wanted to go and tell her they were coming. But I was afraid and I went to hide. They killed my sister and I did nothing, I did nothing! It was my sister who raised me. She was like my mother.

They killed her and I was not able to hide her." (...)

The first two days I was telling myself: "If I can only get him to relax". But the second day, as he kept repeating these things to me, I said to myself "Now is the time" and I said to him: "You are alive now and I am sure that your sister is in heaven. Is she happy that you are alive?" When I asked this question, it was as if he had come to a breakthrough. He said: "Yes, my sister wants me to live." - "How old are you, Etienne?" - "I am 12." Everything had just changed. I then asked him what he had done for his sister. "I tried but did not succeed. I went and I returned to tell her that the killers were coming. Then I left..."



Photo: A. Durand, M.I.C.

Zaire - A feastday for children proves a good remedy to offset a difficult situation.

STEP BY STEP, GETTING TO FIT INTO THE GROUP

I walked with him for three weeks. The first two weeks, we walked one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. Then I began to space out the walks, maintaining the evening hour because I wanted him not to need any medication to go to sleep. One afternoon, he came to see me and said: "Do you want us to go for a walk?" - "You see that I am busy with this little one. Would you go alone and take the walk we usually take together, then come and see me afterwards." I had noticed that he took an interest in younger children. So then he ran, perspired and came back saying: "I went around by myself, I did not see anyone and I was not afraid."

Etienne finally came out of it, even if at first he had trouble concentrating. But I followed his every step, every means he could use: walking, dancing, etc. He opened up a lot with the smaller children and would come and tell me about it. Sometimes he would go and walk with the little ones, holding them by the hand. He would do with the others what I had done with him. I don't know if his purpose was the same as mine. At any rate he would go out and come back and tell me: "I walked with Antoine, I walked with Jerome". Then he would consider that he had walked while holding the hand of a child smaller than himself. He has now opened up, gone back to school and even came out fifth in his class."

AN EXPRESSED WISH

A Rwandan Student of IFHIM comments: "There are in Rwanda thousands of children like Anastasia and Etienne, even adults who are traumatized. How many Godebertas do we have? Not everyone can benefit of a training at IFHIM, but those who do should become multipliers so that in every corner of the country the richness hidden in the hearts of the Rwandan people may bring about better life conditions." □



Zaire - Sr. Agathe Durand at Camp Adi Kivu - Rwandan children receive "valentines" from Quebec children.



Zaire - In May '96, Archbishop Christophe Munzihirwa Mwene Ngabo of Bukavu ordained as deacon Joachim Pons, S.J., member of the Jesuit Refugee Service working in the camps. Archbishop Munzihirwa was assassinated on October 29, 1996.

Return from Bukavu

Since July 1995, Sr. Agathe Durand, M.I.C., of Montreal, had been working with an international IFHIM team on a similar project among adults and children in Rwandan refugee camps of Zaire, near the Rwandan border. The media have enabled us to follow day by day the tragic situation currently developing in this African region. As this issue of our magazine is near completion, Sr. Agathe has returned to Canada on an emergency evacuation flight. We received from her the following details:

Being in Bukavu, Zaire, the epicenter of an active guerilla, Sr. Agathe and her companions had to be evacuated in November along with many others. Mission unfinished... They continued as

long as they possibly could. Those they left behind have journeyed in personal growth and become capable and committed multipliers, able to continue on their own way among their peers. They have emerged from despair, come to face their fear with openness rather than hostility; they have changed their educational approach for the benefit of the children. There was still a great deal for them to do. The needs were increasing with the displacement of thousands of refugees from Uvira. There was a flood of new arrivals, terrified, pushing forward in an obstinate march towards life, towards hope against hope.

The mission has continued to develop. Hundreds of refugees have followed a formation programme in the actualization of human vital energies. Learning techniques of "personal reconstruction" lived under guidance, integrating this new knowledge through the actual experience of these people, together with their own resourcefulness cannot but bear fruit, bring forth love and build peace in that very place where hostility seemed, for a time, to be invincible. □

Editorial Staff

ON THE ROADS OF THE MISSION

BY AGATHE DURAND, M.I.C.

To commune with the realities of other people requires a quality of insight and attention to their lived experience. During a short vacation which she spent among the M.I.C. Sisters of Malawi and Zambia, Sr. Agathe Durand, then in service in Rwandan refugee camps of Zaire, relates with a sense of wonder the ministry of Sr. Pauline Brodeur, a missionary in Zambia. She describes Sr. Pauline's unique contribution on the roads of the mission of Jesus.

A three-week vacation! After one year in the Rwandan camps of Suth Kivu, Zaire, I dreamt of a vacation among the M.I.C. Sisters of Malawi and Zambia. Of knowing another Africa! Of resting, forgetting for a while the turbulence of my mission and disposing myself for another year of service in the "reconstruction of people, of children"! After hopping to five different airports, I finally landed in Lilongwe. An M.I.C. waved to me! My heart was already on the loose: I was no longer a stranger here. Yet, I had never set foot in Malawi! In this foreign country, I experienced the joy of seeing familiar faces and the "family resemblance" of a home M.I.C. style.

ON BUSH ROUTES WITH PAULINE

I had scarcely been two days in Malawi when I had a wonderful opportunity to make a trip to Zambia with Pauline Brodeur, M.I.C. A long route with tracks of passing traffic in the sand that had raised a reddish cloud of dust, roads leading beyond the boundaries, the roads of the mission of Jesus! Pauline has traveled these bush roads of the Diocese of Mzuzu, Malawi, for twenty years. She knows its secrets, the language and especially the population. I listened to her telling me how difficult it was for her, in 1991, to move to a new diocese in Zambia. Now, she is all set. Thanks to her knowledge of the language and dauntless missionary heart, a whole network of villages benefit from her competence, her unique way of being present and of working with multipliers. All this, so that some day she can go elsewhere leaving behind trustworthy witnesses of the same faith in the God of Jesus Christ and of the very same love that knows no boundaries.

Along the way, a special and unexpected moment truly exemplified for me an authentic evangelization approach. I witnessed it first hand - a moment of gratuitousness that invited me to the same gratuitous sharing.

