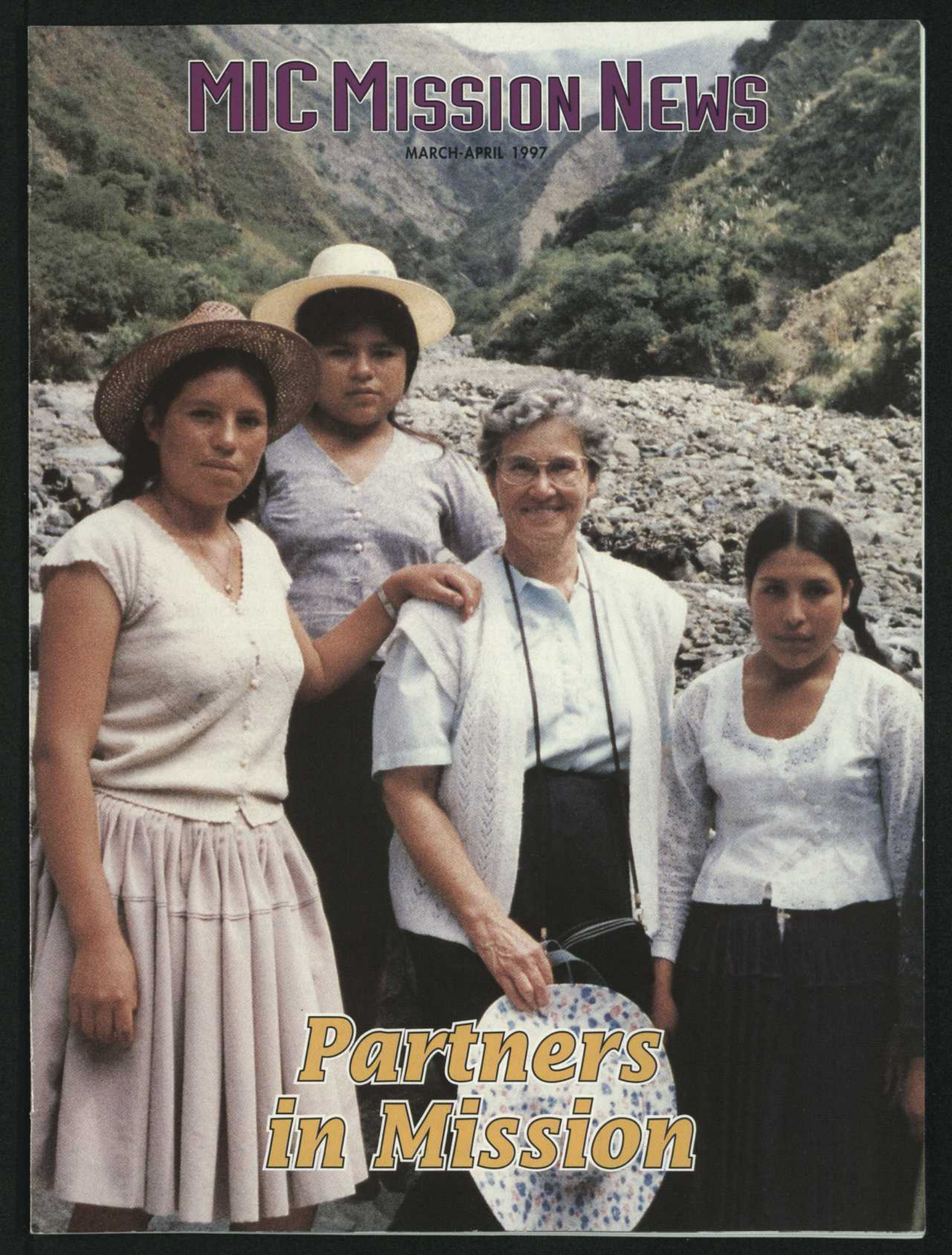


MIC MISSION NEWS

MARCH-APRIL 1997

A photograph of four women standing in a rocky, mountainous landscape. From left to right: a woman in a white short-sleeved top and a full, light-colored skirt; a woman in a light blue short-sleeved top and a wide-brimmed straw hat; an older woman with glasses, wearing a light blue short-sleeved top and a white cardigan, holding a small, round, patterned object; and a woman in a white long-sleeved top and dark pants. The background shows a steep, rocky hillside with some green vegetation.

*Partners
in Mission*

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Louise Laberge, M.I.C. (center)
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A market day in Bolivia.

Photo: Groupe Solidarité-Bolivia

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TO BE MISSIONARY...

People Who Care

"I'm just a lay person..." How often have we heard this remark? Some decades ago, it might have been permissible, but not any more. Today, more than ever, the growing number of committed lay people who answer the call to serve the Gospel at home and in other lands is impressive and full of promise. Adults and young people alike are taking personal responsibility for the mission to bring the good news of God's love to others by word and example. They respond with generosity and dedication to the call for greater participation in the Church's work of evangelization and in pastoral activity.

This responsibility is placed in the context of today's interdependent world, a world searching for unity and peace. The presence and participation of lay people thus adds not only a new dimension but also a new vitality to the Church's response to mission. They are people who care. They bring valuable expertise and enthusiasm into missionary activities. Their impressions are quite vivid, their eyes wide open to the newness, to the beauty, as well as to the sadness that exist among the people with whom they live and work.

Results show that lay people involved in one way or another in missionary activities acquire a wealth of new experiences to share with others, reporting not only what they do but also what they learn from other local Churches. The experience of involvement in the realities of another culture helps them to deepen their understanding of their faith and to create an even greater mission awareness among their own family members and friends. Through their eyes, we see more clearly the vibrant signs of life in communities of faith here and abroad: the dynamism of young local Churches, their missionary awakening and commitment, the exchanges and sharings taking place, the concern for inculturation, the many commitments for justice and peace, the searching among young people.

In this issue of MIC MISSION NEWS, our lay collaborators - M.I.C. Associates, lay missionaries and benefactors - relate some of their experiences as active participants in the mission. Their example challenges us to broaden our minds and hearts to include new realities and to think of the world as a global family. They disclose how they have come to discover that within themselves is the capacity to reach out to others... and that the more they reach out, the more they find themselves able to serve as bridges of understanding and love. They tell their stories of pain and laughter, embarrassment and joy. Most of all, they share their hopes... their hopes to continue to serve, to grow, to be witnesses to God's love, witnesses to God's love revealed in other people. With them, our partners in mission, we find reasons for rejoicing. For already, some of their hopes are met!

New hopes and joys awaken each spring. May the joy of the Risen Lord and His promise of the fullness of life fill our hearts and our world!

A grace-filled Easter Season! ☐

Ma. Anthea Raso, M.I.C.



Lay participants in a missionary formation programme with Cécile Ménard, M.I.C. (center) Photo: T. Lortie, M.I.C.

Hope for the Church

BY PAULINE WILLIAMS, M.I.C.

The world changes, so does the mission. Whether we speak of mission here or abroad, adjusting to social and cultural realities and taking part in the development of human dignity is a journey that takes us on different roads. In the midst of this thriving and fascinating missionary activity, a new phenomenon - the missionary laity - challenges us and opens some promising avenues for the future of the Church. Pauline Williams, M.I.C., has worked for many years with lay missionaries. She highlights the importance of their vocation and of the necessity to support their efforts.

AT THE HEART OF THE WORLD AND OF THE CHURCH

When I look attentively at the life of the Church, I am delighted to see the Spirit of Jesus at work in the hearts of many men and women. I have the joy of reaping some of the fruits and I am in awe. Let me share quite simply with you this wonderful experience.

In the social and religious context of our times, there is in the hearts of the people we meet a quest for meaning and a desire for spiritual life and meaningful commitment. In this atmosphere of genuine search, the Lord's call to the service of the mission is heard, either as a gentle voice or in a thunderous fashion. It is an upsetting experience for some people; for others it is disturbing, to say the

least, and for still others, it confirms a dream of their younger days: to go on a mission to help people. By dint of explicit and constant requests, a movement was created and has been growing: the missionary laity. It is an avenue, among others, for the future of our Church here in Quebec.

THE MISSION IN THE NAME OF JESUS

Wishing to understand what is happening to them, lay people take the means to discern clearly what is taking place in their lives, where God speaks to them in secret. As they are open to the signs of the Spirit, they hear the call which is theirs as baptized Christians - to go in the name of Jesus and for the sake of His Gospel. Their desire is to be at the service of the poor, in a sister-Church, beyond the bound-

aries of their own country. They do not claim to be a replacement for priests and missionary religious communities. What they want is to take an active part in the mission in other countries in cooperation with the local Churches. They want to make a commitment according to their own specific mission and personal charism.

Now, how does one discern God's plan for oneself and respond to this plan? Special places of solidarity and reflection have been set up for the laity to enable them to act on their calling. For the last twenty years in Quebec, missionary Institutes and Societies have made possible a continuous accompaniment and an adequate formation of lay people. Moreover, they are offered actual mission fields for their involvement.



Diversity of horizons and experiences, enriching encounters - an anticipation of the mission.

A RICH ASSET FOR THE CHURCH

The need for all the faithful to share in the mission of Jesus is not merely a matter of making the apostolate more effective; it is a right and duty based on their baptismal dignity, says *Redemptoris Missio* (RM N° 71). Local Churches and Christian communities that accept to send some of their members to share for a few years the life and

missionary activity of another Church are far from being poorer for it. When the lay missionaries return home, they are filled with the vitality of a young Church. Very often, the deep aspirations and



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

struggles of those people in other places have grown close to their hearts. In turn, they make us aware of our solidarity with them. They provide leadership and missionary education to the People of God that we are and promote the integration of the Gospel message in our own culture.

Can the Church afford to pass up the opportunity to see a growth of life in our communities, an awakening of the sense of missionary commitment at home and abroad? It is up to each one of us to keep pondering these things, to open our hearts to the new calls of the Spirit and to make ourselves available! □

MISSIONARY FORMATION

At present, 77 women and men, single or married, are taking part in a journey of discernment so as to better understand God's plan. These participants come from different places that actually spread between Rimouski and Rouyn-Noranda, and include Quebec City, Chicoutimi and Montreal.

During this first stage, they seek to clarify their own motivations. They identify and intensify the faith dimension of their missionary project. As they become aware that this commitment is a radical part of the Church and of its mission, they reinforce their sense of belonging to the Church. They also get to name the type of project in which they plan to become involved and to identify their particular training needs at various levels.

