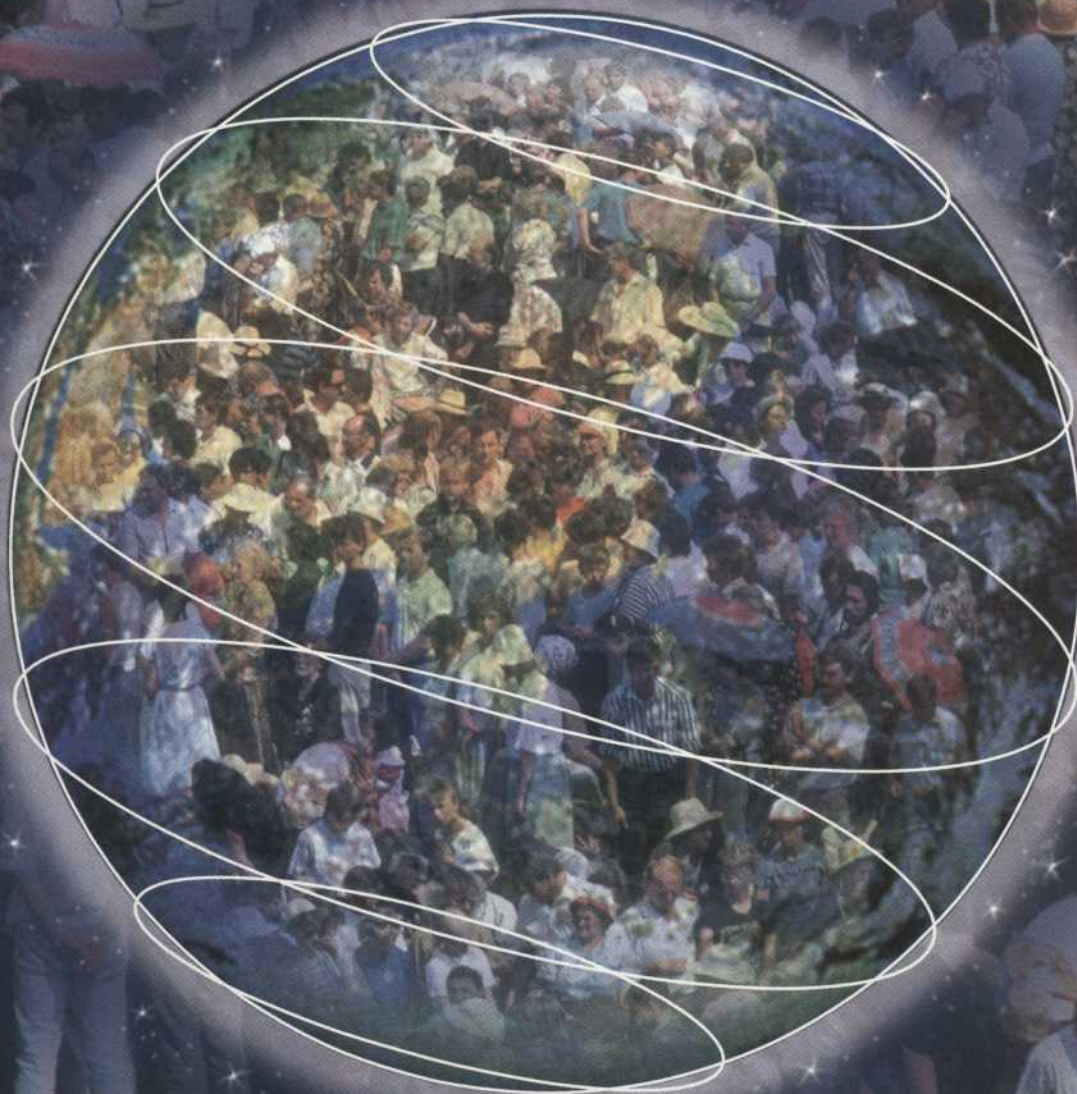


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NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1997



MISSION ACROSS CULTURES

MIC MISSION NEWS

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A Work of Art...

Viewing the cupola of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome is an amazing and awe-inspiring experience: all these tiny, multicoloured fragments of a mosaic, chosen, assembled and glued in place by hand by someone standing on shaky scaffolding... and sometimes at night in the glow of a candle, it is enough to take your breath away! Of this work, in a symphony of hues, were born the figures of angels, of apostles... A work of exceptional beauty!

I sometimes see a parallel between the cupola of St. Peter's and the missionary work of the Church around the world. It is a long and exacting task, requiring patience and creativity, and fraught with unknown elements... What will be the outcome? Love of the work alone moves and sustains the artist to the end of his labour. Thus it is with missionary work. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, proposes the work of art God wishes us to accomplish:

*Before the world was made, He chose us, chose us in Christ,
to be holy and spotless, and to live in love in His presence,
determining that we should become His adopted sons through Jesus Christ.*

Ep 1:4-5

Everything is there: the universality of our faith, the missionary commitment of our Christian life. The most amazing thing is that God, the Father of all, invites us all along our years to lay a stone, to glue in place one piece of the mosaic that makes up the work. Whoever we are, wherever we are. Is that not enough to take our breath away?

Every time one of us does an act of justice, peace or love, every time we make room in our heart for forgiveness, every time prejudice is overcome and a welcoming attitude makes headway, the work of art progresses... Living out the universality of our faith and internationality in a missionary Institute is a daily call to be faithful to the Unique Artist. It is a challenge and a grace!

You create with us this magnificent work of art through your understanding, your solidarity, your prayers, your sharing and your commitments. We thank you! May the God of all Love bless you and keep you under His protection.

Have a Happy and Holy New Year!

In His Joy,

Evangelina Plummer, M.C.

Superior General



Photo T. Lorie, M.C.

The Vast Horizons of the Mission

By JOHN PAUL II

According to John Paul II, we are like seafarers on the sea of life, called to an ever greater unity and solidarity. This strong wind of sharing takes several paths. Here, the Holy Father speaks to us of inculturation and of dialogue - a pathway taken by the people relating their experiences to us in this issue of our magazine.

Today we face a religious situation which is extremely varied and changing. Peoples are on the move; social and religious realities, once clear and well defined, are today increasingly complex. We need only think of certain phenomena such as urbanization, mass migration, the flood of refugees, the de-christianization of countries with ancient Christian traditions, the increasing influence of the Gospel and its values in overwhelmingly non-Christian countries, and the proliferation of messianic cults and religious sects. Religious and social upheaval make it difficult to apply in practice certain ecclesial distinctions and categories to which we have become accustomed. (...)

On the other hand, missionary work has been very fruitful throughout the world, so that there are now well-established churches, sometimes so sound and mature that they are able to provide for the needs of their own communities and even send personnel to evangelize in other churches and territories. This contrasts with some traditionally Christian areas which are in need of re-evangelization. (...)

The mission *ad gentes* meets with an enormous task, which is in no way coming to an end. Indeed, both



Vancouver. Tutoring class in English for young immigrants, with Felicitas Tobias, M.I.C.

from the numerical standpoint of demographic increase and from the socio-cultural standpoint of the appearance of new relationships, contacts and changing situations, the mission seems destined to have ever wider horizons. The task of proclaiming Jesus Christ to all peoples appears to be vast and out of all proportion to the Church's human resources.(...)

NEW WORLDS AND NEW SOCIAL PHENOMENA

Among the great changes taking place in our contemporary world, migration has produced a new phenomenon: non-Christians are becoming very numerous in traditionally Christian countries, creating fresh opportunities for contacts and cultural exchanges, and calling the Church to hospitality, dialogue, assistance and, in a word, fraternity. Among migrants, refugees occupy a very special place and deserve the greatest attention. Today there are

many millions of refugees in the world and their number is constantly increasing. They have fled from conditions of political oppression and inhuman misery, from famine and drought of catastrophic proportions. The Church must make them part of her overall apostolic concern. Finally, we may mention the situations of poverty - often on an intolerable scale - which have been created in not a few countries, and which are often the cause of mass migration. The community of believers in Christ is challenged by these inhuman situations.(...)

It is important to mention the immense *areopagus* of culture, scientific research, and international relations which promote dialogue and open up new possibilities. We would do well to be attentive to these modern areas of activity and to be involved in them. People sense that they are, as it were, travelling together across life's sea, and that they are called to ever greater unity and solidarity. Solutions to pressing problems must be studied, discussed and worked out with the involvement of all. That is why international organizations and gatherings are proving increasingly important in the many sectors of human life - from culture to politics, from the economy to research. Christians who live and work in this

international sphere must always remember their duty to bear witness to the Gospel. (...)

We need, therefore, to direct our attention toward those geographical areas and cultural settings which still remain uninfluenced by the Gospel. All who believe in Christ should feel, as an integral part of their faith, an apostolic concern to pass on to others its light and joy. This concern must become, as it were, a hunger and thirst to make the Lord known, given the vastness of the non-Christian world.

INCULTURATION AND DIALOGUE

As the Church carries out her missionary activity among the nations, she encounters different cultures and becomes involved in the process of inculturation. The need for such involvement has marked the Church's pilgrimage throughout her history, but today it is particularly urgent. Through inculturation the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community. She transmits to them her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within. Thanks to this action within the local churches, the universal Church herself

is enriched with forms of expression and values in the various sectors of Christian life, such as evangelization, worship, theology and charitable works. She comes to know and to express more clearly the mystery of Christ, all the while being motivated to continual renewal. (...)

Dialogue does not originate from strategic concerns or self-interest, but is an activity with its own guiding principles, requirements and dignity. It is demanded by deep respect for everything that has been brought about in human beings by the Spirit who *blows where he wills*. Through dialogue, the Church seeks to uncover the *seeds of the Word*, a ray of that truth which enlightens all people, and these are found in individuals and in the religious traditions of humanity. Dialogue is based on hope and love, and will bear fruit in the Spirit. Other

religions constitute a positive challenge for the Church today. They stimulate her both to discover and acknowledge the signs of Christ's presence and of the working of the Spirit. As well, the Church is led to examine more deeply her own identity and to bear witness to the fullness of Revelation which she has received for the good of all.