At the wheel of the pick-up truck was a Zambian driver... A veteran of village trails, he has become, rain or shine, a technical travel facilitator through often rugged and, at times, impossible terrain. That day, Pauline had arranged for a detour to meet a catechist who had undergone his formation with her.

The arrival of the truck was all it took to get this thirty-year-old man out of his house, visibly moved and delighted by the surprise. Pauline was welcomed in the humble dwelling. Their conversation flowed, uninterrupted, from the initial greeting until - so



Zambia - Preparing a trip from Kanyanga... the driver, Sr. Pauline Brodeur (l.), Sr. Denise Duhamel and Sr. Suzanne Leclair, then Provincial Superior in Malawi / Zambia

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



Photo: M.I.C., Malawi

Malawi - A session in catechetics with Sr. Pauline

soon! - it was time to leave. People were mentioned by name: the children who have grown, the disciples who persevere, a friend who had died recently. This sharing was punctuated by nods of understanding and generous handshakes. In twenty minutes, she who initiated the catechist in the faith allowed him to tell how the harvest had ripened and yielded its fruit. "You know, the retreat you gave in '89..., twenty are now giving it everywhere in the area." At one point, the catechist's voice became assertive, apparently expressing a deep certitude. I turned to Pauline. "Do you know what he is saying to me? - *Amayi*, since 1991, your body is in Zambia, but your heart and soul really stayed with us." And the catechist resumed in earnest to reminisce and tell about the ministry which is everything to him. Through his meeting with Pauline who understood the nuances, who added a word or asked a tiny question, he saw himself pursuing a sacred mission and choosing, step by step, the line to follow in the service of the Gospel. Time has confirmed him in his calling while several obstacles have revealed his fidelity. Pauline can leave now; he has acquired boundless zeal for the Church of Jesus.

UNSUNG RICHNESS

The ride afforded me many exotic and touristic detours. Pauline told me about the years when she was learning the language, about the furrows she ploughed with the people in an unsung ministry, the visits when she enjoyed their hospitality - precious moments for learning about the customs, finding out facts and for loving.

As I ponder over this journey, my thoughts reach out to continents and generations way back to the time of Mother Délia. Pauline's contribution is unique, of course. Yet I see others, hundreds of them... Berthes, Adelaides, Céciles, Genevièves, Marguerites... to whom those who witnessed their lives can also say after 8, 20, 30, 40 years: "Your body is elsewhere, but your heart and soul are here with us!" ☐



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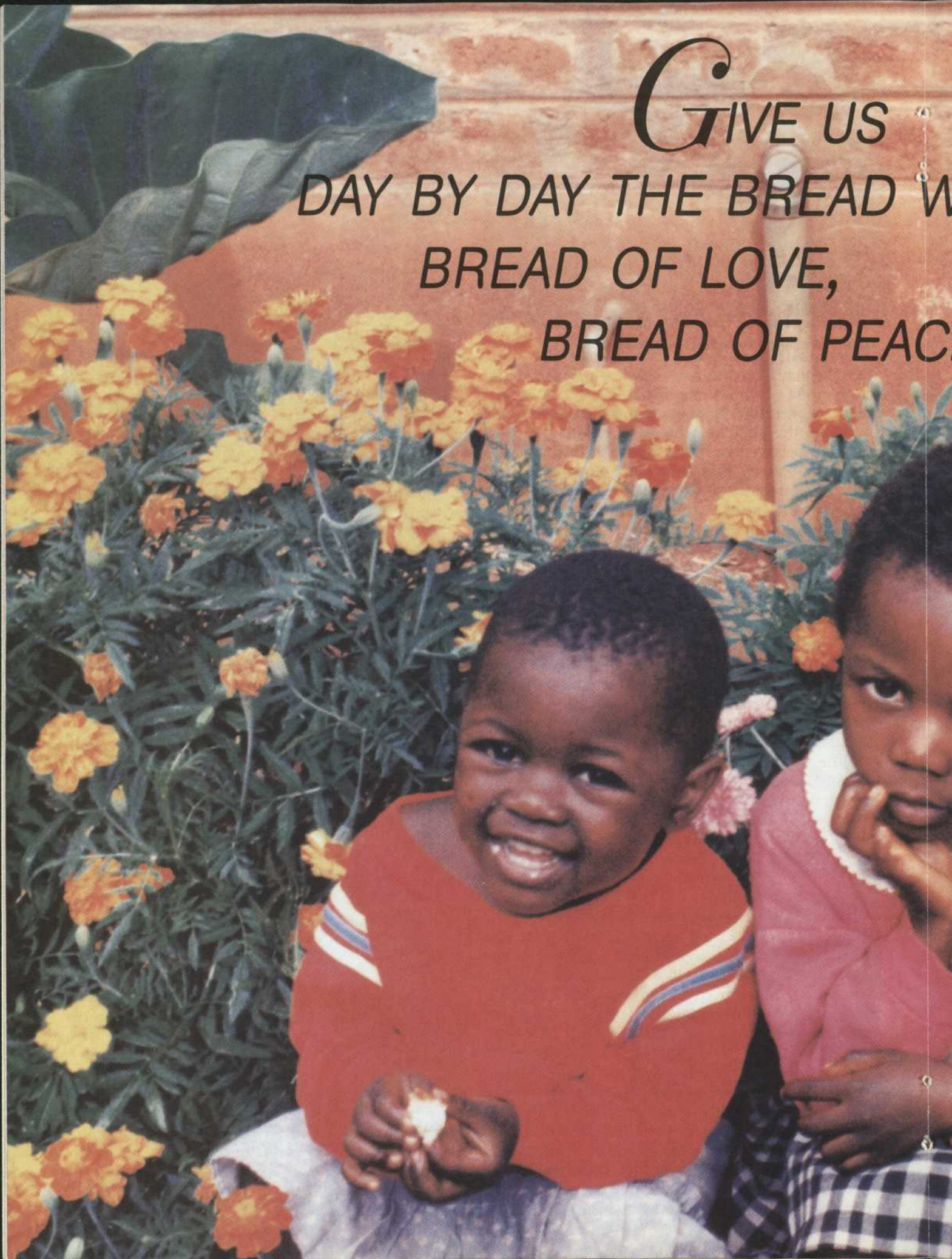
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BREAD OF PEACE*



WE NEED,

ACE....