A second stage of formation is needed for a deepening and maturing of the call to mission. Thirty-three people from the above-mentioned areas are involved in this programme. It includes initiation in missionary spirituality, in the encounter of other cultures and religions, in socio-political analysis and in the rereading of one's commitment, as well as exercises to foster a well-balanced affective life and healthy relationships. Those wishing to work in cooperation with a

missionary Institute familiarize themselves with the mission of this Community. Personal guidance is offered to all those involved in either one of the stages of formation.

LAY PEOPLE AND MISSIONARIES

The desire to take on a commitment in another Church is spreading more and more. An increasing number of people follow a formation programme to this effect. How can one not admire these women and men who are able to risk giving up their job security to devote a number of years to the service of the mission! The missionary laity has become an inescapable reality requiring support, guidance and encouragement not only on the part of Christian communities, but also on the part of those who lead them.

On the occasion of their missionary commitment, Hélène Laperrière and Steven Ouellet with François Lapierre, P.M.E., Superior General. Hélène and Steven are in Brazil since three years.



Photos: F. Vachon, P.M.E.



ASMIC members with Sr. Gaëtane Perron (2nd row, 2nd r.) at a gathering held in Pont-Viau



The Desire to Give Thanks

AN INTERVIEW WITH GAËTANE PERRON, M.I.C.

In every part of the world the laity are developing new ways of being Church and of living as Church. Among these is the reality of lay people associating themselves to religious communities to share in their spirituality and apostolic endeavours. The forms of commitments are as diverse as the Communities. All depend on affinities and callings. The women and men associated to the M.I.C. Sisters are called ASMIC. We have written in the past about this experience which is being lived in our Institute. Sr. Gaëtane Perron, ASMIC coordinator in Quebec, now relates the experience.

Sister Gaëtane, hasn't our Community always worked with lay people? What is the reason for this association?

Yes indeed. In its 95 years of existence, our Community has lived various types of cooperation with the laity, each one as important and indispensable as the others, depending on the social and religious context of the times. Back in 1905, the association *Le Patronage* was established. Its members - *les Dames auxiliaires* - were regarded by the M.I.C. Sisters as their affiliates, offering support and services as "home missionaries". Around the 30's, we already had the sewing circles. Since 1973, a large network of people evolved to raise missionary awareness in parishes by promoting the magazines *LE PRÉCURSEUR* and *MIC MISSION NEWS*. There has also been an increasing demand on the part of the laity to share in the missionary work of the M.I.C. Sisters around the world. Today, these forms of cooperation are very much alive and necessary. Since 1980, we also witness the emergence of what we call "associate membership". A few people, drawn by our spirituality of thanksgiving, asked to live this experience with us. Some close-knit connections gradually developed with them and with those who later came to join the group. They became an association named ASMIC.

How are we M.I.C.s connected to these associate members?

The image readily coming to my mind is that of a

"spiritual family". We have family connections as well as affinities with the ASMIC. Our history, our spirituality, our mission are in harmony with their values. Thus the project of Délia Tétreault, our Foundress, continues... She was the one who, as early as 1902, gathered a number of lay people to live by the same charism of thanksgiving.

How is the ASMIC experience unfolding at the present time?

The associate members of our Institute - male and female - are Christians of every nation and culture. One can find them in the countries where we are present. Each group has its own character and develops at its



Marie-Paule Gaudreault, M.I.C., (1st l.) and some ASMIC members from Quebec: (l. to r.) Yvette Demers, Jacqueline Abgral and Jacques Demers

own pace. It is eminently important to respect people's developmental journey and to adjust to the different cultures. In Quebec, a very simple Guide was published. It defines ASMIC as a well identified group and describes its organization. A profile of our Institute is also given with the specific purpose of our apostolic commitments: to live out the mission in a spirit of thanksgiving in the manner of Mary.

There are currently 208 ASMIC members, including 78 in Canada; 172 others, including 48 here, are journeying toward a commitment as future members. There is also a youth group called JASMIC. This group has 10 committed members in Peru and 36 young people of various countries - including 21 in Canada - who have undertaken the same journey. All these lay people share in our spirituality. They wish to live their faith in a mature way, as conscious, thinking adults. They look for a group to which they can belong, in which to share this faith while remaining in their own life vocation.

Is there a formation programme proposed to the ASMIC?

There certainly is. The spirituality of thanksgiving, just as any spirituality, involves a specific way of understanding and living one's life and faith. It entails a particular vision of the world, of God and of the human person and leads to a commitment. We meet regularly with the ASMIC. We reread our life and commitments in the light of the Word of God and of the spirituality of thanksgiving. In these meetings, we recall the history of the M.I.C. Community, the life of our Foundress, Délia Tétreault, and that of our pioneers. They remain an inspiration for us today. These are moments when we too take a positive, enthusiastic and healthy look at our own lives. In practice, this means:

- contemplating the universe and all creation as a gift of God's love;
- being in awe at God's action in ourselves, in others, in nations and recalling it;
- sharing freely and tenderly the gifts received.

This formation which consists of sharing, celebration and commitment to the service of the mission helps every associate member to become rooted in our spiritual family and partake of its vitality. By being an ASMIC, one commits oneself, along with the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, to live according to a spirituality of thanksgiving and to become a partner of their mission.

One last question - I would like to know what are some of the commitments of the Associates. Would you mention a few of them?

Of course, missionary projects are part and parcel of the life of ASMIC members. They get involved, first of all, in their own immediate surroundings and in their communities of faith. In these environments, they experience various forms of solidarity through their family, professional and social interconnections. This is what strikes me about them - they keep abreast of what goes on in their own milieu, bringing others to a greater awareness of the missionary dimension. They are also eager to encourage projects more specifically related to our missionary reality, such as the ALPA twinning project, an organization to welcome immigrants; the coordination of a youth project called *Solidarité-Bolivie*; the support of assistance projects such as the Institute for Rural Education (I.E.R.) to which we are committed for five (5) years; the support of the M.I.C. Missionary Press through the two magazines, *LE PRÉCURSEUR* and *MIC MISSION NEWS*. These are only a few examples. Each group takes its own initiatives according to the country and milieu where it exists.

After listening to Sr. Gaëtane, I realize the impact this group is called to have in our Institute and in the Church. By taking as their own the spirituality of thanksgiving, our Associates bring a new impulse to their spiritual life and to their commitments. Their presence is a call. It gives us a desire to give thanks. It brings to the world a new, original way of living out the Christian commitment. The spirituality of thanksgiving thus becomes an ecclesial project that is open and full of hope for the future.

Céline Gauvin, M.I.C.



To live the mission in a spirit of thanksgiving, in the Marian way - a commitment renewal by Andrée Bellerive during a liturgical celebration.

In Montreal, Suzanne Tremblay-Perron, M.I.C. (1st r.) with a group of Filipina ASMIC members.



Photos: M.I.C., Canada

A Dream Come True

IN COLLABORATION

Through the years, our thoughts often harbour dreams which lead us to the future, where our lives take on their full meaning. Three M.I.C.-sponsored lay missionaries - Monique Fortier and Lucienne Frenette in Bolivia, Myriam Laroche in Taiwan - have made their dream a reality... a dream to go to peoples of other lands and cultures in the name of Jesus Christ and to share the living conditions of the least privileged. As they journeyed in the mission field, their lives took a new turn and the inner journey led them to thanksgiving. The formation they received as part of the joint M.I.C. and P.M.E. Programme for Lay Missionaries enabled them to live more intensely according to Gospel values.



Monique Fortier (r.) and companions from Bolivia and Peru, preparing to become Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

MY IMMERSION IN BOLIVIA

Upon arriving in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in January 1996, I lived at the Institute of Rural Education (I.E.R.), a formation centre for peasant women. Every year, approximately 40 young women, aged 17-25, come for a period of formation that enables them to return to their milieu as social workers. The young Bolivian women welcomed by the M.I.C. Sisters at the I.E.R. are marginalized in three ways: they are women, peasants, poor.

In the first few months, I devoted my time mostly to learning the language. This was a difficult period. When people talked to me, I could not understand what they were saying and I could not express my thoughts. Coming from a country where the most important thing is to be productive, to give results, to "do" something, it was not easy to learn how to simply "be" with people, receive from them, learn their

way of thinking and doing. I often felt useless and frustrated. In June, a formation session was offered for missionaries working in Bolivia. I wanted to take part in courses on Indian cultures, on their spirituality and on the country's social, political and economic realities.

In July, I went through a real immersion experience. Together with Elmire Allary, M.I.C., I took part in a meeting organized for so-called "alternative" adult education centres such as the I.E.R. We lived a whole week in Salinas on the Chilean border. Being a 13-hour bus ride away from Cochabamba, it seemed at the other end of the world to me. The nights and mornings were freezing cold (-16°C). There was no hot water, no heating and no electricity except from 7 to 10 in the evening. Taking a shower was like diving into the St. Lawrence River... in winter! There were only five of us foreigners out of fifty participants; all the

others were Bolivian, men for the most part. We were really steeped in Indian culture (75% of Bolivian people are Indians of different cultures: Quechua, Aymara, Amazon). How much I appreciated all the Christians whose ideal was to help the peasants regain their dignity through education. At no time was I treated as a foreigner. I learned some serious lessons from these people, especially how to welcome immigrants in Quebec.

FROM ONE DISCOVERY TO ANOTHER

When I returned from this long journey, my missionary life took a new turn. Little by little, I realized that all my past experience and all my skills could be useful for the benefit of the mission. My tasks now are as varied as my talents. Aside from preparing children for their first Communion and accompanying the young women for meetings outside the Institute, I also supervise the



*On the way to Quillacollo!
Monique participates in the
I.E.R.'s self-financing
programme.*

*Lucienne Frenette on a visit to a
health center in Cochabamba.*



Photos: M.I.C., Bolivia

accounting and assist in completing applications for subsidies for the I.E.R.'s self-financing projects. The Institute aims at becoming more and more self-sufficient by marketing eggs, guinea pigs (a delicacy in Bolivia), honey, etc. Every week I put on my driver's cap and take the route to Quillacollo by truck to sell eggs.