A vast field lies open to dialogue, which can assume many forms and expressions: from exchanges between experts in religious traditions or official representatives of those traditions to co-operation for integral development and the safe-guarding of religious values; from a sharing of their respective spiritual experiences to the so-called *dialogue of life*, through which believers of different religions bear witness before each other in daily life to their own human and spiritual values, helping each other to live according to those values in order to build a more just and fraternal society. (...) Dialogue is a path toward the Kingdom and will certainly bear fruit, even if the times and seasons are known only to the Father. □

Excerpts, Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, *Mission of the Redeemer*, Chapter IV and V



Taiwan. Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C. (1st row, center) and lay missionaries discover the values of another culture.

Photo: M.I.C., Taiwan



Montreal. Believers of different religions share with one another their own human and spiritual values. Andrée Ménard, M.I.C. (2nd r.)

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

ICA Celebrates 60 Years!

BY CHRISTINE VELOSO LAO

The story of Immaculate Conception Academy (ICA) in Greenhills, San Juan, is entwined with the story of the Chinese in the Philippines. It also narrates the beginnings of the M.I.C. presence in the country. In 1921, responding to the request of the Manila Chinese Community, five M.I.C. pioneers arrived in the Philippines to assume the administration of the Chinese General Hospital. The ensuing years found the Sisters expanding their services from the hospital to the school. The following text is taken from the book-cum-souvenir programme, *A Chronicle of Grace* by Christine Veloso Lao, a 1991 ICA graduate. In this jubilee edition, our young author presents the story of ICA and its sixty years of faith, service and excellence!



Homeward-bound, under the vigilant care of the M.I.C. Sisters

Gnawed by loneliness and despair, many of these Manila Chinese families accepted the friendship offered to them by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. They drew strength from the Christian faith that the Sisters introduced. Hoping that the Sisters would share this love and faith with their children, the families helped secure a space on top of a hardware store on San Fernando Street and a permit to operate the school. In 1936, the *Immaculate Conception Anglo-Chinese Academy* (ICACA) was born.

In its 60 years of existence, Immaculate Conception Academy has developed side by side with the Chinese community in the Philippines. The evolution of the Anglo-Chinese school into a Filipino school parallels the transformation of the Chinese sojourner into today's Chinese-Filipino, the Filipino of Chinese descent who calls the Philippines *home*.



Christine Veloso Lao, author of the article

Before 1937, the Chinese population in Manila was predominantly male. After making their fortune, young merchants returned to China, started a family with a neighborhood lass, then returned to the Philippines on business trips. When the Sino-Japanese war broke out in

A HISTORICAL JOURNEY

Manila. In November, 1935, the inauguration of the Philippine Commonwealth was celebrated with great rejoicing. With this momentous event, a holiday spirit and an optimistic nationalism descended upon Filipinos. The Manila Chinese sensed a growing economic nationalism among the Filipinos which could very well drive them out of business. At the same time, however, they knew too that they could not yet return to China: A civil war that had broken out between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party had thrown the countryside into chaos.



A model of ICA today

1937, the merchants lost their most important reason for returning to China: their families had moved to the Philippines. In that year alone, near to two thousand Chinese women and children entered the Philippines as refugees; most were the wives and children of the Chinese settlers in the country. The Manila Chinese welcomed relatives and neighbours from China into their community and introduced them to the Sisters. Although many of these refugees were non-Christians or Protestants, their children often found their way to the M.I.C. school. By then, the Manila Chinese were familiar with the Sisters and knew about their modest academy. Older residents admired the Sisters' simple lifestyle and dedication to the school. The newer, less prosperous members of the Chinese community were won over by the Sisters' offer to accept their children into the Anglo-Chinese School for free. They were charmed by the smiling missionaries who cheerfully taught them Christianity.

After the war, people began the arduous task of reconstructing their lives. The Manila Chinese busied themselves by entering new business ventures. However, families were not too busy to neglect the schooling of their children. In 1947, students of ICACA found themselves attending classes at Narra Street. Despite its cramped quarters, the school offered a complete secondary school program. When their new businesses began to improve, the Manila Chinese took notice of the patient, determined Sisters who spent afternoons visiting their stalls at Divisoria, asking for their help to put up a new and better school. In 1956, the first real school building of the Immaculate Conception Anglo-Chinese Academy stood standing proudly on General Luna Street at Intramuros. However, just when everyone had settled into the new campus, the Jesuits of Xavier School revealed their plans to move their school for boys to San Juan, Rizal. Fr. Jean Desautels, the first rector of Xavier School, invited Sr. Rachel De Mars, then Regional Superior of the M.I.C.s, to set up a new school in San Juan to look after their students' sisters.

SINKING ROOTS ON PHILIPPINE SOIL

After careful deliberation, the M.I.C. Sisters decided to trust God and take the path the Jesuits had pointed out to them. While maintaining the campus at Intramuros, they undertook the construction of what we now know to be ICA Greenhills. It was thus at San Juan, in the midst of the modern homes of the new ethnic Chinese, that ICACA put down its roots. Like the ethnic Chinese families whose homes surrounded the school, ICACA slowly realized that it belonged to the Philippines.

Only three years after their move to San Juan, the Sisters and administrators of ICACA decided to adopt a Filipino curriculum enriched with Chinese language arts subjects. They renamed the school *Immaculate Conception Academy* (ICA). Although ICA's Chinese Program had consistently been approved by the Republic of China's Bureau of Education, its number of enrollees continued to drop. The decreasing number of students in the Chinese sections was evident even during the late 1950s.

This situation confirmed the changes that the ethnic Chinese community in the Philippines had been experiencing. The Chinese sojourner was beginning to yearn for a complete integration with the Filipino community. For the Chinese students who had adopted the identity of the Chinese-Filipino, it was no longer necessary to study for tests administered by Chinese universities. Instead, what was of utmost importance for these students was to learn how to adapt to their new home of belonging and to the lifestyle shared with the Filipino people.



1949 Graduates with their lay and M.I.C. teachers (l. to r.):
Srs. Marie-Paule Larocque (†), Claire Fontaine and Lorette Moran

The ethnic Chinese were well aware of facing an insidious problem: cultural death. Says the Chinese-Filipino anthropologist Chinben See, *The post-war generation of local-born Chinese grew up speaking better Filipino than Chinese and (were) more at home in the Filipino cultural milieu than in the traditional Chinese way of life... This weakening of Chinese traditions made many Chinese realize that they had no choice but to compromise... Though difficult, the Chinese community of the Philippines knew they had to let go of their emotional baggage and unite with fellow Filipinos. The education their daughters received at ICA had become one of the community's most vital links to the rest of Philippine society.*



Sr. Dina Ang (I.), ICA directress, and primary school pupils take pleasure in welcoming Sr. Evangéline Plamondon, Superior General.

High school students,
happy to grow
together
in friendship
and sharing

"THE BEAUTIFUL BRIDGE"

When the M.I.C. Sisters first began their educational apostolate at ICACA, the students were looked upon as the *beautiful bridge* to China, Christianity's key to the heart of a nation that had shut its door to foreign religious missionaries. From 1936 till the end of the '50s, two concerns were foremost in the Sisters' minds: the evangelization of ICACA's students and their preparation for the eventual reentry into a Chinese society at the brink of modernization. By introducing the Good News to students well-informed in the ways of both the East and the West, the Sisters formed missionaries equipped with the necessary skills to communicate God's love to their people.

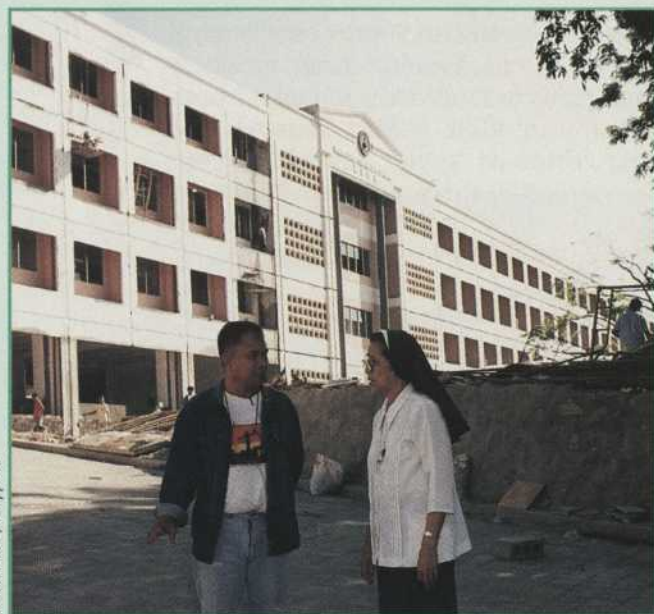
The Sisters believed that their educational apostolate - catechism, counselling, and school administration - was a manifestation of their responsibility for a cultural minority who had not been sufficiently introduced to the Christian faith. In 1964, describing their apostolate in ICA, the Sisters wrote: *Our educational apostolate plays a crucial role in the life of the Chinese-Filipino youth. It is an indispensable instrument in realizing genuine Chinese-Filipino integration in the country.*

With the growing prosperity of the ethnic Chinese in the Philippines, the Sisters realized the importance of making the students conscious of their blessings, and of their responsibility for the less fortunate in Philippine

society. To this effect, the Sisters undertook the task of providing the young women with an excellent education and ample opportunities to meet with, and serve the poor. The 1993 Student Handbook of the High School Department stated: *ICA's educational program aims to inculcate a sound and balanced nationalism in its students and develop in them the qualities of a committed citizen - appreciative of her Filipino cultural heritage, loyal to the Filipino nation, and actively involved in the building of a truly Christian Philippine society...* Owing to the distinctive origin of its students, ICA aims to foster in them an appreciation of their unique identity by developing in them a greater awareness and love for their Chinese cultural traditions and by helping them blend these with Filipino traditions.