LÉONTINE LANG, M.I.C.
From Clair,
Diocese of Edmundston, N.B.
Returned to Zambia
in September 1996.



HUGUETTE PIGEON, M.I.C.
From Laverlochère, Quebec
Diocese of Rouyn-Noranda.
Returned to Malawi
in September 1996.



YVONNE AYOTTE, M.I.C.
From New Liskeard, Ontario
Diocese of Timmins.
Returned to Malawi
in September 1996.



HUGUETTE TURCOTTE, M.I.C.
From Montreal,
Archdiocese of Montreal.
Left for Hong Kong
in October 1996.



CARMEN MÉNARD, M.I.C.
From Côteau-du-Lac,
Diocese of Valleyfield.
Returned to Peru
in October 1996.



PIERRETTE GAGNÉ, M.I.C.
From Ste-Luce,
Diocese of Rimouski.
Returned to Haiti
in November 1996.



GISÈLE LAMBERT, M.I.C.
From Quebec,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Japan
in October 1996.



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

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*Go...
make disciples
of all nations!
Mt. 28:19*

Because of a Simple Gesture...

BY HUGUETTE TURCOTTE, M.I.C.

*What is the impact of our actions? No one can tell!
A simple gesture of gratitude may sometimes go a long, unexpected way and even make the headlines...*

Sr. Huguette Turcotte had such an experience while in Western Canada.



Featured in Victoria - Mayor Bob Ross and the recipient of the Hospitality Award, Allan Mawdsley of BC Transit

Everyone of us, at one time or other, does certain things that have unexpectedly far-reaching effects. This happened to me during my stay in British Columbia. The mild climate of this Province has made it a favourite retirement spot for many people from all parts of Canada. Given the high percentage of senior citizens, the transportation services, to mention only these, have been adjusted to meet the needs of this category of people. With my white hair and orthopedic cane, I, too, was granted special attention by the bus drivers, who would willingly lower the step to facilitate my getting in and out of their vehicles.

Last April, as I took a bus to go to Victoria, I noticed that the driver waited until I was seated before starting to move. I kept observing him and noted that he did

the same for all the elderly passengers: he watched them through the rear view mirror and only took off when the person was safely seated. I was impressed for he did this with courtesy and patience. Then I thought: why not mention this driver's attitude to the Tourist Bureau? I had received on arrival some information material about the city, including a response card inviting visitors to recommend persons whose welcome and services had made their stay in Victoria pleasurable. On reaching my destination, I asked the driver his name, telling him how I had appreciated his courtesy and kindness towards his passengers. And I mailed the card right away.

In July, a letter came from the Tourist Bureau of Victoria with the news that my word of appreciation had prompted the city to award the

driver the "Hospitality Prize" for the month of April! A few days later, a delegation composed of the Mayor, delegates of the tourist industry, hotel and restaurant owners, journalists and media technicians got aboard Allan's bus to present him with prizes and congratulations. My letter from the Tourist Bureau contained two newspaper articles and photographs of the event. What a pleasant surprise!

This gesture of gratitude, of little account in itself, had some unforgettable impact in the life of the bus driver and his family. I draw from this incident a helpful lesson: instead of being critical and of complaining about the lack of kindness of some people, why not make it a point to recall the welcoming gestures of those who are courteous and caring? Other surprises may await us! □

Another Gesture...

Two years ago, a friend made me aware of L'itinéraire (the Itinerary), a Montreal street magazine. To talk or write about poverty is one thing; when street people - the homeless - speak and write about their daily experiences, poverty takes on another aspect. There is hope... when the poor explore means to help one another improve their actual life condition in dignity. In the setting of the International Year to eliminate poverty, proposing the candidacy of the magazine for its texts on the "Church and poverty" (August 1996 issue), obtained for it an award from the Canadian Association of Catholic Periodicals during the Association's annual congress held last October. □

Micheline Marcoux, M.I.C.

**Awarding of the ACPC Prize
to Serge Lareault (2nd, r.)
editor of L'itinéraire and to
Gabriel, (1st, l.) magazine vendor**



Photo: Y. Deschênes



Among the benefactors for the construction of the Centre d'éducation permanente pour adultes in Antananarivo: the embassies of the United States, France, Germany and Japan

In front of the newly-constructed CEPA building: Sr. Estelle Fontaine (2nd, l.) and CEPA team members welcome Jeannine Bombardier of the Bombardier Foundation and her husband.

In Communion with the Malagasy People

BY ESTELLE FONTAINE, M.I.C.

When Madagascar is mentioned in the media today, the focus is too often on the prevalent poverty situation. Sr. Estelle Fontaine, who has worked among the Malagasy people for many years, goes beyond clichés and reflects on the cultural causes - the strengths and the weaknesses - of how this country works. Her analysis, coloured by her skill in psychology, brings her to get involved in projects that call upon the people to take responsibility for themselves. In 1990, Sr. Estelle participates in the setting up of the Centre d'éducation permanente des adultes (CEPA - Adult Education Center) in Antananarivo. She works there as technical adviser.

How can one find the right balance between "affective bonding", so valuable to Malagasy ethnic groups, and the "rational autonomy of consciousness" which is essential for economic development, one of the conditions of the survival of a people? How is it possible, also, to build bridges between people with a higher level of awareness and those without a voice? To be conscious of such dilemma, to reflect on them and to take adequate action is, in part, the aim of our quest and of our commitment on behalf of the Malagasy people.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE CAUSES

Missionaries and other educators have long been devoted to the education of children and youth in Madagascar. Nevertheless, adults are being confronted by

rapid change, by the impact of the ideological and economic revolution taking place in Madagascar as well as worldwide, by the questions that arise from the country's cultural heritage and from some practical problems inherent in Madagascar's maturing culture.