I have gradually discovered the importance not so much of what I do as of how I relate with people. Being missionary is who one "is", not what one "does". I can witness to Jesus Christ by the way I receive other people, by listening, being available and trusting. I can proclaim the Good News by my faith in the peasant women, by being on their side in their struggle to achieve autonomy and dignity - and I do this according to my talents and my charism. Just a drop of water in the ocean... but without the drops of water, there would be no oceans...

During my first year in Bolivia, I realized that the preparation I had received through the formation programme for lay missionaries was invaluable. It has helped me to overcome the more difficult times with the right attitude. Moreover, this programme had a "side effect" on me: it helped me to discern the Lord's call and His invitation to become a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception. I am now an M.I.C. postulant since August 25 and I shall have the joy of being initiated in the religious life here in South America by and with the M.I.C. Sisters. I give thanks to the Lord for giving me the opportunity

to adjust even better to the culture of my people of adoption. □

Monique Fortier

An Ongoing Project

Lucienne Frenette - a lay missionary also in Bolivia - already shared on her missionary undertaking (LE PÉCURSEUR, May-June 1993). That year she participated in a project in collaboration with the M.I.C.s and the Centre canadien d'études et de coopération internationale (CECI). She worked then in health services in the rural areas and also helped in greenhouses for the improvement of vegetable farming. Her husband having died prematurely at 56 and her five daughters now grown up and having left home, Lucienne was able to fulfill her dream to become a nurse and a missionary. Now stationed in Cochabamba, she tells us about her present commitment.

Once my contract was ended with CECI, I wanted to continue in partnership with the M.I.C.s this beautiful love story with Bolivia. I therefore stayed in Cochabamba where I am now working as a volunteer among the orphans and the children at the San Sebastian Prison.

There are 120 children - newborn to six years old - in the Solomon Klein Orphanage. I work with the little ones. I try my best to bring them joy, to stimulate them, to teach them how to talk, to walk and to help them discover, little by little, the world around them. At the prison's day care facility, I assist two supervisors who take fifteen children between 2 and 5 years old to the parks where they can play freely and benefit from an abundance of fresh air and sunshine. What encourages me is the spontaneity, the energy and the great capacity for wonderment these children have. I love to make them happy, to see them laugh, sing and learn some new games.

Thanks to the missionary formation I received with the M.I.C.s, I was able to fulfill my childhood dream. The mission is one of the finest achievements of my life... it is marked by unique and wonderful experiences! I thank the Lord each day for the great privilege that is granted to me. □

Lucienne Frenette



Myriam Laroche (4th l.) with M.I.C. Sisters Jacqueline Villemure (2nd l.) and Monette Ouellette (3rd l.); with them, Dr. Tang (l.), hospital director, and some personnel of Cardinal Tien Hospital, Taiwan.

Learning the Language

*Ah! Lord Yahweh!
Truly I am nothing but a child! Jr 1:6*

What God said to Jeremiah when He revealed his vocation to him appropriately describes the missionary experience which is mine in Taiwan since 1995. Like a child, I am at the learning stage in every respect. Despite the one-and-a-half years spent in studying Mandarin - six months full time and one year two days a week - I can hardly speak it! I am fully aware of the necessity to know the language of my mission country if I am to get in touch with other people. This is even more obvious to me since I have been working at the Cardinal Tien Hospital in Taiwan. The staff speak Mandarin to one another and Taiwanese to most of the patients.

In one way, my limited ability to communicate verbally has an advantage: it enables me to be a careful observer. My way of observing is strongly influenced by my faith in Jesus Christ who, during His life, took sides with the outcast, the rejected and the oppressed of society. Through the eyes of faith, I am enabled to see the sad gaze of the elderly who suffer from loneliness and I can feel their desire to be acknowledged. I observe the discouraged faces of those who are overworked, notice their aching bodies, feel the tension of their muscles from excessive strain and hear their sighs of relief at the end of the day. Thus I can hear, see, feel and finally,

be able to talk. Well, yes! here I am, the voice of the voiceless. Strange, isn't it? But the strangest thing is the discovery within myself of this great freedom - an invitation to speak out on behalf of the less privileged ones.

THE INFLUENCE OF MY MISSIONARY FORMATION

In spite of the difficulties I encounter, I am filled with inner peace and deep joy and a new breath of life gives me courage and strength to continue when everything seems impossible. I really believe that with God's help, this become possible. I find in the life of Jesus the references I need to support my stand in favour of the downtrodden, of the handicapped and of the sick. My constant reference to the Word of God in support of my actions comes from my missionary formation... I learned about and experienced a living, attentive and faithful God. This formation opened my mind and provided the basics for living my mission. Because I journeyed with the M.I.C. Sisters, I discovered an aspect of my faith which was heretofore unfamiliar to me: that of thanksgiving. Here in Taiwan, I discover the gratuitous love of God towards me and find myself more and more frequently giving thanks for everything He has done in my life and in that of others.

Like a child, I grope ahead on the path of the mission, where God invites me to walk along with the poorest of the poor. As the days go by and events happen, my mission is being transformed, taking an unforeseen, unsuspected direction. Deep within myself I listen to God

and hear him tell me: *Do not say: "I am a child". Go now to all those to whom I send you and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid for I am always with you...* (Jr 1:7-8). □

Myriam Laroche



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

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WHAT CHANGED MY LIFE

BELGIUM / PERU

IN COLLABORATION

Jean Flipot is a Frenchman by birth. As a nuclear engineer, he worked for years in scientific research at Belgium's Nuclear Centre. In 1980, he and his wife Thérèse-Marie founded the Belgian section of l'Aide Médicale Internationale à l'Enfance (A.M.I.E.). He shares with us the meaning of this commitment. On her part, Jeannine Boily, M.I.C., who initiated several projects in Breña, Peru in cooperation with A.M.I.E., attests to the manifold benefits provided by the aid and support of Mr. and Mrs. Flipot. From Belgium to Peru - a witness which exemplifies the meaning of solidarity and true fraternity.

A short time after the foundation of the Belgian section of A.M.I.E., someone questioned me in these terms: "Why do you work so hard for A.M.I.E.? What benefits do you receive from it?"

I have forgotten the name of this person, but his provoking words (I perceived them as such at the time!) will always remain fixed in my memory. I was shocked! Was he materialistic, selfish, or simply awkward? Did he think that the passionate interest I had in my profession as a researcher should keep me from going out to discover another world - that of the children in developing countries? It is true that scientific discovery affords one deep pleasure and that, except at the end of my career, my professional life was rarely perturbed by budgetary problems or internal tensions. Problems such as widespread unemployment, unstable jobs and the daily tensions of present day industrial life were unknown in those days. It was the good life and research provided many satisfactions. I was happy both in my family and at work... a little corner of paradise had been reserved for me on this earth.

Yet, only a few thousand kilometers from home, it was hell, hunger, sickness, etc... Of course I knew this like everyone else, but as many others I remained passive, settled and snug in my petty comfort. The hunger of others is a part of the mass of information that invades our consciousness each day; it passes and we "forget" about it! The misfortune of others is really not that difficult to bear as long as we do not personally and physically suffer from it. People who have experienced tragedy in their lives - for example, the loss of their spouse or of a child - certainly understand what I am saying. Many would indeed like to do something, but how and what?



Thérèse-Marie and Jean Flipot of Geel, Belgium. Founders of l'A.M.I.E., Belgian sector, they set out on an adventure where children in particular could receive concrete help.

A DECISIVE ENCOUNTER

One day, thanks to my wife Thérèse-Marie, I had the good chance to meet Dr. Marcel Roy, the founder of A.M.I.E. in Canada, for the purpose of supporting him financially in his missions of Asia and the Middle-East. My encounter with this hands-on worker who spoke from the heart was so interesting that the overflowing enthusiasm of Thérèse-Marie carried me as well into a great social venture: to found A.M.I.E. in Belgium and to lay down its golden rules. We had discovered

how we might concretely help a child at the other end of the world since Dr. Roy had dedicated his life to doing just that. We could have discovered this much earlier for there were Belgian missionaries doing the same work... we even knew some of them! Why then did this particular day trigger something in us? Was it chance or was it Providence?

What an adventure and how demanding it would be for both of us, but also how gratifying! I know that Thérèse-Marie gave me a wonderful gift that day. We had found a way to reach out to the needy and to alleviate their misery while remaining home in Belgium. We wanted to provide the same possibility to our future benefactors without their being burdened by administrative red tape. We wanted A.M.I.E. to act in their stead, bringing their donation wherever needed as they themselves would desire.

Thus the struggle was one against administrative costs! Our commitment has been fully respected, for our total annual costs are generally below 0.1% of the amount we send to the beneficiaries. We also had to offer our benefactors a whole spectrum of possibilities to help, i.e. different forms of sponsorship and projects that responded to their sensitivity or motivation as well as to the needs of the poor. In this respect, our efforts have also been successful.



Many wish to help but how and what? A range of possibilities exists...



Photo: M.L. Hang

In 1995, fifteen years after the launching of the Belgian section of A.M.I.E., this collective effort has yielded great fruit: we work with numerous missionaries, both religious and lay, in more than 12 different countries; we have sponsored nearly 2,800 children and young people and our financial aid is in excess of 115,000 F. (\$4,450,000.00). All can be proud of these global results for everyone has contributed to them. How many hours of work, how many sacrifices, how many acts of generosity are hidden behind those figures. Also, how many joys!

A UNIQUE WAY TO ENRICH ONE'S RETIREMENT

For my part, I entered into this great venture with the firm intention to work at it unreservedly and to make it succeed no matter what the cost would be. I realize today that I received more than I ever gave and that A.M.I.E. has become essential for my happiness. My daily efforts are well rewarded by the joy of the results obtained month after month, by the happiness of getting to know some wonderful friends who share our ideal, by the pleasure of our contacts with the benefactors, but above all, by the ongoing satisfaction of being helpful to thousands of people and of continuing to be productive after my professional life came to a sudden stop through an anticipated retirement programme. It is because of A.M.I.E. that I was not in the least traumatized by the break from my professional life. I lived happily a full and fruitful professional life, but when I turned the page, I did not find a void. On the contrary, I felt free to live the social life of A.M.I.E. to the maximum. I increased my activities, according to my aspirations and rhythm, and without stress. In 1980, I thought I was doing my wife a service by supporting her in A.M.I.E. In fact, I had only accepted, without realizing it, a fantastic gift which was her secret.