The Immaculate Conception Academy has come a long way from its existence as a little school built by the faith of a community and a religious missionary congregation. What once was a tiny room on top of a hardware store is now a sprawling complex in suburban San Juan. Once segregated from the mainstream, the Chinese-Filipino community has integrated with Philippine society, and has become an influential participant in its development. ICA has played a part in creating the conditions that made this integration possible.

The history of ICA Greenhills, and the people who have built it with love is a history of grace. We are able to recognize God's love as the force which gives meaning to everything - the school that is ICA, the journey that is our lives. □



Teresita Canivel, M.I.C., a key figure in ICA's development

God, the Universal Father

I have learnt that on Planet Earth, You have five children very dear to You.
One day in time, You gathered them
from all five Continents,
And in a Fatherly gesture, You clothed them in beautiful, large robes.
One of them was in blue, the deep blue of the oceans and of her islands.
Another was in green as are her green forests.
A third one was robed in the colour of gold, as are her majestic temples.
A fourth one was in fire-brown, the colour of her skin and of earthenware.
The last one, finally, was in white, the colour of snow-covered peaks.

On that morning of the world
when human beings came out of Your hand filled with dignity,
on that morning of light
when You clothed them with beauty,
You said to them:

*Go out into the world!
The great rainbow of my Fatherly love
encompasses all people and all the earth...*

*Go! I give you my Spirit,
live like children of the same family!
Go! Draw from the source of my Fatherly love.
You will learn how to be true brothers and sisters!*

*Then shall peace flow like a great river.
You shall witness all the new things
initiated by Jesus, the faithful Witness,
and you shall know my Name: the Universal Father. □*

From a prayer of Jacques Lancelot - France

Fostering Bonds of Unity

By DITMA LUZ TROCIO, M.I.C.

A missionary from the Philippines, Sr. Ditma Luz Trocio is well aware of the plight of migrant workers, particularly that of domestic helpers in Taipei. Her various commitments in the parish allow her fruitful occasions to meet some overseas contract workers and learn more about their lived experience. Sr. Ditma Luz is also the executive secretary of AMOR (Asian Meeting of Religious), an organization deeply concerned with the plight of refugee women. She speaks to us about this ministry where together, people try to find and open spaces of solidarity and justice.



Sr. Ditma Luz and Filipino immigrants during a Legion of Mary meeting at St. Christopher's Church, Taipei

It is a well-known fact. Since the beginning of this decade, Taiwan has become one of the favoured destinations of a large number of job seekers and capital investors from all over the world. This country's economic miracle and financial prowess have thus attracted multicultural groups, who as a whole, form a complex society. Workers from Thailand (presently the most numerous), the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Africa, India and some from the West have flocked to Taiwan as Overseas Contract Workers (OCW). Forced by circumstances to work as domestic helpers, migrant workers are hired for specific jobs and are expected to leave Taiwan at the end of a two-year contract. This policy seeks to avoid keeping undesirable migrants in the country as much as abusive practices on the part of employers. Issues of injustice, of human rights violation, sex exploitation and other social problems have sprung up. On the other hand, some quiet Churches have become alive because of the presence of Catholic migrant workers who have flocked these Churches every Sunday.

In some families, Christian witnessing and sharing the basic tenets of the faith are effected by the domestic helpers who are professionals and deeply committed to their faith.

PROMOTING SOLIDARITY

The plight of workers, both foreign and local, is a major concern which the Church in Taiwan today tries to address. These people - especially the OCWs - are the modern *poor of Yahweh*, marginalized and oppressed members of a materialistic society. Individuals who are moved and touched by the situation of these people have volunteered to serve them as chaplains or pastoral carers. The volunteers are mostly religious priests and Sisters representing different congregations. Among them are some hired social workers and lay missionaries. For instance, the Church of Taiwan has invited two missionaries from Thailand (a Buddhist monk and a social worker) to help the Thai migrant workers who usually do not speak Mandarin nor the local Chinese dialect.

In Taiwan, the Church is attentive to this multicultural and multi-faith society without neglecting her mission among the local people. Inserted in the pastoral projects of this Christian community, the M.I.C. Sisters, while helping the migrant workers to integrate into the Chinese society and its environment, also help the local people of Taiwan to receive foreigners into their land with hospitality and gratitude for the contributions they bring. Obligated to come to Taiwan to earn their livelihood, migrant workers bring a valuable contribution to the high degree of economic progress in the country.

ENCOUNTER AND SERVICE

My participation in our mission in Taiwan is both simple and complicated, but challenging and rewarding. As associate chaplain for the Young Christian Workers (YCW) at the Holy Family Church Unit in Taipei, I am privileged to share the pain and struggle of the local laborers and get to know about the many problems they face. During our regular meetings on Sunday evenings, we share on our

commitment and on our faith journey. Sometimes, when we have socials, I invite non-Chinese speaking Filipinos to join us and meet the YCW Chinese group. This encounter favours mutual understanding and the integration of the immigrants into Taiwanese society. As for my students at the Tien School of Nursing where I teach part time, I try to make the young women realize how important it is to relate with respect and dignity to their domestic helpers. They are encouraged to appreciate the valuable services rendered by their helpers, this assistance actually allowing them to pursue their own career.



Sr. Ditma Luz with students at the Tien School of Nursing

With Sr. Eulalia Loreto, also from the Philippines, I am involved in the ministry for migrant workers at St. Christopher's Church, the Migrants' Center of the Taipei Archdiocese. I help out in various ways: English and Mandarin classes, pastoral counselling to individuals and families, consultation services for a migrants' quarterly review and contextualized Bible classes in view of fostering the newcomers' adaptation and integration into their milieu. As part of journeying with the Legionaries of Mary in their faith and Christian commitment, I occasionally accompany them in their visits to the sick, the orphans and prisoners of different nationalities.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

The presence of the Catholic migrant workers enlivens parish life. Churches which have closed since several years are becoming meeting places. At all the Sunday masses, St. Christopher's Church is filled to overflowing with Filipino Catholics who actively participate in the liturgy with so much life and vibrant singing. The Church is like a beehive on weekends - there are always meetings of several Church organizations and activities. Often, some of the fervent Catholics stay after Mass with their friends. Sportfests and cultural activities - theatre, folklore and concerts are organized. On three occasions, a free

concert was presented by St. Christopher's Choir in December 1996. This was an opportune time to share the joy of Christmas and also to discover and recognize the varied talents of migrant workers.

Cultural integration is a continuous process that involves newcomers and the local people. Before the overseas contract workers depart from the Philippines for Taiwan, they are given a two-week orientation seminar, a brief introduction to Mandarin

and a list of chaplains or pastoral carers whom they may contact according to their needs, particularly while they are undergoing the initial stages in their process of integration. The service of mediation and moral support are important to facilitate the migrant workers' adaptation to their new community of belonging. For a missionary like myself, being this *in-between person* - a link between the Taiwanese people and the overseas contract workers - is at the same time an experience of giving and of receiving, a challenge where I experience the Spirit of Jesus in the words, the projects and the deep hopes that unite us. □

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♥ HEARTFELT THANKS ♥

A Multicultural Experience in Vancouver

By CECILIA HONG, M.I.C.

Sr. Cecilia Hong originally comes from Shanghai, China. In 1957, her family emigrated to Hong Kong where she studied and became a member of the M.I.C. Community. Having arrived in Canada in 1982, she studied in Ottawa and got involved in pastoral work with young university students. Today in Vancouver, with her knowledge of Cantonese, Mandarin, English, French and her training in counselling, she brings a valuable contribution to pastoral work in the Archdiocese. She shares with us her multicultural experience.



Sr. Cecilia (1st r.) and team members of the CFS

We are happy to have come for marital counselling, Sr. Cecilia. In fact, we should have come earlier! It did a lot of good to our relationship and to our kids. As new immigrants, it is not easy for us to cope with all kinds of challenges at one and the same time...

For the first time, Sister, I felt being understood and listened to. I felt so alone in my struggles. Being far away from my homeland, I have no one to turn to...

My husband and I just cannot communicate with our daughter. We do not know how to tell her things. She feels that we do not understand her and that we are too traditional and strict. We do not know what's wrong with her. She rejects everything we tell her...

Sister, my mother will never allow me to go out for parties at night. She says that girls should never go out at night. Why can't she understand that I need to be like other teenagers, otherwise I will be an outcast. If that is the case, I don't want to be a Chinese. I want to be a Canadian and have my own freedom...

THE WORLD IS MERGING INTO ONE

Looking into the 1.86 million population in Vancouver, it is fascinating to note the freshness of multicultural components everywhere. This fact has transformed Vancouver into a miniature *United Nations* where East meets West, North meets South, a *melting pot* of the Orient and the Occident, the ancient and the modern. Vancouver is coloured with multilingual, multi-faith and multicultural expressions. People are constantly challenged to interact in harmony and dialogue with different nationalities and cultures. Every Sunday, over twenty languages are being used to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in the different churches and these Masses are always packed to maximum attendance.

The tremendous inflow of immigrants from around the world has made Canada a unique place for promoting universal solidarity. Faced with such complexity, the Archdiocese of Vancouver is challenged with an important task - to bring about *Christian Unity* among different ethnic groups and at the same time, to respect the diversity of multicultural expressions. At the onset of the Third Millennium, these ecumenical priorities more than ever aim at bringing about Christian unity and universal solidarity.