In Madagascar as elsewhere, growth takes time. It is not easy to move from a group identity to personal identity because of industrialization, commercialism, urbanization and monetarism. Thus individuals eager to acquire their personal autonomy right away find themselves immersed in a population - despite all its inherent riches - sustained in a mentality of dependence, of fears revived by taboos, the defense of the race and of the ethnic tribe. It happens too that leaders or others, getting involved in inappropriate systems

of government, oftentimes lapse into self-centered behaviour to the detriment of public survival.

A good number of Madagascans, while coming to realize that their human and natural resources are such as to make possible the establishment of a prosperous economy, are aware of the spirit of dependence instilled into them by their family upbringing, of their dependence on their ethnic group and of their strong fear of rejection. (...) This is the kind of thinking behind such reflections as: "On one hand, Malagasy people claim to be ready to join the international market; on the other hand, they expect the rest of the world to take into account their particular racial, ethnic and cultural traits." According to a survey reported in the October 1995 issue of *Exportations Québec*, the GNP

decreased by 40% under the Socialist-Marxist regime, the land acreage suitable for cultivation was reduced by half and agricultural productivity was cut down to a mere seventh of what it had been.

A PROJECT ROOTED IN THE PEOPLE'S CONCRETE SITUATION

Aware of the issues upon which their future depends, some Malagascans strive to find solutions to improve their situation. This is the purpose of the *Centre d'éducation permanente des adultes* in which I participate. To date, around sixty members are asking questions and developing awareness concerning the relevance of the kind of education that is given in relation to the country's future. At a time when everyone struggles for his or her own survival, to pursue this undertaking is a challenge for all of us.

Among the members of the Centre are young professional people: teachers, physicians, computer scientists, project directors, people in public office, consultants, businessmen, etc. Training is given in various areas: interpersonal communication, discernment, personal, cultural, ecclesial, spiritual and

leadership identity, affectivity, learning how to make a choice, mid-life crisis, integration of personality, rereading of various lived experiences, goal setting, forgiveness, etc. We are planning on courses in helping relationship, bereavement, suicide prevention and spiritual accompaniment in everyday life... A number of Malagascan facilitators go to various places throughout the island to give sessions on interpersonal communication. They are well received and invited to return. At each of our general assemblies, a CEPA member gives a lecture according to his or her expertise. What a potential is thus put to contribution! Four members are also preparing to broadcast these lectures on the Salesian Fathers' Radio network.

The CEPA library has approximately 3,000 books on family, business and other concerns: spirituality, health, education at all ages, management, sales techniques and social intervention, human behaviour and various psychological approaches (resources

rarely found in Madagascar). Books such as *Parents efficaces* (Effective Parenting) and *Les difficultés de votre enfant* (The Problems of your Child), having proved most helpful and appreciated, have been translated in Malagasy for the benefit of the generations of the 80's and 90's that went through the process of adopting Malagasy as the language of the schools. The *Centre d'éducation permanente des adultes* has been recognized by the Malagasy government since 1990. We owe the construction of this new Centre to the Bombardier Foundation of Valcourt, Quebec, to friends who are collaborating with us and to the assistance of four embassies: the United States, France, Germany and Japan. Without these indispensable partners, what could we have done? Let us thank the Lord together for their generous participation.

REACHING OUT THROUGH VARIOUS CHANNELS

Besides giving psychological guidance, I have been teaching classes to the seminarians in Antsirabe for ten years. Their team of Malagasy educators has a remarkable fraternal spirit. In addition to CEPA and the Seminary, there are other groups that nourish my enthusiasm and missionary commitment, among them, the students of the *Institut catholique de pédagogie*, the men and women religious formation directors and various groups of lay people.

For me, to work at the upbuilding of God's Kingdom, a kingdom of love and justice, means to discover together that God has created all men and women to be free as children of God. The day when nations, races and individuals will live by this freedom, we shall be able to meet the challenges of our cultures, be they too traditional or too modern, too dependent or too independent. In the meantime, the members of CEPA in Antananarivo are committed to this struggle for the development of true freedom, a struggle which already brings us peace and joy. □

Training of animators in communication



Communication in the family



Discovering the Hidden Gift



BY CHRISTIAN BEAULIEU

For the second year, Fr. Christian Beaulieu journeys with us. This fiery communicator opens for us paths of hope, through Word and Life. This time, he invites us to reflect on why we do what we do, on our desire to communicate the best of who we are and to discover the gift hidden in every situation. He presents to us the apostle Peter as an eloquent witness of a person whose life has been transformed by the Spirit.

YOU MAY BE WONDERING IF...

You may be wondering these days if you are still in the right place, if there is "room for you under the sun", if it is still worth going on, in spite of all, through the hardships of life. You may be wondering if you are meant to write, to compose, to sing, to communicate... If the most important things you have to say to your loved ones and to the future generations will ever be heard...

There is only one way to answer your questions. What is it? Look for the need that keeps you steering in this direction, going on despite winds and tides and getting started again every morning. In the dead of night, when you feel no more desire for anything, ask yourself these vital questions: "Am I really driven to this project by an inner urge to do it? Can I help doing it? Is there any way I could do otherwise?" Would something vital be smothered within you - a fire, an energy, an explosion of life - were you prevented from carrying it out? Would something be snuffed out and die in you were you forbidden to realize this project?...

Search the depths of your being for your deepest answer. If you can face such serious questions with a strong and simple "I must", "I have no choice", "I can't help it"..., then continue building your life on this need. The gift of your very best and your identity depend on it! This is where happiness lies for you! Therefore, go back to it! This is how builders of new projects - houses, churches, innovative programmes, job creation - have been driven to build, writers to write, communicators to communicate, founders to found, evangelizers to evangelize, young lovers to get married, men and women to light fires of hope everywhere they go. Now ask yourself: Do I really have something to transmit? What is it? What is the central message which I would not want, for anything in the world, those I am in touch with to miss?

FILLED WITH SWEET WINE

Peter on the day of Pentecost is the perfect illustration of the top notch communicator the Spirit made out of him that day. (Acts 2:14-36). Peter, the fearful one, the shy one, the quitter, expressed himself with incredible force.

Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed them in a loud voice... And the whole city heard him! And hearing his word and sensing the fervour of his expression, all were touched to the heart, profoundly moved! Three thousand joined the first Christian community that day. Quite an achievement!