Today, I could answer that man who questioned me 15 years ago and tell him that A.M.I.E. gives me, indeed, many privileges. Did not the Little Prince say: "It is only through the heart that one can see clearly"? Thanks to all the benefactors who, through their vote

of confidence, have enabled me to remain at the heart of A.M.I.E.! With their support, I shall continue. In no way do I wish to lose my privileges! □

Jean Flipot

PROJECTS IN BREÑA

While working in Breña, I had the privilege of initiating projects in the area. These could not have been possible without the valuable assistance of the Belgian sector of A.M.I.E. Thérèse-Marie and Jean Flipot, both believing in this missionary undertaking, generously provided me their help and support.

In Breña, a number of social outcasts of Lima, Peru live in tiny roofless huts lined up on both sides of a lane one-and-a-half meters wide: these are the *callejones* (lanes). There are 250 of them in Breña. At the end of these lanes are found an open air water fountain and a shower room for common use. In each tiny hut, parents and children are cramped together and along each lane there are about twenty huts. Each lane, therefore, is home to some one hundred people. Those who come to eat at Breña's community kitchen are from these poor families.

One hundred and eight children from the *callejones* of Breña were getting a good breakfast each day before going to school. This was a first result. For many years I strove to realize a dream that, one day, thanks to the community kitchen, the lane dwellers of my neighbourhood might have one substantial meal at least each working day.

THE COMMUNITY KITCHENS

With the help of Pronar (a national food programme) and of the local people - mothers, older



Jéssica and Cony with their friend, Jeannine Boily, M.I.C.

women and the pastor - I then organized community kitchens for one hundred people, but this collective effort was not enough. We had to call on A.M.I.E. of Belgium to launch the project. The support of Thérèse-Marie and Jean Flipot was priceless and I was able to buy the needed pots and pans, plus the fuel and the maintenance products, transport the foodstuffs donated by Pronar and serve meat and fish once or twice a week to 150 people for three-and-a-half years. This project continues to operate, thanks to the women of Breña and to Adelaida Santiago, M.I.C. who is currently in charge. The community kitchen of Breña is not a canteen or a dining room. Its mission is to prepare portions of food to take home. It is open five days a week, from Monday to Friday. The food is not free; it is sold \$0.25 per meal. Each meal includes a hearty soup, rice and a little meat. Beans or lentils sometimes replace meat.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Thanks to Thérèse-Marie and Jean Flipot, I was also able to get a wheel chair for two little girls suffering from muscular dystrophy: Jéssica, 7, and Cony, 4. This

caused much rejoicing in the lane. They also provided another wheel chair for a young woman of 28, named Jackeline, suffering from the same disease. Jackeline became Cony and Jéssica's teacher. An incredible chain of solidarity!

A.M.I.E. of Belgium continues to help many poor Peruvian children, either to cover the cost of their studies from primary school to university, or to provide for the operation of humanitarian projects such as the Day Care centre managed by Rudt Sarazone, a Peruvian woman, who looks after twenty children. Thérèse-Marie and Jean have been exceptional collaborators. Many pages would have to be written to recount all the initiatives taken to help the children of Lima, always in cooperation with the missionaries. Their contribution, adjusted to the needs of the poorest of the poor, gives us reason to hope. Their friendship is comforting. A commitment of such quality is a witness to the essential mission of the laity in our society and in the Church. □

Jeannine Boily, M.I.C.



A needy family benefits from the community kitchen.



Hermelinda receives a good portion of soup for her family.

MISSIONARY INTENTIONS

MARCH 1997

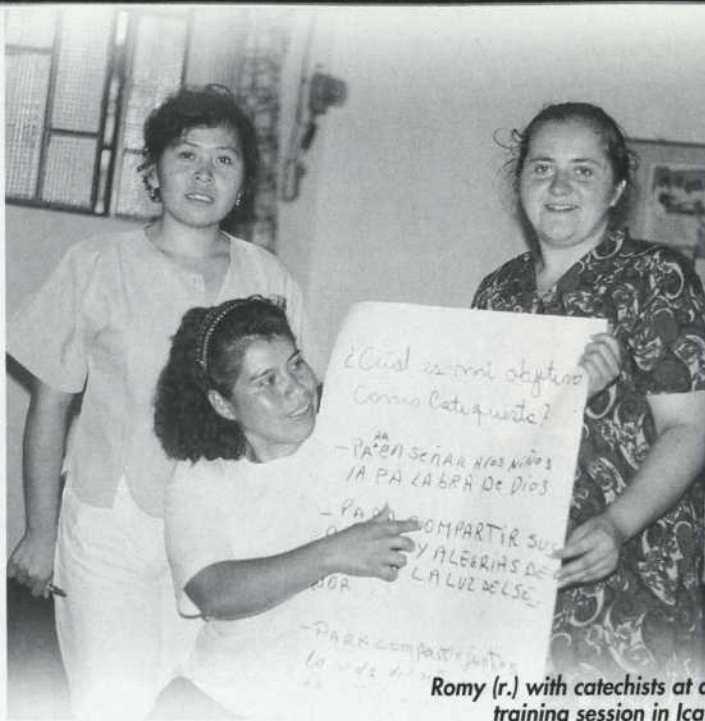
Lord, we pray that the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Papal Organization for the Propagation of the Faith may stimulate the missionary commitment of all Christian communities.

APRIL 1997

God, our Father, uphold the Christian community in Hong Kong. May it continue to be a witness for faith, proclamation, unity, and dialogue with the whole Chinese people.

On a Journey of Sharing

IN COLLABORATION



Romy (r.) with catechists at a training session in Ica.

With courage and enthusiasm, the Church of Chile has engaged in an experience of missionary sharing and solidarity. Despite scarcity of personnel and resources, the Diocese of Chiloe did not hesitate to send two young women as lay missionaries to Peru. Currently working with the M.I.C. Sisters, they speak about their integration in the Church of Peru. Sr. Ana Alvarado tells us how they were led to this missionary journey.

The "missionary hour" of Latin America is also the "missionary hour" of our Diocese of Chiloe, in Chile. In fact, two young women of Ancud, Carmen Gloria Cid, 25, of the *Jovenes Sin Fronteras* movement (Youth Without Frontiers), and Sigrid Romy Yunge, 27, a leader of *Infancia Misionera* (Missionary Childhood), decided to set out on a missionary journey to Peru to share their faith in that country.

In the manner of Délia Tétreault, M.I.C. Foundress, Carmen and Romy became aware of the gratuitous love of God which shines so brightly in the beauty of their island of Chiloe. They also perceived the constant invitation of Jesus to continue His mission. In fact, while still very young, Carmen committed herself to *Infancia Misionera* and then set up the group *Jovenes Sin Fronteras*. This leadership role constantly put her in contact with missionaries and enabled her to live on a level of solidarity and sharing with other peoples and other Churches. Romy, for her part, secretly nurtured her missionary vocation until she met the M.I.C. Sisters from Ancud, who provided new openings for her reflection

and commitment. She joined the movement *Infancia Misionera* as a leader and pursued her journey of growth in the missionary and thanksgiving spirituality bequeathed by Délia Tétreault. This is how Carmen and Romy, wishing to be faithful to their vocation as lay missionaries, chose to live it in connection with our M.I.C. Community.

The fifth Diocesan Synod of Chiloe, held last year, stressed the missionary dimension of the Church. This was another fertile ground that brought Carmen and Romy's missionary vocation to maturity. The presence and action of the Holy Spirit have been so obvious and constant that now, in spite of the shortage of priests, sisters and lay missionaries, Chiloe, "out of its poverty shares its faith" with the people of Peru. This event gave great joy to the Christian community and to its pastor. They launched and encouraged the sale of "tickets" to raise funds for Carmen and Romy's trip.

This joy does not make them forget their regret of the departure for Canada of Gilberte Perras, M.I.C., better known to them as their

Madre Amada. After more than thirty years of mission here, she is returning home, leaving in this part of our country the many seeds she has sown. Fallen in fertile soil, the seeds are already producing fruit. As Sr. Gilberte once left her native country to share her faith, her joy and her hope with the people of Chiloe, so today Gloria and Romy are leaving Chiloe to go to the people of Peru. These two young lay women want to implement along with the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception the mission which Christ entrusts to them today in Ica, Peru, a place where people have long been asking for missionaries. □

Ana Alvarado, M.I.C.

An Undertaking Full of Hope

When we arrived in Ica, we felt a little worried as well as happy, perhaps assessing more accurately, the challenges awaiting us here. We had to get inculturated in another country and another Church and to fit into an international team in which there were considerable age differences. This new team included two

Canadian M.I.C. Sisters who were both seasoned missionaries in Peru - Sr. Jeannine Boily and Sr. Rose-Alice Brochu; Sr. Cypriana Cacahuana, a young Peruvian in formation, and ourselves, the two latest arrivals from Chile. We eagerly set out together, lay women and religious, to live a hope-filled venture. Thank God, we all had a strong desire to share the gift of faith with a population that thirsted for spiritual life and this made us happy and confident! It took very little time for us to settle in a house

that had been restored by request of the Bishop. Furniture, kitchenware and other items were unloaded from a large truck. With the help of five young people, we succeeded in completing the huge task of putting everything in place and we celebrated the achievement with song and dance. At half past midnight we threw ourselves into our beds after a particularly full day.

AN EXHILARATING TASK

Tate, Calderones, Pachacutec, Puno and Lujaraja? These names which were once foreign to us have become familiar with time. They are the names of five villages of the Department of Ica and also of the Christian communities of the Diocese of Ica for which our pastoral team is responsible. Since there are no priests, we propose to the villagers the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and first Communion. We also celebrate marriages and funerals. We visit the sick and the school children and we train catechists.

In time we worked our way into the catechetical programme of Pachacutec's Secondary College. We teach courses to the students of Secondary I to V every day. There are 15 sections, which means we meet approximately 500 students. It is hard work... we struggle, among other things, against some

kind of ambience of homosexuality and corruption.

From March to December, we prepare the children of Tate, Lujaraja and Pachacutec for the Sacrament of Confirmation. This preparation lasts seven months. It includes: participation in the Eucharist every Saturday, a meeting every Sunday, as well as days of reflection and meetings with other young people. The 8th of December was a double feast day! In Tate, 38 children celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation and in Pachacutec, 53 others lived the same event. The choir we formed in Tate already does a good job in enlivening the Eucharistic celebrations.