Sr. Cecilia (2nd row, 1st r.) and students of Notre Dame High School

A LISTENING HEART, A HEALING TOUCH

Several pastoral ministries of the Archdiocese, among which is the Catholic Family Services (CFS), are centralized in the Catholic Charities Building. Upon my arrival, I was deeply struck by the variety of nationalities working together in the same building. My ministry at the CFS as a counsellor for individuals, couples and families began in January, 1996. The CFS has a wonderful team of 13 counsellors and three clerical staff. Altogether, we represent eight different nationalities, namely: Chinese, East Indian, Spanish, Italian, Croatian, Yugoslavian, Polynesian Chinese from Fiji, and Canadians of various European origins. The richness of our multicultural experiences and linguistic capacities helps us to provide a more compatible service and draws us to be more sensitive to the struggles of our multicultural clientele.

Besides adult counselling, I am also responsible for youth counselling at two Catholic high schools: Notre Dame and St. Thomas Aquinas. In so doing, I am faced with not only multiple individual, marital and family problems but multicultural youth problems as well. In most cases, youth problems are deeply affected by family problems such as marital conflicts, separation, divorce, domestic violence, emotional abuse or drug abuse. There is, too, the generation gap made even more drastic for young immigrants by the clash between their ethnic culture preserved and promoted by their parents and the new culture that solicits them in their new milieu. This makes youth development and parenting difficult.

My counselling experience both at the Catholic Family Services and in the high schools has been profoundly challenging, but greatly rewarding. I feel that in caring for each individual experiencing pain and struggle, I have come to touch the wounded Christ. I have wiped away many a tear, listened to a lot of pain, shared much suffering, encouraged many to grow and witnessed a lot of resurrection. Behind the richness of multi-culture, there exist countless inherent problems, struggles and pain. As immigrants, it is not easy to let go of what is familiar and secure and be exposed to the unknown and the uncertain. One has to adjust constantly to a new environment - new people, a new language, a new job, different cultural values. In some cross-cultural

marriages, adjustments are often more demanding and difficult. This process of inculturation and insertion often adds extra pressure to family life and relationships.

Being an immigrant myself, I too have struggled with my own adaptation, worked for my own integration into this multicultural society. Having moved ever so often in my life as a missionary, I realize that I have developed a new mentality - *internationality*. I have learned to accept people beyond their cultural differences, beyond their colour and faith. I have learned, as well, to listen to them with my heart and care for them with my whole being. *Home* is no longer a geographical place for me, it is the *core of human hearts* where my heart can abide. The Lord still calls many young people to live this fascinating mission! □



At St. Thomas Aquinas High School, students are opening up to other cultures.

Photos: C. Hong, M.I.C.



JING YING MARIE-DE-LOURDES LWO, M.I.C.
From Kuanhsi,
Diocese of Hsinchu, Taiwan.
Left for the Philippines
in May 1997.



CLAIRE GUÉRARD, M.I.C.
From Quebec,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Madagascar
in June 1997.



CLAIRE CARON, M.I.C.
From St-Clément-de-Tourville,
Diocese of Ste-Anne-de-la-Pocatière.
Returned to Madagascar
in July 1997.

Missionaries of the Gospel

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



CLAIRE CARRIER, M.I.C.
From St-Martin,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Cuba
in August 1997.



MARIE-CLAIRE LABELLE, M.I.C.
From St-Jérôme,
Diocese of St-Jérôme.
Returned to Taiwan
in August 1997.



PIERRETTE QUÉVILLON, M.I.C.
From Montreal,
Archdiocese of Montreal.
Returned to Chile
in August 1997.



MARIETTE PROVENCHER, M.I.C.
From Ste-Gertrude,
Diocese of Nicolet.
Returned to Madagascar
in July 1997.



MARIE LECLAIR, M.I.C.
From Quebec,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Zambia
in August 1997.



SUZANNE LECLAIR, M.I.C.
From Quebec,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Zambia
in August 1997.



JOSEPHINE LEAL, M.I.C.
From Tagudin, Ilocos Sur,
Diocese of Nueva Segovia,
Philippines.
Left for Cuba
in August 1997



ANITA DUBÉ, M.I.C.
From St-Eusèbe,
Diocese of Rimouski.
Returned to Haiti
in August 1997.



ANA MARTHA TORRES FRONTANILLA, M.I.C.
From Oruro,
Diocese of Oruro, Bolivia.
Left for Haiti
in August 1997.



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

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A PRESENCE AMONG THE YOUTH

BY ADRIENNE GUAY, M.I.C.

Today more than ever before, young people are searching to find the true meaning of their life and what commitments to make. How can we reach out and help them fulfill their deep aspirations? A group of M.I.C. Sisters from different countries met at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to find answers to these questions.

Sr. Adrienne Guay, one of the participants, tells us about the meeting.

In the countries where we work, M.I.C. Sisters meet young girls seeking for projects wherein to commit their resources and talents. Because of the multicultural profile of our Institute, we feel the need to share and clarify among ourselves a comprehensive vision of our presence among the youth. Already, in August 1996, M.I.C.s from Asia (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Philippines, Japan) met in Japan to reflect on their way of being and doing in this domain. This time, eleven M.I.C.s from Haiti, South America, Cuba, Africa, Madagascar and Canada gathered at Port-au-Prince for the same purpose. Haiti is a favourable choice. Formerly a mission land, today Haiti offers the advantage of having young people journeying at all stages of formation. Moreover, the initiatives taken, accordingly adapted to reach out to the young Haitian youth, bear fruit.

JOURNEYING TOGETHER

With enthusiasm, each participant recalled the evolution of initiatives taken in her country to reach the youth. From one region to the other, experiences confirm one another. For most of the M.I.C.s, it is by their involvement at school, in the dispensary and in parishes that they always welcomed and continue to welcome young people along with the fostering of vocations. Ever since the '50s, five postulates-noviciates were founded: Haiti (1958), Cuba (1966), Peru-Bolivia-Chile (1966), Madagascar (1966), Africa (1985). In turn, the young M.I.C.s of these countries become sparks which light up the



Participants at the session; Adrienne Guay, M.I.C., (2nd row, 1st r.) author of the article, Mésina Paulémon, M.I.C., Haitian, Assistant General (1st row, center)

desire for a missionary project or for a religious commitment. Along the years, they too prepare to accompany another generation of young people in their own spiritual search and commitment.

Today, in each country, the M.I.C. Sisters and the young people use to good effect various creative ways and means of journeying together. There are proposed times and spaces for encounters and lieux for missionary insertion: sessions, retreats, vocation camps, brief mission stages, commitment projects in the vicinity. Everywhere, personal support is emphasized in order to answer any question posed by the young people all along their vocation journey. It is striking to see how welcoming structures and animation provided to the youth vary from one country to the other. A vocation camp in Haiti differs from that in Peru. The same is true for mission stages and retreats.

LISTENING TO THE YOUTH

The desire of our foundress, Délia Tétreault, was that each individual find a place within the Church and society. Our aim is set in that same direction. However, the political, economic and religious situations of our mission countries have greatly changed. Each participant helped us discover the impact of this new socio-cultural context on young people and on religious life. The youth experience unstable political regimes, many facing grave problems of poverty, unemployment and even violence. Challenges abound, thus the need to take proper measures to better understand young people and become involved in their personal journey.

But what profile do we have of the young people we meet? It is as different and full of hope as that of their own country. If we attempt to gather their common values, what



(L. to r.): Ileana Grau Diaz, M.I.C., Cuban, Marie-Colette Raeliarisoa, M.I.C., Malagasy, and Muriette Hilaire, M.I.C., Haitian; at the background, the Haitian flag

stands out is their marked tendency for commitment to the poorest, for community life and for a dynamic spirituality. Realizing such a project calls for aptitudes. On this point, psychology and accompaniment prove to be important tools for formation. With the help of resource people, we have observed the uniquely singular way each young person communicates, opens up to values and lives a relationship with God and the Church. All this, without overlooking God's unique way of calling and touching hearts.

IMPRESSIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Young Haitians pointed out to us what energizes them, what hinders them from living a full life and what kind of life they most desire. Their discernment of vocation touched a lot on mission, spirituality, welcoming, a listening presence and freedom. Here are some of their testimonies:

- *I appreciated being free to discern as well as to make a choice on my vocation without outside influence. I also understood that one cannot acquire growth alone.*

Rosette

- *The reading of the life of Délia Tétreault impelled me to communicate with the M.I.C.s. I was drawn by her missionary charism, her love of the will of God, her humility. I then began my vocation journey and I appreciate the Sisters' help. For me, accompaniment is some-*

what like yeast added to the dough, causing it to rise. It is indispensable for guiding and sustaining my personal growth.

Carmènetta

- *Love is the keynote of my mission. Saying yes to God is to risk journeying farther along. I feel called to serve my brothers and sisters who are forsaken and oppressed. Thus does the mission challenge me. The*



Photos: A. Gray, M.I.C.

Young Haitian women value the presence of M.I.C. companions in their vocation journey.

spirituality of thanksgiving of Délia Tétreault goes straight to my heart... How can we see God working unceasingly for us and gifting us with such a rich creation without offering it to Him in thanksgiving?

Myriam

- *The mission, the spirituality of thanksgiving and the love of Mary draw me to respond to my deep aspirations. I made this discovery through the monthly encounters, the days of prayer, the vocation camps and by sharing the life of the Sisters.*

Natacha

These three weeks of reflection and sharing were for us a profound experience of internationality. We have lived unity in our diversity. We now depart jointly responsible and enriched by new ways of being and doing. Understanding more clearly the spiritual needs of young people, we thus discover with them the pathways wherein God awaits them. □

MISSIONARY INTENTIONS 1997

NOVEMBER

That the Institutes of Consecrated Life, responding to the call of the Synod, rediscover and deepen the greatness and service of their charism in the Church.

DECEMBER

That the lay Christians of Latin America discover their important role in missionary activity.

From Fear

BY CHRISTIAN BEAULIEU



When travelling, one risks having to forget self to welcome and discover life, other people and God. Welcoming and discovering imply changes to be experienced, boundaries to be crossed. Such is life! Today, Christian Beaulieu has chosen a text where Jesus ventures out to a foreign region and meets a Canaanite woman. A process of transformation is presented to us ... the stepping from fear to audacity.