He stood up... In a loud voice... Filled with sweet wine... Like a pressure cooker ready to explode. Like a bottle of champagne about to pop open. Like a volcano on the verge of erupting. Where could the source of such energy and radiance spring from? What a strength emanated from him, what assurance! Yet he had come a very long way... He had cut off the ear of a soldier, which had not quenched his thirst for vengeance. A few hours before, he had locked himself between four walls out of fear. A few days before, he still coveted the podium of glory. A few weeks before, he had fallen and betrayed in a grand manner. A few months before, he had been desperate... What was it that made such a difference now?

How had he arrived at this point? Who was this man who expressed himself with such fire, such strength, and was so totally taken up by what he did and said? Where did he get his inspiration, his strength? What made him such an outstanding communicator? With such an impact! Like a crash of thunder, a bolt of lightning in people's lives...

*WHAT IS REQUIRED OF A COMMUNICATOR?
FIRST OF ALL, TO HAVE BEEN THERE...*

Only those who have walked the same path are credible and equipped to lead their peers toward the promised land of their love and toward new horizons. How could they guide others to new horizons if they had not themselves faced the winds and storms that drive us there? What strength, what energy, what appeal those communicators possess who have gone through this journey before us and who inspire and draw us to follow after them!

Perhaps in your treasure hunt you come up against major obstacles. But these obstacles are not mere stones obstructing the road ahead; they are diamonds for you to polish and purify that they may give you their utmost brilliance.

*THEN, TO DISCOVER THE GIFT HIDDEN
IN EACH SITUATION...*

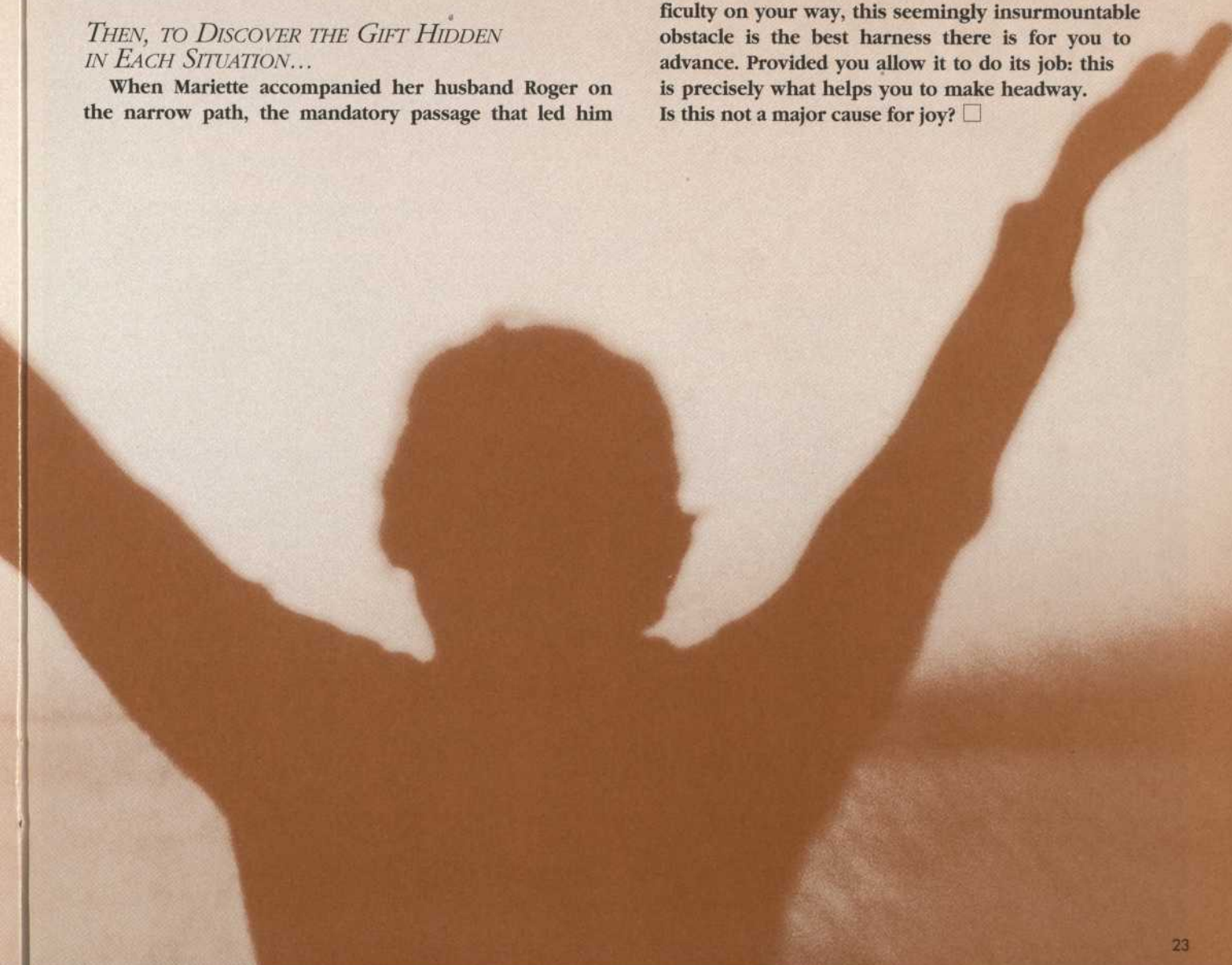
When Mariette accompanied her husband Roger on the narrow path, the mandatory passage that led him

from this life to the other Life,... staying at his bedside twenty-four hours a day, for months on end, watching for the least sign of light from beyond to shine in his eyes, she had a foreknowledge of the hidden gift buried in death. She knew that in every grave there are sparks of life, promises of resurrection. She looked for the life hidden in each situation.

Are we ready to set all the wheels in motion to find this hidden gift? Are we prepared to pay the price? Are we willing to "stand on guard" and watch for the sparks of life and light buried in each grave? You perhaps fear the autumn frost that always comes too early and might spoil the fragile fruits of your loves. But remember that the grapes that yield the best wine are those picked after a severe frost.