AVAILABLE FOR MISSION

Gradually, we have started considering other important plans: training catechists for the parishes, visiting remote areas in order to find out more about their needs and to offer the necessary pastoral services. More and more, we feel the desire to stay another year. We really want to continue this task of evangelization... We have become attached to the people of Ica - they are a generous people living under difficult conditions. For them, the Church is the Church of the people and the Gospel is a source of life. □

Carmen Gloria Cid
and Sigrid Romy Yunge



Carmen (r.) gives small sandals - a symbol of the mission - to Geny who is sent to Pachacutec as catechist.

Photos: J. Boily, M.I.C.

♥ A PLANNED GIFT ♥

A PART FOR THE MISSION

For the benefit of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception:

♥ REQUESTS IN YOUR WILL

♥ LIFE ANNUITIES

- ✓ provide you with a lifelong income
- ✓ enable you to reduce your taxes
- ✓ provide you a way to help our missionaries effectively

♥ LIFE INSURANCE

- ✓ allows you to help generously without prejudice to the interest of your family. It is a capital paid after your death by your insurance company.
- Your contribution, in the form of insurance premiums, is deductible from your taxable revenue as a charitable donation.

WE WELCOME ALL REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

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Missionary Sisters of the
Immaculate Conception
121, Maplewood Avenue
Outremont, Qc Canada
H2V 2M2

Telephone:
(514) 274-5691

Fax:
(514) 274-3298

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

APT.: _____

CODE: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

TELEPHONE: () _____

♥ HEARTFELT THANKS ♥



Each Person is Unique!

Someone said to me one day:

"Each person is unique"!

Will you believe me?

I took that saying seriously.

*It is not that obvious
when you stand among a large crowd
or drive through a big city at rush hours,
Even less so in a factory
working on a production line.
There is no lack of interchangeable jobs,
it seems, in the world of paid labour.*

Yet...

*Look more closely at life.
Listen a little... yes, lend an ear.
Every face carries the mystery
of a story unlike any other.
Observe... What a satisfaction it is
to be called by one's own name,
to be recognized for one's personal contribution,
to receive a thoughtfully worded invitation,
to take part in a team, in a group!*

*In the mission of Jesus,
which spreads to the entire planet
and includes a variety of elements
like a puzzle to be assembled,
there is room for everyone.
Furthermore, the calls are personalized!
There are calls for all ages
and for the most varied cultures.
There are no categories, only persons,
each of them one of a kind,
invited through an inner challenge:*

"Are you willing?"

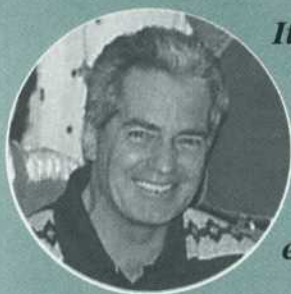
which sparks a response.

*All these responses shine as so many suns
causing Life to grow! □*

Agathe Durand, M.I.C.

Encounters that

BY CHRISTIAN BEAULIEU



It takes much flexibility and love to work together with others and to succeed in a project or mission. In such a venture, we all learn how to give our best - humbly and fully - and we each accept the others with their gifts and talents. Christian Beaulieu tells us about these true encounters in which we participate in the growth of each person. "To refuse them, he says, is to miss the opportunity to experience true love and joy."

A FASCINATING AND DAZZLING LIGHT

You may know about this fact from the life of the Curé of Ars. His reputation had spread all over France because he had the gift of reading people's hearts and hearing their confessions. One day a woman came to see him in order to get a better knowledge of herself. She insisted on hearing what the good Curé, through his clairvoyance, could reveal to her about her soul. He answered: "Madame, it is a blessing that you do not know too much about yourself. If you only knew half of it, you could not bear it."

What we need most is light, help, cooperation, support. Yet how dazzling and scorching light can sometimes be! At a certain degree of brightness, it is "unbearable" to look at. How many times have you not heard someone whisper: *We can't talk to him about this, he immediately explodes... He flies into a rage... He loses control... It's dangerous, he will get all worked up.* All light is good, it is liberating. However, some lights are frightening, some truths we do not wish to see. Why? We do feel the need to see things clearly, but this would lead us to change and the cost would be too high. What we don't know doesn't hurt... What fool stays on the offensive when the obvious choice is to yield to fear? Who accepts to charge against his own fear?

BILLIARD BALLS...!

We often move toward one another and meet like "billiard balls" hitting one another on the table. Each one wants to remain a "billiard ball": *Move aside, here I come! - Get out of there, this is my place! - Don't you cut into my territory. - I'll manage on my own.* Everyone wants to send the others "in the hole"... or else "score a point over them". The temptation is great to act as if we "owned" other people..., to look upon them as "one more trophy in our race for excellence".

Each of us therefore tries to "protect" himself from the other. Chances are the two will often meet equipped with "protection" gear and on their guard! With our character differences that make us incompatible with each other! With our fits of temper, our jealousy, our envy, our desire for competition. The more we multiply these encounters, the more risk of explosion there is! Imagine the noise five hundred million billiard balls hitting one another would make! With this kind of living, don't we run the risk of getting hurt, suffering blows and having our hearts ripped apart?

Happily, for Jesus, the evangelizer is not at all "another billiard ball". The evangelizer proceeds differently; but what can he do in the face of those who hit hard, who try to hit or else run away and then turn into themselves to avoid all contact, exchange, communion?... How can one get through their hard shell? It is not a question of strength, it

Transform the Heart

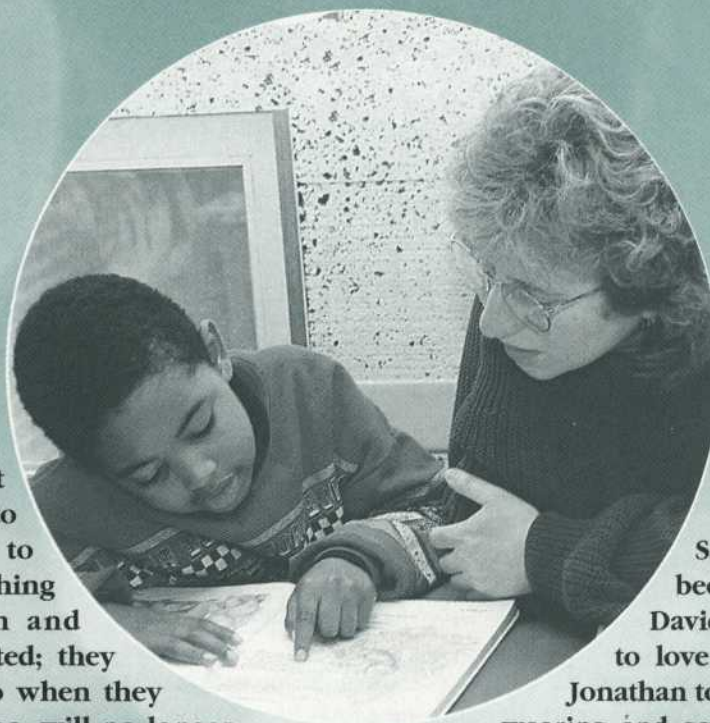


Photo: T. Lortie, m.i.c.

is a question of love. One just slips in gently, as a child, to find the way and the key to their heart. An incredible thing happens then: these men and women are not at all rejected; they are welcomed and loved. So when they in turn go to others, they, too, will no longer be like "billiard balls".

Let us go back to Jesus' way of doing. Let us look for an opening, ever so small, to discover in it a secret, a tiny part of the Spirit and to touch that person's heart. Usually with gentleness and patience... even at times with violence... for medication is not always sweet, it is often very bitter! Always respectful of their freedom, we just may see, then, their protective shell begin to crack... and finally open.

THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN JONATHAN AND DAVID

All this is so well illustrated by the beautiful story of the friendship between Jonathan and David told in the Bible. Jonathan was a prince, the son of a king. Everything prepared him to succeed his father on the royal throne. Behold, one day, David who had nothing of the appearance of a future king, entered the life and heart of Jonathan and a wonderful friendship grew between them.

"Then after David had finished talking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan became closely bound to David's and Jonathan came to love him as his own soul. Jonathan took off the cloak he was wearing and gave it to David, and his

armour too, even his sword, his bow and his belt."
(1 Samuel 18:1-4)

Is there anyone among us who, like Jonathan, would be ready to give another person his royal cloak so that his friend might reign as master and king in his stead? Who is prepared to renounce his rank, prestige and power to enable another to excel and become greater than himself? Who is willing, as Saint Paul suggests, to consider a young person, a child, a helper, an associate as superior to himself and bearer of a unique grace? Who among us accepts to let the humblest person surpass him one day? This is not always so easy and so obvious. I agree. So then, we suffer...

Suffering and joy embrace one another and sleep together in the same bed; they simultaneously make love to each other in our hearts. True joy can live with disappointment, annoyance and sorrow, just as a musical phrase or composition, even a joyful one, contains some dissonant chords. To refuse it is to miss the opportunity to experience true love and joy. □

If Such an Opportunity Comes your Way, Don't Miss It!



A warm welcome from young Bolivians singing and waving flags.

IN COLLABORATION

May 1996! For the second year, the Groupe Solidarité-Bolivie was hosted by the M.I.C. Sisters of the Instituto de Educación Rural (I.E.R.) in Cochabamba. This time, nine enthusiastic university and college students of Quebec accepted the challenge of an actual missionary immersion and returned home imbued with strong values afforded them by this mission experience. Clémence Leblanc and Nicole Maheu, both ASMIC members, and two M.I.C.s - Srs. Gaëtane Perron and Jeannine Bélair - accompanied the young women through the process of their formation and immersion. A short-term missionary project in six activity-packed weeks! Some group members share memorable facets of their rich and diversified experience... with hopes that other young people will have the same good fortune!

LIVING AN EXPERIENCE OF HOSPITALITY

As we set foot on Bolivian soil, we had strange and different feelings: we were happy to arrive at last in this country about which we had been dreaming for so long, yet we felt a twinge caused by the fact that now, there was no turning back; we were going to live the next few weeks in a very different world from which we had a great deal to learn.