Jesus, what idea comes to your mind that day, urging you to go to a foreign region! Amid people banished from their ranks, excluded from the Jewish religion! What do you intend to do with non-Jews? You know they are not to be associated with. To what are you endangering your life? What will the people think? And your reputation? You are well aware of the risks you can encounter in such situations. And you hope to pull away unhurt? Moreover, you wish to escape unnoticed, you who have just multiplied bread and to whom crowds are attracted!

And this woman you encounter...! Hasn't she everything against herself? Is she not Syro-Phoenician, of a heathen nationality and moreover, mother of a girl *tormented by an evil spirit*? Truly, she is one who could be regarded with disdain... Have times really changed? Usually such persons with a low self-image allow themselves to be easily exploited, without a word, without cursing. *Such is life*, they keep on saying.

But with this Canaanite, what audacity! Falling at your feet, she cries out, *Help me Sir!* Yet since so long a time, a very thick wall separates your people and hers. She has every good reason to ignore you. How I admire her audacity!

NO FOOD THROWN TO THE DOGS!

At first, Jesus, you keep at a distance, you stand on your guard. Why? *Let the children eat to their content*, you say, *for it isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs*. What are you saying?... That the bread of healing, of liberation, of health, of forgiveness, of salvation... must not thus be wasted on last comers but that it is for the true sons of Abraham, for *true* believers?

Jesus, I understand why you stood on the defence. Your people, your education, your Jewish religious formation obliged you to consider strangers, those of other races, of other cultures and religions as *nobodies*. This resembles us. We also are scared to risk new encounters, to confront the unknown in its different expressions. Fear of different cultures, of religions coming from elsewhere, of customs so unlike ours... in a word, fear of multiculturalism in its various forms. We do not want to associate with such people! We are afraid to be deceived, manipulated, betrayed. We fear to lose our identity.

DOGS SURELY EAT THE CRUMBS!

And the Canaanite woman reacted instantly: *That's true, Sir, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's leftovers*. What a beautiful response from a woman who sees herself totally powerless! What audacious faith manifested by one who claims a place for herself at the table of salvation and who is content with crumbs that fall from the master's table.

to Audacity



You are bewildered by the faith, by the audacity of this stranger. You allow yourself to be transformed by her. Perhaps you have never seen such faith in Israel. To this day you had thought that your mission sent you to the lost sheep of your people close by, in Israel. But the stray sheep, at the other end of the earth, you did not think about them? You had never imagined them so clearly as part of your life. But as of that day, your outlook has changed.

How unbelievable! Jesus, you really give the impression of learning from the more staunch in the faith, like this Canaanite woman. And the more staunch in faith are often the most fragile in their humanity, the lowest, the most humble on the social scale. The poor evangelize you, students teach you, the most impoverished are your mentors. Jesus, you have learned your lesson well. You have welcomed this turning point in your life by your way of conceiving your mission. You proceeded from fear to audacity by your availability to all peoples. A truly wonderful anticipation of multiculturalism! You opened a gap in the wall and this stranger was swept into this precious opening without delay. No wonder that you realized to what extent her faith is astonishing, explosive. *Woman of great faith! What you want will be done for you!* And at that very moment her daughter was healed.

For us who recognize ourselves as *broken reeds, still burning wicks...* that the slightest wind can break or extinguish, for us who have such an extreme need to be reassured, today these words should normally have, as in those days, the effect of balm poured on the weakened faith of our communities. What assurance, what comfort, what soothing balm!

Believe it or not: God reveals himself to Jesus His Son in the faith of a Canaanite. Yes, God is at work through her, changing the normal course of things. Oh Jesus, what a wonderful touch of your grace, of your liberty of Son of God. You relieve the human heart of all ghettos imposed by men to open it to greater freedom. This well expresses the openness of the Church regarding all peoples without exception. In the future, the bread shared at the table of the Lord is the *bread of little children*. At this family table, what is given isn't taken away from anyone. Even the crumbs satisfy all hunger for they are *fulness of Salvation*. *One need not be strong to receive this bread, but weak to acquire strength!* □

* You are invited to read the account of the healing of the Canaanite's daughter in Mark 7:24-30 or in Matthew 15:21-28.

TOGETHER, YET DIFFERENT

REMARKS GATHERED BY CÉLINE GAUVIN, M.I.C.

At the Ludger-Duvernay School in Montreal, children from different countries learn to live together in different ways in a new cultural milieu. Day after day, the teachers do their best to facilitate this difficult learning process. Their pedagogical approach takes cultural differences into serious consideration, thus preparing the multicultural society of tomorrow. Nicole Joly, M.I.C., a pastoral animator in this school, arranged a meeting with the teachers who agreed to share their experience with us.



At Ludger-Duvernay, children from different countries are not strangers to one another.

Ludger-Duvernay Elementary School is located in the working-class district of St-Henri, in the south-west area of Montreal. It serves nearly 460 pupils of 28 different nationalities. The young immigrants are placed in immersion classes to learn French before joining the other children in regular classes. But how do they learn to survive together, their cultures and beliefs being so different? How do they come to know one another better? What challenges do the teachers meet in such a learning situation? During their noon break, nine teachers came together to answer these questions.

A JOURNEY TO BE MADE TOGETHER

These children, said Isabelle, often arrive here with a sad history, some having recently left a country in conflict. They have lived through painful and trying moments, even war. They did not choose to leave their country; they were forced to go in order to save their lives. What they have endured is really touching. To integrate this lived experience and to adapt to their new milieu, a journeying together with them is necessary.

Evidently, young people have their affinities, continued Cécile. I can tell who belongs to what group. Children in their early teens are more sensitive to the least difference. We can easily understand that it is more difficult for them to adjust to a new culture since they have had a longer exposure to their own.

For the children as well as for ourselves, declared Isabelle, it is quite a culture shock. We, too, are confronted by their cultures. So many nationalities have been received in the last 20 years, making it difficult for us to find our own way through them all. It is obviously a most enriching, but also a most challenging encounter. Personally, added Marielle, I have always felt this challenge, but I don't think we are facing it collectively. An attempt is being made to help young immigrants adjust to our society. The fact that the burden of this integration seems to rest largely on our shoulders frightens us. We strive to do our best individually, but we feel the need of a more concerted collective effort. As each day goes by, we are aware that the future of Quebec society is at stake. Yet, we experience great joys and great sorrows. We love these

children and understand their situation. On the other hand, we note some resistance to the acceptance of immigrants and certain weaknesses in the structures for integration.

Cécile, who has been handling immersion classes for 19 years, is well aware that welcoming immigrants demands a great deal of selflessness and open-mindedness. She stresses that mutual understanding is best facilitated by small, unobtrusive gestures of fraternal love. I help my pupils to familiarize themselves with their new milieu by inviting them to participate in activities such as fieldtrips, festive meals, maple sugar parties, etc. Integration is a process that comes about through an encounter with the other. I believe that the immersion classes have to be desegregated. Many occasions of interchange are more possible with the regular classes.

A LINGUISTIC BAGGAGE

At first, the new-comers are shy and very frustrated by their inability to communicate. After five months, they really start to speak the language. The study of the language and the methods employed

give them many opportunities to break the ice. The texts used refer to existing situations here and elsewhere and provide occasions for sharing. Confronted with these totally different cultural situations, they quickly make comparisons. To feel at ease, said Marielle, the children require an early learning of the words that express their emotions and feelings. In an immersion class, the teacher's skill consists entirely in enabling the children to speak spontaneously so as to benefit from every occasion and situation. If a child gets hurt by another, instead of getting into a fight, learning the words to explain the frustration and enacting the event prove more beneficial.

The immersion class - intended to be a learning experience and a means of multicultural education - is truly an immersion for students and teachers, declared Cécile. We discover their ways of thinking and living and quickly perceive the existing barriers in some countries between boys and girls. Boys are treated like kings and girls are to serve them. We do not find fault in terms of culture, but by our attitudes and words, both boys and girls are given the same consideration. This demands great care. In encountering their culture, we do not think of ourselves as being the best in the world. They too have many interesting ways of living and we try to emphasize their worth. Wanting to transmit sound values to these children in moral education, related Irène, we invited them to explain their various cultural events and celebrations. At Christmas time I asked: How do you celebrate Christmas? Is there a feast that is similar to what happens



Having classmates from other countries is an enriching experience.

here at Christmas? It is one way of opening up to the traditions of other countries. As their vocabulary expands, many ghettos disappear.

AN INCREDIBLE DILEMMA

According to Irène, the school conveys new values and the children no longer know where to stand in terms of their own values. To them, their family is very important and so is their social environment. They are constantly torn apart and left out, creating an incredible dilemma. What values must they claim? What is the correct blend? Half and half? A very difficult adjustment to make, not only for the children, but also for the families, especially for the first generations. This difficulty to integrate on the

part of the parents is what makes them feel bad. To integrate oneself into a new culture must be considered more as a long-term process.

For my part, says Nèjmen, a young teacher in training, originating from Morocco, it took all of five years to be really at ease in our society here. My father is a Muslim and my mother, a Catholic. They encouraged me to integrate, first in France, and then in Quebec. Both being very open to other cultures, they advised me

thus: *Now you have to live your life here. You must not only maintain your own values, but also learn other values that are important in building your life in your new environment.* I can never forget my country, but I chose to live here. Having come here to study, I first kept to very limited circles in Montreal, then my horizons broadened. Since we are moving towards a new society, declared Isabelle, we cannot expect it to remain as it was before. Each time a new pupil arrives in a class, the dynamics change. On both sides, something new is coming about and being experienced.

At Ludger-Duvernay, we are privileged to know, admire, love the other and also rediscover who we are, adds Sr. Nicole. *In this ministry, we work with pride: being proud of our name, of our face, of our respective groups, of our skills and of our commitments.*

The students learn to maintain a positive attitude upon themselves and a loving regard toward others. These are necessary steps to live together differently according to the Gospel and to build a hope-filled future. □



Photos: T. Lortie, M.L.C.