TO BRING OUT OF IT A POSITIVE ASPECT

At the very heart of the unhappy situation you are going through is a piece of good news for you. Your life can be changed, your problem can be considered from a different angle, you have misjudged your situation. Do not attempt to change your harness to haul yourself out of the impasse where you find yourself. This difficulty on your way, this seemingly insurmountable obstacle is the best harness there is for you to advance. Provided you allow it to do its job: this is precisely what helps you to make headway. Is this not a major cause for joy? □



*P*REPARING FOR THE YEAR 2000

In the preparatory phase for the year 2000,
1997 is centered on the person of Jesus Christ.

The theme proposed:

*Jesus Christ, only Saviour of the world,
yesterday, today and forever: (cf. He 13:8)*

John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, n° 40

Like the disciples, let us say to Jesus:

Lord, teach us to pray.

When you pray, say:

Our Father... (Lk 11:2)



OUR FATHER



Lord, I would like to meditate tonight on the prayer which You taught us, the Our Father.
I have often meditated on it and I shall do so once again, asking You simply:
"Teach us how to pray".

On the walls of the humble Monastery of *Carmel du Pater*, on the Mount of Olives,
this prayer is printed in some sixty languages,
carved in the stone of the old outside walls of the monastery
so that it may be seen and read from generation to generation.
It should be inscribed in material other than stone,
because characters carved in stone do not resist the erosion of our industrial civilization.
They wear away in time.

The words You have carved in our hearts endure.
What could they conceal that they should live on in people's hearts?
They hold the prayer of the One who wept in Bethany, who feasted in Cana,
who denounced wrongdoing in the Temple, who healed the sick, comforted widows,
forgave Mary Magdalen... and who, in the silence of the night, prayed to His Father.
It is the prayer that rises from the clamour of the crowds, from the tiredness felt after a day's
work or a day looking for work, the prayer of the one afflicted with AIDS or cancer,
the prayer of a simple elderly person.
It is not the padded prayer that safely shelters from the world the one who says it;
it is the prayer of one who lives in the midst of the world.

It is the prayer which can be compared to a huge wave of the sea
heaving toward Heaven the three wishes every creature sends to the Father:

Hallowed be Thy Name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,

that falls and crashes on the shore
to express the needs of all Your creatures, our needs:
Give each one of us our daily bread,
Forgive us,
Deliver us.

This is what You taught us to say again and again each day.
Let us not forget to end it with *Amen*.
Amen because we know for sure that all things are in the Father's hands
all our moments of light,
all our moments of distress
and that your Kingdom will surely come at last.

The *Pater* begins with an act of self-surrender,
the self-surrender of Mary who answered to a request which she understood not: *FIAT*
and it ends with an act of trust renewed on the Cross: *Father, Thy will be done*. □

Pierre Gouin, S.J., October 1994

Written in the wake of the Hebron Mosque massacre (Israel)
Prayer inspired by the meditations of Leonardo Boff.



Photo: S. Morissette

In God's Garden

Sr. Marie-Cléona Robitaille (Sainte-Justine)

The long earthly journey of Sr. Marie-Cléona began on August 31, 1901 in Lowell, Massachusetts, United States. In 1912, her parents and family of eleven children settled in St-Mathieu, Diocese of Trois-Rivières, where Cléona first attended school before pursuing her studies in Shawinigan and then in Trois-Rivières.

At 23, she entered the novitiate of Pont-Viau and made her first profession of vows on February 11, 1928. In September of the same year she was named for Kagoshima, Japan and later for Wakamatsu. In 1943, Cléona had to leave Japan because of the war but she returned in 1949 for another 15 years. She always gave her very best to her tasks, particularly that of cooking and



sewing. She visited families and was always ready to help her companions in their apostolic activities. Having returned to Quebec, she extended precious help to our M.I.C. Sisters of Outremont, Pont-Viau, Joliette and Trois-Rivières. Though completely deaf, her exceptional quality of presence was, indeed, "a reflection of God's love for each one of us", said one of her companions.

In 1987, having then retired at Pont-Viau, she had a serious fall and had to enter the infirmary. Paralysis soon completely disabled her, but she remained sound in mind. A long silent self-offering day after day, until her demise on May 21, 1996, at the age of 95 years. □

Armandine Gauthier, M.I.C.

Sr. Jeanne Bédard (Saint-Roch)

Sr. Jeanne was born on July 9, 1906, in the Parish of Saint Roch in Quebec City, where she grew up and pursued her studies. She entered the M.I.C. Novitiate at 21.

Shortly after her profession, she was assigned to the printing services at our Mother House, where her sense of responsibility, her constant concern for work well done and her congeniality were greatly appreciated. In 1947, her missionary ideal was fulfilled as she left for Haiti. After teaching in a primary school for seven years, she was assigned to work at *La Charité S.V.P.*, a home for the elderly, the sick and the handicapped. Sparing neither her efforts nor her time, she devoted herself totally to the welfare of the sick and poor who appreciated her love and concern.



Having returned to Quebec in 1981, Sister Jeanne took every opportunity to extend help in various ways inasmuch as her health allowed. It was not easy for this energetic woman to accept her limits, but she maintained a realistic and positive attitude as she spent the last stage of her life in Verchères. Though in pain, she made this a time of interiority, contemplation and thanksgiving, praying the Rosary and spending long periods of time before the Blessed Sacrament. On May 23, 1996, her illness having reached its peak, she was taken to the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital of Montreal. She died the following day, ready to meet the Lord and to contemplate Him forever. □

Reina Martel, M.I.C.

Sr. Marguerite Demers (*Saint-Louis-de-France*)

Marguerite, the tenth of sixteen children, was born in St-Sauveur, Quebec City, on the 22nd of March, 1908. At 22, she entered the Novitiate of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

Enriched by a vast experience in the working world and accustomed to a variety of tasks, she used her many talents for the service of the Community with a generosity of heart that never failed. Her simplicity, joy and spirit of thanksgiving made her a delightful companion. Her ever ardent desire was "to be the little drop of water in the wine", as in the Offertory of each day's Mass.