If we had any fears, they vanished quickly. Indeed, no sooner were we inside the airport, that the comforting smiles of Monique Fortier, whom a few of us already knew, and of Sr. Suzanne Labelle put

our minds at ease. All along the way to I.E.R., we could not stop marveling at the scenery, our eyes unable to take it all in. When the gates of I.E.R. flew open and we drove in, we were welcomed by all the boarders of the Institute - about forty of them - and by the other Sisters. The young Bolivian women waved little flags as they sang while the M.I.C. team welcomed us, not to their home, but to *our home*... This was our first contact with Bolivia!... an extraordinary contact! With these young girls our age with whom we quickly made friends. With our M.I.C. hostesses, who were appreciative of the joy we shared and who made our stay a most unforgettable

experience. Everywhere, Bolivian hospitality is marvelous. Of this hospitality we keep memories that can never be erased.

Kattie Lussier

GETTING IMMERSED IN THE LIFE OF A PEOPLE

I lived an extraordinary experience in Bolivia. A group experience, an experience of sharing, tolerance and respect. I took a challenging assignment at the *San Juan de Dios* psychiatric hospital, where I encountered a clientele heretofore unknown to me, with whom I had the opportunity to confront my abilities and my limitations. I spent some wonderful hours in the company of

these people whom I very quickly learned to love.

Édith LeBlanc

During my stay in Cochabamba, I worked at the house of *Madre de Dios*, a temporary residence for girls and women in difficulty forced to live on the streets. Each day I met battered and homeless women without any resources and for some, with children. What can you do in the face of such distress? Discreetly, through active listening, I tried to win their trust and to show an interest in the hardships they were experiencing. I dared to put in a word, a phrase likely to give them a glimmer of hope, at least for the moment. I encouraged them by making them aware of their worth as women and of their importance in society. I felt very helpless. Fortunately, there was also a qualified team trying to motivate them and the help they provide does, in due time, bring to each one more stability and self-esteem. Some of them, who are unable to pull through, remain at the residence and help with domestic tasks. I was edified by their courage, their struggle to survive and their moral fortitude. Once again I realized that we are evangelized by the poor.

Clémence Leblanc



On the way to the campos - (1st row) The chauffeur, Clémence, Kattie, Édith, Sophie, Josianne, Nancy Paz, M.I.C., and Jacqueline. (2nd row) Joanne, Gena, Maryse, Catherine, My Lê.

What I best remember of my trip in Bolivia is the time I spent at the Solomon Klein Orphanage. Up early, by 7 a.m. I was already on the *truffi* that took me to my workplace. The winter cold did a much better job of waking me up than coffee. At 8 in the morning, I was at the orphanage and off to the room where I would spend the day with 18 babies. The first thing to do was to wash my hands and put on an apron. I could hear all these little ones cry for they were hungry and thirsty. There were so many of them lying on the floor, waiting to be fed. Two young Bolivian women explained with gestures what I was to do. I then had my first meeting with a child of the orphanage. Her name was Norma and she must

have been two or three months old. I took her gently in my arms and gave her the milk bottle. Norma smiled at me and her beautiful black eyes said thank you. I noticed a bald spot at the back of her head - probably caused from lying on her back for too long. All the babies had the same bald spot at the back of their heads. I spent time to take each one of them in my arms, from the youngest - two weeks old, to the oldest - ten months old. They responded in different ways: some were astonished to see a new face, some laughed heartily, others cried. It was really sad to see these babies spend the whole day lying on a mattress on the floor or in their bed, waiting for another day to pass. They could not as yet get up or crawl. I left the orphanage at around 4 in the afternoon... my arms ached from rocking, consoling, cajoling the little ones all day long. Yet I left the place with a peaceful mind. I was thinking, at least they had a little love.

Maryse Vinet



Interest, active listening, a climate of confidence - Clémence Leblanc and a new friend at the I.E.R.



Maryse Vinet gives loving care to the little orphans at the Solomon Klein Nursery.

I worked four days a week as a volunteer at the *San Juan de Dios Hospital* among chronic care patients. I got attached to these people because of their ability to give without discrimination. I also gave first aid courses to young peasant women at I.E.R. Hopefully, they will be able to

transmit to others what they have learned and I, too, shall be able to share what I have learned from them. After my work at the hospital, I also set up a pharmacy together with three other nurses in the group. These afternoon hours were indeed very full.

Josiane Larochelle

DISCOVERING THE BOLIVIAN WORLD

The image of the street children, the smile of the little ones at the orphanage, the face of the Bolivian people and the wonderful scenery of Bolivia are forever imprinted in my heart. The inner richness of the Bolivian people amply compensates the external poverty with which they struggle. Selfless giving is a deep-seated characteristic of their nature. Everywhere one hears *Holá! Buenos días!* and see people smile: the carefree child walking in the street, the shopkeeper in front of his little shop, the friendly woman vendor at the market and families in the small villages far away from everything.

Sophie Perron

I could tell you about Bolivia for hours and hours with my eyes, my hands and my heart. What marvelous things I discovered when I met the Bolivian people! I found happy people, warm, welcoming and generous. On the other hand, I also encountered misery, poverty, injustice. I wanted to discover and learn about another culture. I wanted very much to give, but finally, I received much more than I gave. Remaining who I am, I worked with them, not for them. Each one of them has a store of richness hidden deep within. One only needs to take the time... to accept receiving and giving, to respect, listen, observe with the eyes of the heart, to share and especially, to take time "to be".

Josiane Larochelle

What impressed me most in Bolivia are the people. Bolivian people are so warm and welcoming despite their difficult living condi-

My Lê Hang and Josiane Larochelle with a medical personnel attending to families from San José village.

Sophie Perron shows special attention on her little Bolivian friends.



Photos: Groupe Solidarité Bolivie

tions. I also noticed that the things we take for granted in our country are often very valuable to them. I saw this when we distributed some notebooks, pencils and erasers. The children were so delighted! They thanked us profusely. It was really moving! I want to remember this all my life!

Catherine Proteau

I was impressed by the way the Bolivian people live. In spite of their misery, they have zest and *joie de vivre*. They share all they own with everyone. They show much appreciation for the least help they receive. A beautiful smile of gratitude brightens their faces. Their hospitality is striking. I felt comfortable with them and there was no place for shyness. In short, it was an unforgettable experience. It enabled me to become aware of the joy there is in living out of one's own resources.

My Lê Hang

REAPING THE FRUITS OF MISSIONARY IMMERSION

I had been preparing for over a year for this event. Ah, Bolivia! what an unforgettable experience! One goes there with the intention to help, but before long realizes

that one receives so much more. There is another important lesson I drew from my encounter with the Bolivian people: external poverty does not prevent people from being generous. On the contrary!

Joanne Bonnici

An experience such as this made me discover many things. My habits and my values took a beating. Thus, having had to do laundry by hand, I really appreciated automatic washers when I came home. I learned how to open up to others, for the values of listening, mutual help, sharing and respect permeated our journey and have not ceased to grow in me since!

Sophie Perron

Leaving home for a five week trip is something I had done before, but never on a trip to work as a volunteer. This was a new experience for me. Before I left, I had a long way to go: getting to know the members of the group, raising funds to finance the trip and especially getting to know myself... a first time for me to be thinking so deeply about who I am and what I want! The introspection did not stop there. I continue discovering my strengths and my weaknesses and developing new skills: I am now able to work - like making bandages - with minimum supplies. My vision of the world has indeed broadened.

My Lê Hang

AN ESSENTIAL MISSIONARY COOPERATION

BY THÉRÈSE BEAUDET, M.I.C.

"To present a new subscription is to help the missionaries, it is to continue the work of the Lord in the field of the harvest", our Foundress, Délia Tétreault, wrote in 1920. Today, an increasing number of lay people are helping the M.I.C. Sisters in activities to support the missions. Sr. Thérèse Beaudet, a missionary in Peru for 20 years, is deeply appreciative of the laity's continued interest and assistance. Whenever she is in Quebec, she never fails to visit her own parish in Deschaillons, and especially to meet the collaborators of our mission magazine.

For the past ten years, my sister, Brigitte Bernier, has been involved in promoting our magazine LE PRÉCURSEUR. Whenever I come to Quebec, she convenes a special meeting of the promotion group she leads. This is a great opportunity for me to rediscover the bonds that unite me with my home parish and environment. On such occasions, it is with joy that I invite these people to relate to the Peruvians with whom I work.



Fr. Alain Rousseau, pastor of Deschaillons and Parisville, with Sr. Thérèse Beaudet

It is also an extraordinary opportunity for me to hear about all the initiatives that are taken, in spite of all daily activities, to continue to arouse mission awareness by means of our magazine LE PRÉCURSEUR. Challenges are never lacking and we know them well: a difficult economic situation, the ageing of the population, the incredible number of publications. Yet, fidelity to the mission is strong and there is never any shortage of helping hands. If one of these collaborators is unable to continue her mission, names of friends who can replace are proposed. Jacqueline, Gaby and Brigitte have just become involved in this service of promoting the missionary press. Either through a telephone call or through a friendly visit, the magazine is offered and the circle of readers enlarged... like a drop of water, enlivened by a powerful dynamism that reaches to the farthest shores. This was the symbol used on the 1996 World Mission Sunday, with the theme: *Go... make disciples!*

With the support of the parish priest, Fr. Alain Rousseau - ever attentive to maintain contact with missionaries and to conscientize the people to mission - a network of solidarity was set in motion to provide for an intense experience of

this missionary day. Parishioners of all ages got involved in the Sunday liturgical celebration. A meeting was organized in the evening during which I was able to talk about my work in Pucallpa, Peru, drawing attention to the needs of the Peruvian people as well as to their culture and religious practices. Each person thus became, in his or her own way, a bridge of communion, sharing and hope. Indeed, quite an effective way

to sustain and renew our missionary dynamism!

On my part, I felt renewed by this immersion in my local Church. I recalled one by one the faces of those who try to live out a solidarity without boundaries. My heart is overwhelmed with thanksgiving and I rejoice to see the marvelous work of lay people in the Church here. In January this year, I leave once again for Pucallpa, but not alone. Through their material, affective and spiritual support, the parishioners of Deschaillons and Parisville will continue reaching out to the people of Peru. My heart is filled with deep appreciation for their valuable participation in the mission! □



Collaborators for the magazine LE PRÉCURSEUR - Brigitte Bernier (center) and friends

SAPANG PALAY REVISITED

After years of service at Mount Saint Joseph Hospital in Vancouver, a well-deserved retirement allowed Carmen Castonguay, M.I.C. to realize a long-cherished dream: the opportunity to return to her first mission, the Philippines. A visit to Sapang Palay, a former M.I.C. mission area, provided her the wonderful occasion for a reunion with friends and collaborators... a memorable occasion to recall precious souvenirs together, share experiences and reiterate grateful thanks!