Children proud of their name, of their origin, of their talents

A TIME FOR GIVING GIFTS

With the offering of gifts, one joins
in a movement of caring.
As though, from time to time,
one is no longer able to resist
the strange desire to turn away
from oneself to touch someone else.
As though, hidden
under the daily accumulation
of selfishness and greed,
a deep-seated desire emerges
calling for something that brings joy
into the eyes of another.
As though, in a moment of insight,
one is aware that life is meaningless
except when turned towards others,
that love first manifests itself by caring.
Gift giving is a gratuitous gesture,
Not a necessity,
nor a mark of politeness.
Gift giving is a grace done solely
for the joy of the other.
Giving a gift is nothing more
than my love presented visibly:
Here. Receive! This is a sign.
As I present this gift,
I would like to give you myself.
But giving oneself is difficult
and cannot be done
in one day.
This is why I shall keep on
offering you gifts
again and again!
A gift is a fragment of love,
committing me to giving my very self! ☐

Charles Singer

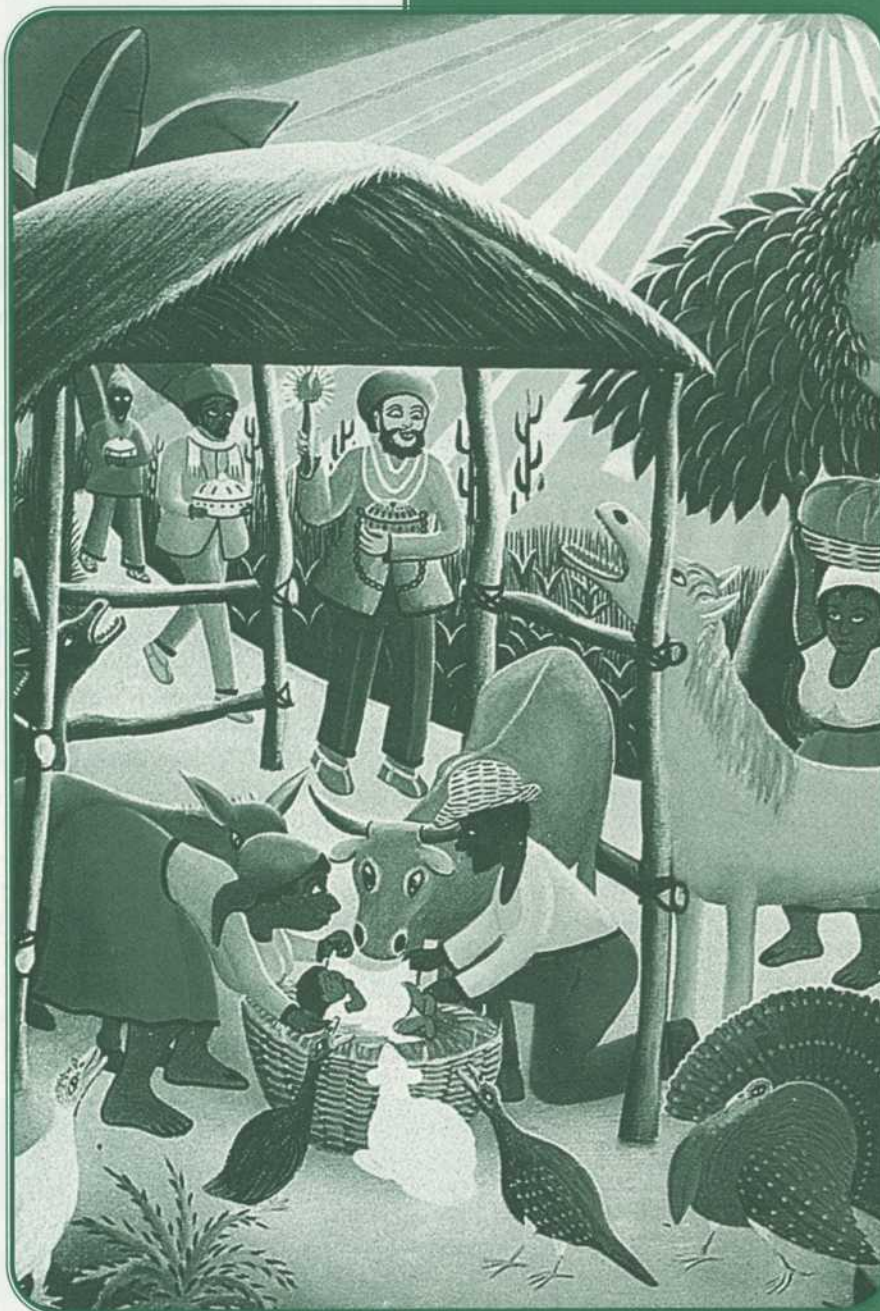
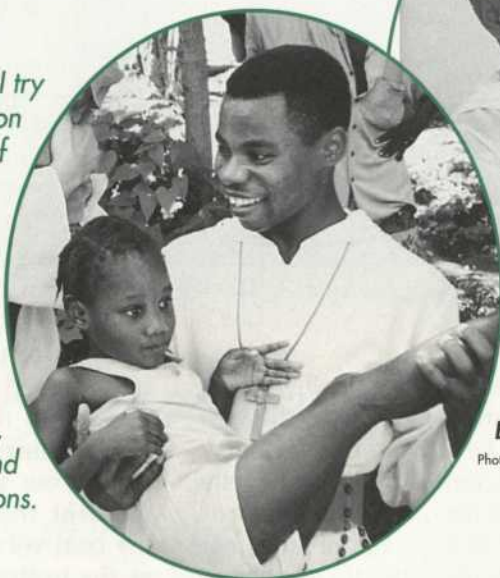


Photo: J.R. Cherry, Hall

THEY CAME TO HELP US...

By MADELEINE ALARIE, M.I.C.

"Providence takes good care of us. Thus I try to do the same for people." This conviction pervades the everyday life of Sr. Madeleine Alarie, missionary in Haiti. A nurse by profession and since 9 years directress of a community residence for elderly people in Cap-Haitien, Sr. Madeleine provided overabundant care to a big family, most of whom were very sick. In an attempt to find someone to continue the work, her wish was granted beyond her own expectations.



Brother Louima (l.) and Brother Eugène with sick children

Photos: M. Alarie, M.I.C.

Founded in 1940, L'Asile Communal Stenio Vincent was confided to the direction of the M.I.C. Sisters in 1956. Since then, whatever the difficulties encountered in this mission, the Sisters spared nothing to provide the best care and to share their affection with more than 100 elderly men and women, a good number of whom are blind. For the Sisters, living among these people was a privilege. They were filled with wonder and were fascinated by the surprising wisdom and joy communicated by their elderly wards. In 1988, the direction of the community residence was placed under my charge and my main preoccupation, during that period of rebuilding the country, was to ensure the continuity of the project regarding both finances and personnel. In 1994, the unforeseen happened. I met some members of a young Community established in Jamaica: the Missionaries of the Poor. They came to Haiti to announce the Good News and to introduce their Community to young Haitians, called like them, to work with the poorest of the poor. I have discovered these missionaries, brothers and priests, to be precious collaborators.

A MESSAGE OF JOY AND HARMONY

The first two brothers whom I welcomed at the community residence were Brother Eugène, from South India and Brother Louima, a Haitian from Jeremie. Both of them arrived at the residence with dazzling smiles displaying their hearts of gold. I soon discovered within these young men a great simplicity and a good sense of humour, qualities they know how to maintain even when facing the most difficult tasks. But obviously, there is more. Their message is filled

with hope, joy and harmony and their presence brings comfort to all. The strenght of their commitment gives clear evidence of a staunch and profound faith.

Upon observing them at work among the sick and the needy, I noticed at once how much this ministry fills them with happiness. Nothing is too demanding. What amazes me is the depth of the regard which they direct on each one under their care. Beyond the illness, the pain and misery, they know how to discover the value of each person. By a warm hug, a friendly tap on the hand, a kind presence, the brothers reach the hearts of the elderly people by their unfailing love and care.

On the streets of the neighbourhood, onlookers may see a person as very poor. However, the missionary brothers look deeply into this person's heart to find a



Sr. Madeleine Alarie (1st l.) and a team of collaborators

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



Brother Gregory (l.) and Mr. Hormidas Alarie, brother of Sr. Madeleine, see to the upkeep of wheel chairs.

wealth to be explored. For example, I recall Chérinor, a beggar installed right on the street. As many others afflicted with pain and misery, he had been abandoned. When the missionary brothers came for him, he happily exclaimed: *I knew very well that the Good Lord would look after me!* It is this message full of hope and of faith that the brothers bring to all - the destitute, the homeless, Aids victims and the abandoned. These people make the wonderful discovery that they are all beloved children of God.

AN EXPERIENCE OF FRATERNITY

At the residence *Stenio Vincent*, nothing is spared to help the dying and ensure that they are accompanied during their last moments. They are enlightened by the light of faith and this passage becomes meaningful for them. With the brothers, an atmosphere of peace and serenity prevails at the bedside of the elderly people. I remember Guerta, an old blind woman who had just died. Her face, marked by suffering and pain, was illumined by an expression of serenity and of joy.

In the past, seldom were young men observed helping at the community residence - caring for the sick, bathing them or scrubbing the floor. Now what amazes me most is to see young Haitians follow the example of the missionary brothers for whom no task is repulsive. In all simplicity and humility, the brothers ask the young people who offer their services only to don the *sarrau* and do as they do! And it sure works!

I like mentioning harmony because this quality stands out at once when I refer to the Missionaries of the Poor. Coming from India, Jamaica and China, they work with confidence and good humour despite all the diversity they encounter in the working team already in place. At present, this team involves two diocesan priests from Toronto, a Dominican sister from Beauport, Hormidas, my brother from

Gatineau, young Haitians of an apostolic movement lending us strong and joyful helping hands, the employees and the 103 residents. Quite a team! An amazing experience of fraternity.