She came to Pont-Viau in 1987, where she was happy to stay until the time of the great Call. She departed from our midst for the eternal praise on May 25, 1996. Even if her field of apostolate was limited to our M.I.C. houses in Canada - Quebec City, Vancouver and New Brunswick - Sister Marguerite was a great missionary, constantly alert to the word of God and to the many needs of her brothers and sisters. She was really an important "little drop of water", for she served most generously with humility and love. □

Fabienne Bernatchez, M.I.C.

Sr. Thérèse Dufresne (*Saint-Pierre-aux-Liens*)

Born in St-Cuthbert on June 3rd, 1905, Sr. Thérèse went to live in Shawinigan in 1912. Her parents instilled in her the sense of Christian virtue, gratitude, responsibility and service of others. After finishing her studies at the Ursuline convent, she taught music for a few years.

Drawn by the call to missionary religious life, she decided at age 23 to join the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. After her profession, she worked devotedly at our houses of Quebec, mostly at the Mother House. She was assigned to the music department, to the teaching of typing, to the Office of the Holy Childhood and to various internal community services. She had the joy of going to Haiti, where her talents were appreciated at the *École Normale* of Cap Haïtien. Due to sickness, she was forced to return to her homeland after



two years of service in Haiti.

Despite several bouts of illness which punctuated her long life, Sister Thérèse always remained a hard worker with a vibrant missionary spirit. She entertained a continuous correspondence with the M.I.C. Sisters in far-away missions and maintained an affectionate presence to her family. Most of all, she constantly reached out to the whole world through her prayer and through the offering of her handicaps, the "coins of her apostolate", as she would say. Eager to remain young at heart and "marveling more and more each day at the love and goodness of the Lord", she wanted to be a "missionary in thanksgiving" to the very end. On May 26, 1996, almost 91 years old, she was received by the Lord for the eternal thanksgiving. □

Georgette Barrette, M.I.C.

Sr. Jeanne d'Arc Michaud (*Jeanne-de-Domrémy*)

Born in St-André-de-Kamouraska on March 8, 1910, Sr. Jeanne received from her parents a sound Christian education and drew from her father's home the values that shaped her endearing personality.

At 23, she entered the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. She devoted herself for many years, in Montreal and in Rimouski, to the spreading of our magazine *LE PRÉCURSEUR* and to missionary promotion in the schools. She was then appointed to a service of authority and as bursar in our houses. However, the work that marked her life more than any other seems to have been that of closed retreats. She devoted herself to this work with great dedication for fourteen years. Wherever she went, she left the memory of a most charitable person, thoughtful



and joyful, a reflection and testimony of a Presence which conquers all hearts. In 1973, she was assigned to Pont-Viau where she worked in the archives and for our missionary magazines, performing her tasks with great care.

Retired at the Délia-Tétreault Pavilion in 1993, she accepted in faith the detachments required by her illness. On her last Christmas, aware of her approaching death, she presented her violin to the director of the *Petits Violons de Laval* for a young artist. Her earthly pilgrimage was nearing the end. She handed her soul over to God on May 31st, 1996, at the age of 86, having lived 63 years in the religious life. Now, in the presence of her God, she sings with Mary an eternal Magnificat. □

Jeanne Guinois, M.I.C.

NEWSBRIEFS... HERE AND ELSEWHERE

PHILIPPINES

FAREWELLS TO A
HOME-AWAY-FROM-HOME

After arriving in Davao City in 1952, the M.I.C. Sisters undertook diverse ministries, among which was a Student Center. In 1955, the Center became the Our Lady of Good Counsel Dormitory. Here, young women, mostly college students from nearby provinces, found a home-away-from-home. Annie Lou, a B.S. Accounting student, expresses deep appreciation for her stay in this dormitory.

During forty-four years, the Center - Our Lady of Good Counsel Dormitory - has been a haven for students. Young residents like me experienced the warmth of a homey atmosphere in a comfortable and safe place, conducive to learning and development of spiritual and moral values. This year, all 100 of us residents are obliged to bid farewell to one another, to the M.I.C. Sisters and to the dormitory itself... for a colony of termites have also settled in and have made the building unsafe for occupancy.

A good part of who I am today is a reflection of what the M.I.C. Sisters have imparted to me. During my three-year stay at this residence, I have been enriched with Christian values to help me face the world with strength and courage. The Sisters have taught me self-discipline and have encouraged my active participation in various group activities and liturgical celebrations. I have learned to manage my time, especially regarding my studies. In many ways, I have become more independent and responsible. One of my greatest joys was to meet good friends whose friendship I will ever treasure.

For me, the dormitory was not just a building where I returned at night and where I woke every morning, ready to face a new day... but a place where I learnt very valuable lessons to keep and bring with me wherever I might go. To Sr. Nicolasita Villarin, our directress, and to all the M.I.C. Sisters who have touched my life and that of my companions, I wish to express my deep gratitude for the love, patience, understanding and dedication they have extended to us. I wish that each one of us may find the same happiness and contentment that filled our life together in this house. It is difficult to say goodbye without the assurance of seeing each other again, but such is life and we have to move on... □

Annie Lou Quilala

MALAWI

WHEN CHRISTIAN STUDENTS MEET

The Young Christian Students (Y.C.S.), a youth movement in Malawian schools, consists of young people who commit themselves to spread Christ's message of love in their own milieu.

Doris Twyman, M.I.C., coordinator of all Youth Movements in Mzuzu Diocese, shares with us the outcome of the organization's annual gathering, as reported by three Y.C.S. members.

"It is well in my soul if I put Jesus in my life..." This verse of a song was often repeated with great enthusiasm during a three-day gathering held at Marymount School in Mzuzu. About 110 Y.C.S. members from different schools throughout Mzuzu Diocese, participated in this annual meeting. During two days, sessions were given by

Photo: M.I.C., Philippines



Nicolasita Villarin, M.I.C. and residents of Our Lady of Good Counsel Dormitory, Davao City

Participants at the YCS Annual Meeting, Mzuzu



Photo: YCS

the Training for Transformation Team. The team led us to reflect on the importance of trust and mutual acceptance in a sharing group. We were invited to reflect on the events and the situations in our respective schools and villages, as well as in Malawian society, so as to find the root causes of our problems and adopt relevant actions. On the third day, we looked at new ways of introducing to the students in our respective schools some facts on which to reflect. We then studied a paper on "How to Run a Group Discussion" and tried to put it into practice by using the process of *See, Judge, Act* on a very relevant topic: What does freedom mean to a student?