"It was on July 4, 1956, 40 years ago, when I arrived in Manila Bay on a cargo ship," Sr. Carmen recalls. After a few years in the south, she took charge of the M.I.C. Community and school in Intramuros, Manila. In those years, many poor migrants had built makeshift houses within the ruined walls of Intramuros. Concerned about the children's education, the Sisters offered free classes in the evening to some 200 girls. Unfortunately, in December 1963, the Manila Mayor ordered the immediate eviction of the families around the area. With much reluctance, these so-called squatters had to board the trucks destined for Sapang Palay, a rural area outside Manila. On their arrival, the people found themselves in the middle of uncultivated farm lands and with just the sky above them. Without hesitation, Sister Carmen followed them to the site. Generous people came to her assistance and before long, a large circular nipa structure was put up in Minuyan Area. Completed in May 1965, the Immaculate Conception Center served as a place of worship, a community hall and a haven to the displaced families.

In September 1996, Sr. Carmen returned to Sapang Palay to the joy of some 15 women putting the welcome mat out at the former SAPAVEC (Sapang Palay Vocational and Educational Center). An enthusiastic sharing of experiences followed one after the other. The women related their life experiences since the time Sr. Carmen and some of her companions returned to Canada: Srs. Madeleine Alarie, Thérèse Boutin, Cécile Martel, Béatrice Pelletier. They also kept lively memories of the Filipina M.I.C.s who worked with them in the Center, among them: Srs. Lilia Frondoza, Angelita Villarin, Angelita Olimba. They recalled that



SAPAVEC which began as a cottage industry center was then registered in 1975 as *Damit Bayan - Country Clothing - Manufacturing Incorporated (DMBI)*. The "success story" of each pioneer was moving and heartwarming. Some among them

were enabled to help their children further their careers... all because of the sewing project, a self-help program initiated by the M.I.C. Sisters.



Pioneers of the Sewing Center in Sapang Palay proudly present samples of their work to Sr. Carmen.

Confident that the core group of 11 women could manage by themselves, the M.I.C. Sisters departed from Sapang Palay in February 1980. The self-help program they have launched has proved to be an effective

source of financial help to the seamstresses and their dependents. To this day the DMBI is a thriving business, giving livelihood to several women who would otherwise be resorting to other menial tasks for a living. The continued patronage of Immaculate Conception Academy for its students' uniforms and now, Xavier School, has given them lucrative work. They boast of having 12 speed machines and 11 ordinary ones. Sr. Carmen praised and congratulated them for their courage and perseverance in keeping the sewing project going. Her thanks also went to her M.I.C. companions who were undaunted by difficulties in helping the poor. The women, on their part, were profuse in their expressions of grateful thanks to the Lord, to Sr. Carmen and to all her M.I.C. companions who lived and worked with them in Sapang Palay. □

A Christian Community Grows in Vilimukulu

In January 1995, two M.I.C. Sisters launched the outreach programme of the Kanyanga Zonal Health Centre in the remote village of Vilimukulu (Manga), in Luangwa Valley. Following up their initial visit with longer sojourns in the village, Srs. Laurette Gauvin and Emeldah Katongo made themselves available for various pastoral services to the villagers. In turn, they experienced the warm hospitality and solidarity of a young Christian community.

"Our main work," the Sisters say, "is our presence among the people... they are our mainstay and indispensable partners in mission."

An atmosphere of excitement permeated the village and surroundings on that beautiful day in January. Swarms of children came running and shouting for joy. Teachers and villagers were on hand to gratefully welcome Sisters Laurette Gauvin and Emeldah Katongo, Scholastic. "We have waited a long time for this to happen," they said. The villagers have been cut off from spiritual and material help for years due to very bad road conditions especially during the rainy season. The discovery of garnet mines in the area proved a blessing for the Valley people... the gem company now sees to maintaining the road thus making Manga and its surroundings more accessible.

At the first Sunday Mass in the village, the Sisters thanked the people for their warm welcome and for their wholehearted collaboration in preparing an unused three-room bush clinic to serve as their house. During the visits that followed, the Sisters met with the leaders of the small Christian community. When the Sisters were first invited to answer the request of the people in this region, there were eight baptized Catholics and twenty-three catechumens. The villagers are sympathetic and quite eager to receive spiritual nourishment. Before long, they gradually opened up and expressed other needs. A group of women had learned to sew by hand and were very eager to learn how to sew by machine.

Every time the Sisters return to Manga, they make it a point to visit the sick and the orphans. This is an important facet of the AIDS Home-based Care Programme, helping villagers realize the importance of a pastoral outreach to those who have contracted AIDS. The Sisters

bring communion to the sick, pray with the dying and their families. They also teach families and relatives of the sick how to care for them and ensure that orphans are properly attended to.

At one time, Srs. Laurette and Emeldah decided to remain in the valley for two weeks, bringing provisions required for their stay... at least that's what they thought. The villagers checked in on them regularly to make sure they had all they needed: food, water, firewood. The village chief even inquired if they were afraid at night and offered to post a watchman near their house if needed. When their food supply ran out a few days before their scheduled departure, the Sisters notified the villagers. In no time, the people brought corn flour, peanuts, fruits... etc. "We will gladly continue doing so as long as necessary," they assured their visitors. The Sisters marvelled to witness how the valley people have developed a sense of community and service. With simplicity and openness, they readily minister to one another and to all others who come to stay in their midst. □

Echoes, Africa, March 1996



Sr. Laurette Gauvin and a Zambian catechist meet villagers at their homes - precious occasions to pray and dialogue together.

Photos: M.I.C., Zambia



Photo: S. Morissette

In God's Garden

Sister Mariette Toupin (Anne-des-Anges)

A native of Montreal, Sr. Mariette was born on the 15th of April, 1913, in a deeply Christian family and grew up in an atmosphere of warm affection. She entered the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception at the age of 18.

After her profession, she spent eleven fruitful years in the service of education, especially among the little pupils in kindergarten. Loved and appreciated as a teacher, she put all her heart into the Christian upbringing of the children entrusted to her. In 1961, sickness entered her life. She had to come to terms with this trial and accept an assignment that was more in keeping with her actual condition. She worked for a few years in the library and found joy and satisfaction



in this service. She was a very congenial and thoughtful companion, grateful for the least service rendered by her companions and others around her.

She was received at the Délia-Tétreault Pavilion in 1985. Under the weight of her illness, all hopes vanished... She passed away quietly on August 4th, 1996, after receiving the Anointing of the Sick. She was 83 years old and had lived 56 years in religious life. Sr. Mariette succeeded through prayer and constant recourse to Mary, in transforming her trial into joyful abandonment, thanksgiving and missionary oblation. Having reached beyond her sufferings, she can now celebrate Life and savour the joys of eternity.

Sister Jeanne Brassard (Jeanne-Marie)

Sr. Jeanne was born in Montreal on the 7th of July, 1921. She grew up in the warm and loving atmosphere of a large and devoted Christian family. She was 19 when she entered the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

In 1947, she was appointed to Sûchow, China, where the Chinese Communists had already invaded the surrounding area. For a whole year, she assisted a nurse in caring for the wounded of the war. Forced to leave this mission along with her companions, she went to Hong Kong. There she studied Cantonese and English and became assistant nurse at the dispensary of Kowloon. After going through pedagogical training, she went on to education. She was very happy among the little ones of the kindergarten. Later she taught singing in the primary grades and gave



private French courses. In 1975, her health began to fail. She returned to Canada and devoted herself without reserve in various community services.

Gifted with a gentle and lively disposition, Sr. Jeanne's contagious laughter and harmonious voice contributed to spread joy. She wanted to make others happy. Her interior life nourished by prayer blossomed into presence and listening in an untiring effort to do the will of God. Her encounters with Mary brought her light and courage. She entered the infirmary in 1987. Her illness followed its course and her state of health - especially her remarkable memory - weakened. On August 6, 1996, feast of the Transfiguration, she commended her life to the Lord at the age of 75. Another page of missionary life written with faith and simplicity had just been turned.

Sister Marie-Paule Blanchette (Marie-Léopold)

The eldest daughter of deeply Christian parents, Sr. Marie-Paule was born on December 8, 1905, in St-Vital de Lambton, in the Bauce region of Quebec. At the start, her missionary vocation was endangered by an unstable health. Finally in 1934, following 10 long years of waiting, she entered the Novitiate of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Pont-Viau.

After her profession, Sr. Marie-Paule gave her services at our house of Outremont; then in 1953, she received an appointment to our missions of Haiti. At the school as well as at the orphanage, her remarkable personal qualities won the affection of the children entrusted to her care. As a group leader of the Legion of Mary, she was able to give new expression to her Marian devotion. On her



return to Canada in 1962, she extended the benefit of her literary talent to the Community by serving at the secretariat of the Holy Childhood Association in Joliette and in Pont-Viau. She was also given charge of corresponding with LE PRÉCURSEUR subscribers. She was a sociable, loving and gentle person, easy to relate to. Her union with God grew out of an untiring desire to accomplish His holy will.

In 1985, she entered the Délia-Tétreault Pavilion and lived the last stage of her life in prayer and generous acceptance of her sufferings. Seized by a stroke, she peacefully yielded her soul to God on September 9, 1996, at the age of 90 years. With ever increasing gratitude, Sr. Marie-Paule had lived 62 years of missionary religious life.

Sister Évangeline Giguère (Marie-Gabriel)

Sr. Évangeline was born in Quebec City, in the Parish of Notre-Dame-de-Jacques-Cartier, on May 14, 1905. Blessed with a rich Christian heritage received from her family, she entered the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception on February 1st, 1934.