A MARVELLOUS GIFT!

One day, the children arrived at the community residence under unforeseen circumstances. It seemed that no one could take them in. Without hesitation and with great zeal, the brothers opened their hearts to welcome them. Needless to say, I felt uneasy. Were we capable of providing the necessary care and attention to these children? In no time, a ray of sunshine dispersed all fears... a grand spirit of understanding was created among the employees, the patients, the brothers and children - all united

in a deep concern and mutual love. This showed me once again the work of God in action. He knows how to run things! As for us, we have only to rely on Him and do our small part. The brothers' spontaneous commitment, shown by their total availability, has confirmed my own vocation. Surely, God's reign has come as well as the truth proclaimed by Jesus: the Kingdom of God made of joy, peace and love is destined to the little ones and to the humble. Today, I recall these precious moments with much tenderness.

Founded in Jamaica in 1981 by Father Ho Lung, a Chinese, the community of the Missionaries of the Poor has ministered from the start with the poorest of the poor in several countries, particularly in Haiti, India and the Philippines. Being but five members in 1982, they are now 70 in the community. The members come from the United States, from St-Lucie, from Belzile, from Trinidad and Haiti. And this is but the beginning! For one, the big family of the residence *Stenio Vincent* can look to the future with confidence. Providence takes care of its needs. □



On feastdays and ordinary days alike, young Haitians generously offer their services to the children and the elderly at the community residence.

Photos: M. Alarie, M.I.C.



In the Garden of God

Sister Élisabeth Vanchestein (Sainte-Yolande)

Born the 29th of October, 1911, Élisabeth grew up in St-Mathieu of Laprairie. At the age of seventeen, she entered the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and was professed in 1931.



Sr. Élisabeth started her teaching career at the age of twenty. During 24 years, she committed herself totally to teaching the youth in Quebec, gaining their admiration and love. She gave private tutoring at the apostolic school of Rimouski and at Outremont and later taught the seniors at Granby Secondary School. In 1955,

her teaching career continued in Haiti with students at a secondary school and teacher-training college. A woman of multiple talents, she was actively involved in the parish liturgy, the choir and theatrical presentations. Revel-

ling in the beauties of nature, she took painting as one of her hobbies. Her closeness to God was a precious personal experience she loved sharing with those around her and a way of witnessing to the Good News. By her generosity, friendliness

and consideration for others, she spread her inherent optimism and joy.

Having returned to Canada in 1983, she took on apostolic activities compatible with her age while also devoting time to community services. She spent the remaining years of her life at Pont-Viau. Her deep contentment on being a missionary was evident in her incessant thanksgiving and love for Our Blessed Mother. Following a period of illness, Sr. Élisabeth was called unexpectedly to her eternal reward on the 5th of February, 1997 at the age of 85 after 67 years in religious life.

Sister Patricia Blanchet (Sainte-Patricia)

Patricia was born in South Weymouth, Mass., U.S.A., on February 4, 1919. At eighteen years of age, she joined the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. After her profession, she was actively involved for eight years in the promotion of our missionary magazines THE PRECURSOR and LE PRÉCURSEUR.

In 1948, Sr. Patricia embarked for the Philippines where she dedicated more than twenty years of her life to education - at Gagalangin, Manila, then at Mati and San Juan, Rizal. A very efficient administrator, she was highly gifted with qualities of leadership and warm personal relation-

ships. Her constant vision of faith guided her activities. She was renowned for her comprehensive attitude and unfailing devotedness. In 1972, she assumed the direction of a Chinese school in San Francisco, U.S.A., showing great interest in the faith education of adults. She then served as a pastoral agent in 1983, engaged in pastoral catechesis at Elfrida and Mc Neal, Arizona, U.S.A. During 13 years, she committed herself and her time totally to this ministry, enabling the love of Christ to be



a concrete life experience for the children, the poor, the sick and elderly persons living alone. Her life was characterized by an intense activity all geared toward others and animated by a warm heart which overflowed with love for her God.

It was on February 14, 1997, at Mc Neal, Arizona that the Good Lord called this ardent missionary to her eternal reward at the age of 78, after 59 years as an M.I.C. Sr. Patricia was laid to rest at the cemetery of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Arizona, there where she so loved to spend days of solitude and prayer.

Sister Annette Corbeil (Saint-Émile)

Annette was born on August 16, 1908 in Ste-Brigide's Parish, located in the heart of Montreal. At the age of 23, she entered the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and was professed in 1934. During 15 years, she went from door-to-door diffusing our missionary publication and visiting Quebec schools for the Holy Childhood programme.

In 1949, she left for Africa where she lived until 1971. In Malawi, she devoted her time to the education and catechesis of elementary school children and lent a hand to the nurse at the dispensary. Her artistic soul, musical abilities and

love for beautiful things were put to good use. Totally committed and richly gifted, she was ever available to fulfill the multiple demands of the moment. Sr. Annette took every opportunity, especially on Saturday, to call on those who met with difficulties, comforting them and reviving their faith. Towards the end of her missionary career, she put more emphasis on parish pastoral activities, preparing catechumens for baptism - always keeping the more difficult groups consisting of mothers carrying their baby on their back. She looked after the singing



and parish liturgy and was often seen cycling out on village paths towards the bush areas for her apostolic encounters. Wherever she passed, her dynamism, kindness and availability opened doors and touched hearts. As she fulfilled her ministry, the radiance of her being displayed a Presence deep within her, ever sustained by her great devotion to Mary.

Returning to Canada in 1971 due to illness, Sr. Annette passed away at our Infirmary in Pont-Viau on March 3, 1997, at the age of 88 after 65 years in religious life.

Sister Jeanne Nadeau (Sainte-Paule)

Born on May 28, 1909, at Ste-Sophie, county of Mégantic, Sister Jeanne was professed in the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception on February 11, 1931.

In 1933, she left for China with several M.I.C. Sisters and headed for Manchuria. After studying Cantonese, she helped at the dispensary, visited the sick and taught catechetics. All this time, the Christian community expanded and grew in faith. When the communists invaded Manchuria in 1944,



Sr. Jeanne experienced living under house-surveillance, along with the anguishes of World War II. Then followed the exodus towards Tsung Ming island where she cared for orphans. Having returned to Canada in 1949, she worked in various sectors and regions before undertaking a new ministry in Taiwan. Enriched by her first experience, she opened a mission in a mountainous region and started a kindergarten, thus facilitating encounters with the parents in

view of spreading the Good News. Returning for good to Canada in 1972, she continued her ministry among Asian immigrants in line with the catechism programme of Montreal. She also served as interpreter in various immigration and medical offices.

Sr. Jeanne died very peacefully at Pont-Viau, on April 23, 1997 at the age of 87 after 68 years as an M.I.C. Following in the footsteps of Mary, with a heart filled with gratitude and availability for the mission, she lived a life of charity, joy and thanksgiving.

Sister Pui-Chong Helena Fong (Helena-Marie)

Helena was born in Canton, China, on April 23, 1911, in a large Chinese Buddhist family. Having completed her primary schooling, she was registered at the Holy Spirit School in Canton for English courses and religious instructions by Sr. Gratia Blanchet, M.I.C. She pursued her high school and university studies in Canton and taught at our Holy Spirit School before being appointed assistant-directress and later directress. During the 8 years of Japanese occupation (1937-1945), she was greatly concerned about our Sisters and went out of her way to provide food for them.

Following her baptism at age 13 in

1924, Helena felt the call to the religious life, a call that was burdened by extremely difficult events and circumstances. Yet she remained confident in her untiring search for the will of God. The advance of Communist forces towards Canton compelled our Sisters to close the school and to leave... Helena being left alone. She left for Canada where she was welcomed at our Mother House. Shortly afterwards, she asked to be admitted to the M.I.C. Institute. In 1950, after 26 years of waiting with unflinching hope, she thus started her postulancy in



Pont-Viau at the age of thirty-nine.

After her profession, she was then appointed directress of Good Hope Elementary School in Hong Kong. Endowed with competence and valuable past experience, she dedicated twenty-four years of her life in fulfilling her deepest desire: making God known and loved by all of her students. In 1983, she returned to Canada and was assigned to services in a parish and with the immigrants. Sr. Helena died at our Infirmary in Pont-Viau on May 27, 1997, at the age of 86, having lived 47 of those years in religious life.

Sister Evelyn Martin (Saint-Martin-de-Tours)

Evelyn was born in Shaw-bridge, Quebec, on April 23, 1920. She grew up at Lesage (Prévost today), in the diocese of St-Jérôme. On February 11, 1941, at the age of 21, she became a professed member of the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.



At the time of her first appointment, she was involved in promoting our missionary magazines and in giving mission awareness talks to the youth in primary and secondary schools in Montreal. Being young, enjoying good health and bilingual,

she took her tasks to heart. Later, her assistance was required in education for the *Jardin Jésus-Enfant* at the Mother House where she eventually directed the school. In 1958, following her arrival in Hong Kong, she taught at Tak Sun Primary School and later became the directress. During a stay in Canada, she obtained a Master's degree in Religious Science and returned to Hong Kong where she assisted in the establishment of Tak Oi Secondary School. There she gave Bible and English classes and with competence

and dedication, assumed the direction of the school.

In 1982, she returned to Quebec definitively due to ill health. Always available for various community activities, her joyful outlook and cheerful disposition were deeply appreciated. Her life was greatly touched by the faith of her parents. Enriched by this precious heritage, she fulfilled her various ministries by uniting her vision of faith, her competence and her selflessness in view of building the Kingdom of God. Sr. Evelyn died in Pont-Viau on April 29, 1997, at age 77 after 58 years in religious life.

Sister Irène Gélinas (Saint-Barnabé)

On March 26, 1916, Irène was born at St-Barnabé North, located in the county of St-Maurice. She made her profession in the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception on the 5th of August, 1937.