Our sincere gratitude to Bishop J.M. Zuzza of Mzuzu who took time to greet us and show his concern, particularly regarding the problems faced by our generation today: drugs, abuse of sex and of freedom. We felt challenged and ready to rally to his invitation to be *light and salt* to our fellow-students. Indeed, this annual gathering greatly contributed to ever keep the fire burning in our hearts! □

*Yohane, Daniel and Scholastica -
Y.C.S. Members*



*Mr. Serge Ménard,
Minister for Greater Montreal,
greet the jubilarian.*

CANADA

ANOTHER M.I.C. CENTENARIAN

One hundred years indeed mark a rare occasion well worth celebrating! On September 16, 1996, the chapel and big hall in Pont-Viau put on a festive look, highlighting the 100th birthday of our dear Sister Berthe Surprenant, our second centenarian!

Radiantly happy, Sr. Berthe welcomed members of her family, numerous friends and distinguished guests who came to celebrate this memorable day with her.



*Sr. Berthe Surprenant
with the personnel at
the Infirmary
of Pont-Viau
Photos: M. Boulé*

The Eucharist was concelebrated by Bishop Gérard Tremblay, former episcopal vicar of the Laval Region, with P.M.E. Fathers Fernand Gaudry and André Pigeon. Sr. Évangéline Plamondon, M.I.C., Superior General, opened the celebration with warm wishes and expressions of gratitude to the birthday celebrant. Other special messages followed after the Mass. Mr. Serge Ménard, deputy of Laval and Minister for Greater Montreal, proposed a toast for the honoree of the day. He offered congratulatory wishes in his name and in behalf of Quebec's Prime Minister Lucien Bouchard, whose greeting he read to Sr. Berthe. On his part, the City Councillor Georges Gauthier, representing the Mayor of Laval, extended to Sr. Berthe the Mayor's greetings. Through our Provincial and M.I.C. local authorities, Sr. Berthe received the apostolic blessing of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II and the congratulations of Mr. Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada. Sr. Berthe spent nine years as a nurse in Africa. Fond memories of mission days recalled with her and a faxed message expressing the loving wishes of the Sisters of the Province of Africa added to the special joys of the celebration.

To mark this red-letter day, a souvenir scroll was given to everyone present. On one side of the scroll was printed the beautiful love story of Sr. Berthe; on the reverse side, her photo. The guests and all of Sr. Berthe's family members in particular were delighted over such a beautiful feast with their beloved aunt, now a centenarian! * □

M.I.C. Information, 1996

MISSIONARY INTENTIONS

JANUARY 1997

Christ Jesus,
you died to save all humanity.
Give strength to the baptized to witness
to your saving death by their lives.

FEBRUARY 1997

Crucified Lord,
teach the sick and the elderly
to unite their sufferings with yours and
to offer them for the Universal Church.

Editor's Note: At the time of finalizing this issue, we learned of Sr. Berthe's demise on October 31, 1996.

Hello!

With the coming of the New Year, InterAction brings you a lot of new ideas! We suggest some interesting activities which will give you a chance to reflect and discuss with your club, your school group and even your family. It will be a good way to improve your communication skills.

Let's keep in touch all through the year 1997!

AN AWARD OR A LEMON

In face of the media, do you just TAKE EVERYTHING IN or do you look at it with a CRITICAL MIND?

To learn how to see things with a critical mind, here are two activities to choose from with your group...

Make some changes to them to suit your own milieu.

You are members of a Selection Committee and you must give an AWARD or a LEMON.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Five or six videoclips
- A VCR and a TV set
- Pop corn

INSTRUCTIONS:

Sit comfortably and watch the video clips. Each has a copy of the "Award or Lemon" evaluation sheet. If you do this activity on your lunch hour, use fewer clips.

After each video clip, take a moment to answer the short questionnaire privately.



When you have watched all the video clips, let all the members share the reactions they wrote on the questionnaire.

Finally, take a vote for the Award or for the Lemon.

SUGGESTIONS:

After the activity, write a letter to a television station that shows video clips and/or to your school or local newspaper to let them know the result of the vote. Tell them who you are and explain briefly why this or that video clip was given the Lemon or the Award *

GALA OF MEDIA AWARDS

Have you ever watched the EMMY awards, the GEMINI awards, the OSCAR awards... or any other such gala on television? The award winners are chosen by a jury and given trophies or plaques. There are several nominees and the choice is made according to specific criteria.

Why not organize a Gala of Media Awards among yourselves (selecting newspapers, magazines, television shows, videos, video clips, radio programmes...)?

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Promotion of peace or use of violence.

An AWARD for Peace,
A LEMON for Violence.

* Adaptation and publication authorized -
Répertoire d'activités des Clubs Mond-Ami,
Service national Mond-Ami, Montréal.

AWARD OR LEMON



What is the title of the song? _____

Do you like the music of this video clip? _____

Do you like the images? _____

What message do you think the artist is trying to convey through this song?

Write a word or a sentence.

What do you think of this message? _____

What do you think it deserves: AWARD or a LEMON? Indicate the prize you picked for it.



To contact the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, here are a few addresses:

CANADA:

THE GENERALATE
and Mission Procure
121 Maplewood Avenue
Outremont, Qc Canada
H2V 2M2 Tel.: (514) 274-5691

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

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

AFRICA:

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

CUBA:

CALLE 146, N° 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
Lot 11-J-4 bis, Ivandry
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.

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Rwandan refugee camp in Zaire - Thanks to humanitarian projects
centered on the "reconstruction of the person", seeds of life are sown ...

Photo: M.-P. Girard, S.S.C.M.

NURTURING HOPE

This is what we are about:

We plant seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete but it is a beginning, a step along the way,

an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

Oscar Romero

(The Communicator, ARCCC, June 1996)

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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