As a nurse, she spent most of her first few years of religious life at our Oriental Hospital of St. Joseph in Vancouver. Accompanied by a Chinese interpreter, she cared for the elderly and the sick, many of whom were TB patients. Her devotedness was remarkable. She was filled with a profound devotion to Mary whom she constantly associated to her apostolic endeavours. A mysterious communication of grace took place and many



spiritual favours were obtained. In 1957, she returned to Quebec where she cared for our sick sisters, until the time of her retirement. Even then, she loved to make herself useful through volunteer service.

Chosen for a unique mission of charity, Sr. Évangeline expressed God's love for each person by her unsparing devotion and tender presence, as well as by her special concern to make Christ known and loved. She died peacefully in Pont-Viau on September 22, 1996, at the age of 91, having lived 62 years in religious life. Enlightened by the memories she has left us, the pages of her life filled with gestures of hospitality and fraternal service are a tasty treat replete with Gospel values.

Sister Thérèse Côté (Thérèse-de-la-Croix)

Born in the Parish of St-Jean-Baptiste, in Quebec City on the 3rd of September, 1916, Sr. Thérèse spent her childhood days and her youth in Beauport, where her parents had acquired some property. She was seventeen when her mother died. She then took charge of the housekeeping, to which she devoted much care and affection. She entered our Institute in 1937.

After her profession, Sr. Thérèse was assigned for nine years to mission awareness activities in the schools and to the promotion of our missionary magazines. She was then appointed director of retreats in Joliette as well as superior of the fraternity, a function she again later exercised in Granby. In 1952, she received an assignment to our missions of Haiti, where she fulfilled the service of authority while being directress of our schools in different places - Les Côteaux, Limbé, Croix-des-Bouquets



and La Boule. In 1954, she experienced the fury of hurricane Hazel and felt deeply in her heart "that terrible sense of helplessness before the misery of the crowds". Having returned to Canada in 1980, she continued to give her help in community services in as much as she could. Peaceful and serene, she offered her sufferings and prayers for the salvation of souls.

Sr. Thérèse sought to perform her mission as a presence, a prayer and an offering for her country of adoption. Her constant filial recourse to the Blessed Mother helped her to realize her missionary ideal. She was struck by a heart attack... and the Lord came to receive her life so generously offered. She died in Pont-Viau on October 6, 1996, at the age of 80 years, having lived 59 years in religious life. □

Jeanne Guinois, M.I.C.

NEWSBRIEFS... FROM HERE AND ELSEWHERE

HAITI / CANADA

WHEN THE FRUIT EXCEEDS THE PROMISE OF THE FLOWERS

Summer 1983... A missionary immersion project led Sylvie Richard and Anne-Marie Chagnon to Haiti. They reported that the long preparation and the one-month stay in that country marked them deeply (LE PRÉCURSEUR, July-August 1983). How did that experience affect their lives? Fourteen years later...

Thanks to a telephone call from Sylvie, Sr. Adrienne Guay, who accompanied the group, presents an enlightening response to the question which is often asked: "What is the use of going on a short-term missionary commitment?"

The telephone rang. It was Sylvie. What a surprise! She had just returned from Toronto where she had been living for three years with her little family. She said: "Adrienne, when I tuned in to Radio Ville-Marie to recite the Rosary, I recognized your voice. I thought you were in Madagascar. I immediately phoned the M.I.C.s to find out where I might reach you. They told me you were in Pont-Viau." It was

such a joy to find each other again! Then, quite naturally, we reminisced about that missionary project in Haiti, 14 years ago. A month one can never forget! "Yes", said Sylvie, "I've got the bug! I'm really a missionary at heart... I can never forget that wonderful experience. I'm teaching my three children - Mélissa, Sabrina and Jean-François - to open their hearts to people of other countries."

"Haiti! Yes, I was marked by my stay there, but I was also very strongly marked by the preparation for that project, which went on every weekend for eight months. I've been a different person ever since. I would still like to go on a mission abroad with my husband, Mario, and my children. Mario is a mechanical engineer and we are waiting for a position in his type of work. It is a possibility. We have been learning Spanish in anticipation of spending a few years in South America. I could teach as a volunteer educator according to my experience. In the meantime, I am involved in my own surroundings and am more open and sensitive to the misery of others, to poverty and injustice."

Sylvie and Mario always kept in touch with me when I was in Madagascar. They wrote to me and covered the costs of education for a Malagasy child. Sylvie keeps me

updated on Anne-Marie, who was also in the group of 1983. "She went back to Haiti three summers in a row to care for the sick in a dispensary. She spent a whole year in India in the charity centres of Mother Teresa. She just left for El Salvador for two years of international cooperation. Anne-Marie reoriented her career at the University of Ottawa after that experience in Haiti. She majored in International Relations and came through with flying colours. Since then she has travelled from India to Africa

and from Africa to Central America, bringing her help to others. Her commitments know no boundaries. Her work takes her wherever aid and development are needed... To put it in a nut-shell, she lives for others."

After our conversation, I took time to savour the fruit of this missionary experience of 14 years ago. What is the use of going away for a short-term missionary project? What difference does it make? To me, the actual experiences of Sylvie and Anne-Marie provide the answer, a confirmation! □

Adrienne Guay, M.I.C.

Sylvie Richard and Anne-Marie Chagnon during their memorable stay in Haiti, in the summer of 1983.

Sylvie and her husband, Mario with their children: Mélissa, Sabrina and Jean-François



AN ENTHUSIASTIC COLLABORATOR

Ana Aquino, from the Philippines, came to Montreal 9 years ago. She first met the MIC's in 1990 at St. Kevin's Church. From the start, she showed great interest in our missionary work. She also wanted to learn more about our Foundress, Délia Tétrault and on becoming an Associate. She shares her reflections on her experience as a promoter of the magazine, MIC MISSION NEWS.

On a week-end last year, I found myself back in St. Kevin's Parish Church. I was quite pleased to be in the company of Srs. Suzanne Tremblay-Perron, Jeanne d'Arc Allary, Lucille Ménard and Teresa Katongo... my new friends - all of them M.I.C.s. We were there to promote the calendar issue of the magazine. I felt excited and happy, especially when the pastor, Fr. Thomas Brady, accepted the copy I was offering him. That occasion encouraged me to go on, without feeling shy. I recalled my days as a sales-representative in the past. I was then involved in introducing different kinds of prod-



Ana Aquino (seated, r.) and her ASMIC friends are active promoters of the magazine MIC MISSION NEWS.

ucts yet feeling that something was lacking in my life. Now, I am invited to introduce a mission magazine to friends and strangers alike. I experienced quite a different feeling... I was excited, happy and pleased with what I was doing! How I liked the atmosphere inside the church after the Mass, seeing friends I have not met for a long time. It was a joy to offer them a subscription to the magazine. I met others who were already subscribers... this time I did not miss the chance to

invite them to take gift-subscriptions for their own friends and relatives.

I thank the Lord and our Immaculate Mother for granting me this experience and inviting me to commit myself as an ASMIC member. At present, I am helping out at the Filipino Catholic Mission of Montreal, with our Filipino pastor, Fr. Frank Alvarez, P.M.E. I am a member of the Parish Pastoral Council and coordinator of the Catechetical Ministry. Having left the Philippines for Canada in 1988, I am indeed happy to belong to a parish community here. Moreover, I feel privileged to participate in the spirituality and in mission awareness activities undertaken by the M.I.C. Sisters. ☐

Ana Aquino



Memorial Donation

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

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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FIVE LOAVES, TWO FISH

Springtime is here! After a long winter, new life buds forth everywhere and the sun spreads warmth all over the earth. How good and beautiful it is! What about you? What can you do to make life more beautiful and the world a better place? Would you like to be a life-giving sun for those around you or for other children throughout the world? Do you have qualities or talents to share?



Part of a tapestry realized by J.R. Chéry. Haitien artist

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

Two thousand years ago, Jesus suggested acts of fraternal love, solidarity and sharing to the children. If they would only listen to Him! On the huge stage of the world, young people like you have an important role to play, a mission to share. Get together with other children of your club, at school or at home, and find things you and your friends can do to spread warmth and life over our planet. Together, find out how you can make people happy!

- In a quiet place, sit in a circle and at the center of the circle, place a candle as a symbol of the presence of Christ in the group. (Arrange with an adult to have a small candle given to each child.)
 - Read or tell the story written in John 6:1-14, where a young boy presents five loaves and two fish to Jesus to feed a large crowd.
 - Share on the value of this little act of solidarity. This little boy didn't have much, but with the help of Jesus, he gave much and satisfied a large crowd of hungry people.
 - Take a moment of silence and think of one quality or talent you have, that would bring life and sunshine to your family, your club or to other children in the world. Are you cheerful? kind? generous? pleasant? loving? honest? friendly? Go ahead! Recognize your good points, your richness!
 - Name this quality, this talent, by answering the question: **"What are your five loaves and your two fish?"** Light your candle from the one in the center of the circle and place it alongside.
 - Take time to look at the quality named by each one and discover together the value of this personal quality for the family, the club or other children in the world.
- For example: *Louise: I am cheerful.*
- Yes, it is true that cheerfulness helps, it does good. When someone laughs heartily and is in a good mood, that person clears away sadness and makes life more pleasant.*
- When everyone in the group have spoken up, notice how the center of the circle has become bright with light because of the little flame of the candle added by each one.
 - Write a message to Jesus. Offer Him "your five loaves and two fish". Tell Him that you want to reach out to others and make the world a better place. End the meeting by allowing everyone to freely express a prayer. □

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Service national Mond-Ami, Montréal.

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Photo: Martel Family

To All Our Readers,

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*has come
to life anew.*

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strengthen your hope!*

**The M.I.C.
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Blessing of the chapel in San José, Bolivia. M.I.C. Sisters Nancy Paz and Suzanne Labelle (center), celebrate the event with the villagers and their pastor.

Photo: M.I.C., Bolivia

TO BE MISSIONARY...

To be missionary is to work with all one's strength at the formation of the community. It is to devote oneself to discovering, calling forth and promoting the best in another. It is to recognize and harmonize the talents, gifts and charisms of each one by giving them room to grow. In fact, it is to love people, to discover how they complement one another, to participate in the flowering of their beauty and to be happy to see each and all of them grow.

Aware of such an abundance of life and energy around oneself, it is to make plans and to have projects in mind. To invent, create and innovate. With the encouragement and support of many collaborators, it is to do something new, with the people, for the Church and for the greater glory of God. □

From a text by Bishop Pierre Fiset, P.M.E.

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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