The first stage of her missionary career took place in Vancouver where she lived for 19 years: 1938-1954 and 1965-1968. Her presence as an auxiliary nurse in the midst of elderly Asians was greatly appreciated. Her loving care and comprehension revealed the Gospel message she

wished to transmit and hearts readily opened up to receive the Good News. Upon returning to Quebec, she committed her time to the good functioning of closed retreats at Joliette, St-Jean and Marlborough, Mass., before settling down at Trois-Rivières for a period of sixteen years. Following the required studies and enriched by her past experience with the sick, Irène's knowledge in reflexology was put to good use in bringing relief to



many people. Her last four years were spent at Verchères. However, on the occasion of a pilgrimage at St-Joseph's Oratory, she experienced a sudden ailment. She died shortly after at St. Mary's Hospital, Montreal, on the 23rd of April, 1997, at age 81 after serving 62 years in religious life.

Sister Irène is remembered as a devoted and thoughtful companion. Her gentleness and her profound piety reflected an intense spiritual life.

Sister Aurore Lusignan (Sainte-Aglæ)

Aurore was born at Belœil on December 23, 1907. At the age of 21, she entered the postulate of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. After her profession, having followed an intensive course in hospital care, she left for China at the age of 25. With other M.I.C. nurses, she cared for the sick in our Manchuria dispensaries for 14 years. She made home visits and had the opportunity to baptize many dying children. Following the Sino-Japanese war and the invasion of Manchuria by communists, our Sisters were placed under house-surveillance. Their lives were marked by intense hardship due to lack of proper food, rigorous



cold with inadequate heating facilities, the insecurity of bombardments and the total absence of communication with their own families and the M.I.C. community. Thanks to the ingenuity and devotedness of a companion, Sr. Aurore underwent a speedy recovery from a bad case of dysentery. In 1945, she suffered from a pulmonary hemorrhage. Unable to stay on to face the communist war, she returned to Canada once the frontiers were cleared.

After 10 years of treatment, she worked at the circulation department of

our missionary magazines, thus participating in their evolution for 32 years. *Before setting off for Manchuria*, she had stated, *I addressed thousands of magazines by hand, then came the era of stencils. Today, computers are in vogue.* Her vibrant love of God, her staunch confidence in Mary and the comfort derived from the love and joy of community friendship helped her overcome the hardships encountered along her journey, ending in a happy and peace-filled gift of self to God. At the age of 89, Sister Aurore passed away at Sacred-Heart Hospital, Montreal, on May 30, 1997 after 67 years in religious life.

Jeanne Guinois, M.I.C.

NEWSBRIEFS... FROM HERE AND ELSEWHERE

CHINA

CANADIAN MISSIONARY HONORED IN MACAU

Before her departure for retirement in Canada, the Governor of Macau awarded a decoration and a diploma of merit to Sr. Bernadette Choquette, a Canadian member of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Angels. The special ceremony held at the Government House on November 7, 1996, marked the continued dedication of Sr. Bernadette on behalf of the poor and needy in Macau during more than fifty years. Quietly and discreetly, with affection and respect, she assisted a good number of Chinese students who completed their studies with success.



Sr. Bernadette Choquette, M.N.D.A., with the Governor of Macau and his wife

Among the invited guests from Hong Kong were Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C. and Mary Olga Lam, M.I.C. They had the pleasure of congratulating Sr. Bernadette for the special recognition she received. Mr. Jules Nadeau, a

Montreal journalist who had organized the event, accompanied the Canadian guests on their trip to Macau. Presently a Portuguese territory, Macau is destined to be handed back to China in 1999. □

M.I.C., Hong Kong

MALAWI / CANADA

HOMAGE TO BISHOP JEAN-LOUIS JOBIDON, M. AFR.

BISHOP OF MZUZU DIOCESE, MALAWI

Bishop Jean-Louis Jobidon passed away in Quebec on April 14, 1997. A great friend of our Community, his demise saddened us as well as his many friends in Canada and in Africa where he missioned for 45 years. In Mzuzu, Malawi, a grieving Church recalls their diligent bishop endowed with a gentle heart. A man of dialogue, gifted with a disarming simplicity and a remarkable spirit of service to the Church, Bishop Jobidon untiringly exerted all efforts to consolidate the foundations of a young and dynamic Church.

Born in Château-Richer, Quebec in 1916, he joined the Missionaries of Africa and was ordained to the priesthood in 1943 during World War II. Then, he departed for Africa where he spent fifteen years in Tanzania as vicar and later as parish priest. In 1954, after having specialized in the organization of cooperatives, he went to Karema (Tanzania) where he worked with many local business men. Moreover, he tended various pastoral projects. In 1958, Rome appointed him as Apostolic Prefect and then as Bishop (1961) of Northern Nyassaland - presently the



Northern Malawi Province. During a brief stop-over in Rome, he met Pope John XXIII and expressed his sentiments of inadequacy as he faced the responsibility of the large diocese of Mzuzu. The Pope responded simply: *What about me, I have the responsibility of all the dioceses of the world - of the Universal Church! But the accomplishment of the work is not mine, it is the task of the Holy Spirit. Be not afraid, confide yourself humbly to the Holy Spirit. He will do marvels!* Greatly comforted by those words, the new bishop departed, filled with enthusiasm and peace.

A good number of M.I.C. Sisters have been privileged to collaborate with Bishop Jobidon in building the Kingdom of God in Malawi. They give homage to this missionary with a generous heart, deeply attached to the African people and to the young Church of Malawi which he served with untiring faithfulness. □

Helene Labelle, M.I.C.

CULTURAL HARMONY AWARD

In 1994, the City of Vancouver had recognized Mount Saint Joseph Hospital for its outstanding programmes and methods of approach offered to the multi-ethnic population of the city. This year again, Mount Saint Joseph Hospital receives the same award. This special recognition attributed to the hospital underlines the efforts of the hospital personnel and of all the people who have contributed towards quality relations among the different cultural groups.

The awarding of the Certificate of Excellence was held at the City Hall last March 21, within a celebration and in the midst of a multicultural setting and attendance. The opening prayer conducted by a representative of the First Nations of Canada led the assembly to a period of profound reflection and respect. Established in 1946 by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in view of helping



Photo: M.I.C., Canada

Representatives of Mount Saint Joseph Hospital at the awarding ceremony: (l. to r.): Mary Lau, Ruth Coles, Juliette Ouellet, M.I.C. and Dianne Doyle; Ruth Coles is in charge of the Hospital's multicultural programme.

the Chinese immigrants, Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, where some M.I.C. Sisters still work, carries on today its mission of service among people from countries all over the world. □

Juliette Ouellet, M.I.C.



Photo: PROMIS

Sr. Andrée Ménard, M.I.C. (2nd l.) and fellow-recipients honored by the Centraide du Grand Montréal

THE GIFT OF CHANGING THINGS

Sr. Andrée Ménard, M.I.C., from Montreal, has missioned in Japan for 25 years. In 1986, during a home leave in Canada, she discovered a much more multi-ethnic Montreal than some years ago. Having become aware of the difficulties of integration for new immigrants, she decided to come to their assistance. In 1988, with the collaboration of a Vietnamese, a Haitian and a Bolivian, she established the Centre PROMIS (*Promotion, Intégration, Société nouvelle*). Her competence and dedication earned her several awards among which is the medal of the 125th anniversary of the Canadian Confederation. In May of this year, at the Congress Hall, Centraide du Grand Montréal awarded to her the prize Gilles Cousineau in recognition of

her exceptional contribution to improve the quality of life and social integration of newcomers to Quebec in the locality of Côte-des-Neiges. This happy event provided an occasion to recall the remarkable work accomplished by Sr. Andrée on behalf of the Centre PROMIS. One of her collaborators, Didier Gaba, offers her this testimony:

Among Sr. Andrée's qualities of heart, her sense of organization and her capacity to gather people allow her to be surrounded in the organization by a team of 300 people, 240 of whom are volunteers from different origins. Due to continued efforts, PROMIS has quickly become an important agent of social integration of immigrants in the locality. More than 10,000 people coming from 109 countries are referred to it annually, reflecting also the Quebec of today. The Centre serves the immigrants in sixteen languages, while privileging their integration in French. Sr. Andrée's deep social commitment need not be demonstrated. Facts speak for themselves.

At Côte-des-Neiges, at the heart of this small society of nations, Sr. Andrée continues with determination and perseverance the project of building a multi-ethnic community where all - men, women and children - feel accepted, loved and respected in their rights. In collaboration with public and parapublic community organizations of the locality, she persists in creating the necessary programmes to facilitate the integration of new immigrants and refugees. □

Céline Gauvin, M.I.C.

You Received a Gift? Quick, Open it!

Have you seen the gift wrapped in grey? I wonder who prepared that one. It's not very presentable!

You're right! I'm glad it's Grandma who wrapped me up. Have you noticed my pretty ribbons and bows?

I heard you both, you know! Perhaps my plain wrapping does not impress you... Just wait and see what I contain!

Children share their thoughts.

- For me, friends are like gifts!
- I agree! No one else likes my best friend but I have discovered his heart. He is so generous!

And you, what have you discovered in your friend's heart?

At Christmas, tell the person to whom you are offering a gift what you like about her.

To: _____
My message : (What I like about her) _____
From: _____

See how the children are so eager to unwrap us!

* Service national Mond-Ami, Montreal
Amisol, November - December 1989
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Photo: T. Lortie, M.I.C.

Lucille LaSalle, M.I.C. and a friend from Malaysia

ENCOUNTERING THE OTHER

Encountering the *other*
is to establish a blossoming and lasting relationship.
It consists in creating a true exchange and reciprocal transformation:
to accept as one's own the elements of another's culture,
to draw from the resources of another
in view of building together a community of ideas,
of interests, of affection, of remembrances and of hope.

From a text of G. Bédard, Pastorale Québec, Oct. 1995

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